

Collaborative Deliberative Exercise (CDE) in “Defining the Problem & its Causes”

To be done in WEEK 1 (Jan 25 -Feb 1) and carries 10% grade

There is much buzz about an environmental crisis these days. But what exactly is the problem? What are its underlying cause(s), roots, reasons? What went wrong? When, and how? In groups of two, map-out what you know about the environmental crisis, about “The Problem” and “The Causes”. What are the sources of your answers? Who have you as support for your answer, on your side? Though secondary to this exercise, if you feel inspired, also try to articulate together “Solutions” moving forward, ones you have heard, or can think of on your own. Which articulation of the problem resonates with you and why? In Week 1 of REL 279, you will work with a partner to carefully deliberate on these questions that are at the heart of this course, and will hopefully offer us a launching pad for the discussion on the first day of meeting on Feb 1st.

Here are the steps:

1. Check our class Google Doc for partner assignments: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jKyj0e-15o_O-HJoRLhSBOOd47KUM--oKBSQD8mtyVE/edit. For this week only, I have randomly assigned you into pairs—but feel free to change your partners if you’d like. Meet as a partner group over Zoom and get to know each other. Read through the following steps together and plan your group work for the first in-person session on February 1st.
2. Tell your partner what you know about the environmental crisis. The same set of questions: what exactly is the problem? What are the underlying causes for it? What went wrong? When, and how? What solutions will be best? This exchange of view is based solely on your *best-yet-purely raw* existing knowledgebase. Refrain from ‘googling’, watching videos, or looking up any information. Use only your internal sources, *thinking*, *memory* and *imagination*. Next, articulate for your partner the source(s) of your views, i.e., from where did you get this view, and what alternatives have you rejected? You may choose to discuss your views, even debate if you’d like.
3. Available on Moodle, read then the following two pieces:
 - a. Lynn White, Jr. “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis” (*Science*, 1967)
 - b. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Problem” from *Man and Nature: Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*
4. Together with your partner, settle on your *best* reading of the two essays, and what both authors suggest as the problem and its roots/causes/reasons.
5. To the point and in 500-words then, together articulate
 - a. A summary of the two views;
 - b. A comparison of the two views and their point of converge and divergence;

- c. A comparison of the two views with your own *raw understanding* of the “Problem and Causes” that you articulated in 2) above.
6. Concluding the assignment, open our class Google Doc and in no more than 2 sentences, tell us individually: what is your gut reaction to these authors’ views? Sign your name.
7. Be ready to discuss your Collaborative Deliberative Exercise in our first in-class meeting on Feb 1st. Sit with your partner on that day.

NOTE: Toward the end of our study this semester you will revisit & return (15% grade weight) with your team-mate to this Exercise for another round.

ROUND II – REVISITING the Collaborative Deliberative Exercise

DUE on MAY 3 (15% of the grade)

1. Revisit your Part I (including the two texts) you submitted beginning of the semester;
2. **MAIN Section:** In 1100-1200 words, and by drawing on the various texts you have studied articulate ‘*The Problem and its Causes*’ from the Muslim(s) point of view. Do these authors also propose some solutions? Cite passages and provide commentary in support of your analysis/synthesis. **(5%)**
3. **A Comparative Table:** Draw a comparative table that compares (and thus contrasts as well) the points of view of various authors; **(5%)**
4. **Conclusion (from without, 250-300 words):** your assessment/critique/reflections on the Muslim points of view including perspectives you find most and least compelling. Provide persuasive reasons for your view. Also, do you have something to say to Lynn White Jr. and Seyyed Hossein Nasr? **(5%)**
5. Concluding the assignment, open our class Google Doc and in no more than 2 sentences, tell us individually: your overall takeaway from the assignment. Sign your name.

NOTES:

1. Your audience are your classmates.
2. Be ready to discuss your Collaborative Deliberative Exercise Part II in our May 3 class meeting. Sit with your partner on that day. May 3 class session will be a discussion based on this homework.
3. **WORD FILE only.** You will post this assignment **no later than the class time on May 3rd through Moodle.**