

First Group Presentation Assignment

For this first group presentation I would like you to find a real social dilemma out in the world. It can either be “solved” (that is everyone is avoiding their self-interest and doing what is good for the group) or “unsolved” (everyone is pursuing their own self-interest). Ultimately, I would like you to think about how it is or could be solved, but for the time being you need not worry about that. However, keep this in mind when looking for examples.

Your examples can come from anywhere; from problems with your friends to global problems with nations (and anything in between). If you are the biological sort, you can find social dilemmas among non-human animals, but if you do this try to find one that has been solved. Look for something you are interested in and research it as extensively as you can. Eventually you will be presenting this work to the class and giving us a bibliography, so be sure you keep track of where you learned different things.

In groups, I will have you present the situation with your other group members. The presentation doesn't need to be extremely formal, but remember you are preparing for a class presentation so don't just wing it either. In your group presentation you need to be able to answer the following questions. As a group member you should try to be critical (politely) with the other members, try to find ways that they may have gotten the answers to the questions wrong. This will ultimately make the presentations better and also will make you better at being critical of your own work.

Questions:

1. What is the background situation? (Give as much detail as you can)
2. Who are the players?
3. What are the strategies available to them? (Be sure you have them all.)
4. What are the outcomes for the different strategy combinations?
 - Here you don't need to use numbers if you don't want to, but say something about how people are better or worse off in different situations.
5. What would someone who pursued only their short term self-interest do?
6. What would be best for everyone if everyone did it?
 - Remember to be a social dilemma the answers to 4 and 5 need to be different

Each group member has 25 minutes for presentation and discussion. You can use this however you like, but remember you will have to give an in-class presentation later.

After the presentation and discussion everyone will fill out evaluations. The “audience” will evaluate the presentation and the presenter will evaluate the contributions of each group member. You are being graded on both, so be sure you are both a good audience member and presenter.