

FILM DISCUSSION

GUIDE

Office of Sustainability student interns created questions for these sustainability-related documentaries to help facilitate a conversation after watching the film. To see related discussion questions, click the name of the movie. If you know of other movies you would like to see on this list or if you have any questions, please contact our office.

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AMONG GIANTS

- Are the activist’s tactics for environmental justice too extreme?
- How can the “tree-huggers” channel their energy to reach the public more effectively?
- Did their actions prevent a great deal of ecosystem destruction?
- How has the environmental movement evolved in recent decades?

BLUE GOLD

- Should water be privatized or remain a public good?
- Where does your tap water come from? (Lake Ogletree)
- What do you think is the number one source of water pollution in Auburn?
- Is bottled water ethical?
- Is access to fresh, clean water a human right?

CARBON NATION

- How have you seen evidence of climate change in your life? What changes have your elders mentioned; more droughts or heat waves, record cold temperatures, more intense storms?

- What do you see as the energy source of the future?
- Are any of this film's proposed solutions to climate change feasible in the near future?
- How deeply ingrained are our nation's politics in regards to carbon pollution?

EATING ALABAMA

- What are the benefits of eating locally-sourced food?
- What are the drawbacks of eating locally-sourced food?
- Are there any actions that the industrial agricultural complex can take to reduce their ecological damages?
- Are all chemical fertilizers dangerous/unnecessary?

FAST FOOD NATION

- Of all the drawbacks of the American system of fast food production (health, labor, environment) what is most important to you?
- Are there benefits to fast food?
- Do they outweigh the drawbacks?
- Children are often the targets for fast food marketing. Do you think this is ethical?
- Was the creation of the fast food industry inevitable? What do you think plays a bigger role in the fast food industry, the current nature of the American Family or the technology that allows companies such as McDonalds to produce food in a cheap and fast way?
- Could you/have you sworn off fast food? Why?
- A very common current issue in today's society is the minimum wage of fast food workers. Do you think fast food workers should be earning \$15 per hour?

FED UP

- What do you think of the statement "Sugar Is Poison?"

- What do you believe the role of the Government should be when it comes to eating healthy?
- What needs to change in America to make kids healthier?
- Did watching this movie want you to make changes to how and what you personally eat? Why?
- What do you think it means to be healthy?

FOOD CHAINS

- Farmworkers are among the lowest paid workers in America. How does this make you feel/what do you think about this?
- Do you think the extra penny per pound rule is fair? Why would someone be for/against this deal?
- Some call modern farm workers as “modern day slavery”. Do you think this is a fair statement?
- When you are shopping for food after seeing this film, will you look for companies that take better care of farm workers? even if the food may be more expensive?
- Do you think you could pick close to 500 pounds of tomatoes in a day? Do you think this is a fair task?

FOOD INC.

- Do people have the right to know what is in their food? Did you know how much corn was in the food you eat?
- Whose responsibility should it be to inform people about what is in their food? Should the producers be clearer or should we seek this information out on our own?
- The movie points out that cows and farm-raised fish, which are not biologically suited to eating corn, are now given a modified diet that is based on corn. Do you think people’s diets have been modified in a similar way?
- Do animals have the right to a certain quality of life?

- As consumers do we have the right to know how certain animals, such as chickens, are being raised?

FOOD MATTERS

- Are you for or against the use of pesticides on food? Food may have toxic chemicals on it but they also grow bigger and faster so they are cheaper and more available. What do you think is more important?
- Do you think you could change your diet so that 51% of the food you eat is raw? What are some of the potential health hazards if you are eating the wrong foods?
- Do you think doctors should be required to have nutritional education?
- If vitamins and other supplements such as spirulina are so healthy and effective, why don't more people use them?
- The only legal ways to cure cancer in the US are surgery, radiation therapy, and chemotherapy; in many countries (including the US), it is illegal to treat cancer with nutrition. What do you think of this?

FORKS OVER KNIVES

- What may keep persons who are aware of this movie and its message from making changes to their diet?
- Do you believe that eating certain foods is an ethical issue?
- Were you aware of the connection between deforestation of the Amazon rainforest and raising cattle for human consumption? Do you think this deforestation is justified?
- Why did the filmmaker choose to use the phrase "plant-based diet" and not "vegan," which is another name for this same type of diet?
- A ton of research and evidence has been gathered to support plant-based diets, but likewise, a ton of research and evidence has been gathered to support low-carb, high-fat and protein diets (often called "paleo" or LCHF). How do you reconcile these conflicting conclusions?

FUTURE OF FOOD

- Should large companies be allowed to patent seeds?
- There is enough food in the world to feed everyone but due to uneven distribution there are many impoverished countries in the world with limited access to food. How does this make you feel?
- Have you ever shopped at a farmers market? Why or why not?
- There has never been a nation-wide vote to allow GMO technology in the food supply and the environment. Do you think there should have been/there should be one?
- Do you think it is right for a company, such as Monsanto, to essentially control the seed market?

HAPPY

- Is an emotion such as happiness truly quantifiable?
- Is there a baseline amount of money that is needed to acquire happiness?
- What are the dynamics of a rich vs. poor society that alter the feeling of fulfillment?

HOME

- How does this pertain to your major or future career?
- Name one thing you can do every day to lessen your ecological footprint.
- Does Mother Nature have the ability to repair itself? Or should humans help?
- Is anthropogenic activity the largest driver of environmental instability?

KILOWATT OURS

- Is there really a trade-off between sustainable energy and money?
- Will the U.S. ever be a “net zero nation”?
- What are some impacts of coal-generated electricity?
- How do these energy sources compare when we look at clean energy: coal, hydropower, natural gas, and solar?

KING CORN

- This film suggests that there might be an overproduction of food on some pieces of land. Do you think this is actually an issue or is having too much food not a problem?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of having cheap food available to you year round?
- How are the following responsible in changing the American food system: producers, consumers or the government?
- Are you comfortable with having your tax dollars support the food systems pictured in this film?
- What role does the Family Farm play in America's perception of itself? What does it mean for the U.S. that the family farm is being replaced with industrial factory farms?

LAST CALL AT THE OASIS

- How have you seen evidence of the water wars here in the Alabama/Georgia/Florida area?
- What steps can California take to reduce their drought crisis?
- Should water rights be sold on the free-market?
- Can the water pipeline from North Nevada to Las Vegas be avoided? Should it be avoided?

LET'S BAN THE BEAD

- Who is to blame for micro beads, producers or consumers?
- Will you change the way you live to avoid using micro beads? Why?
- How do the products you use rate on the Think Dirty Shop Clean app?

NO IMPACT MAN

- What would the world look like if everyone lived like "No Impact Man"?
- What do you think you might find the easiest/ most challenging to do?
- Would your personal well-being improve by living with no impact?
- What would you miss the most? Could you cope without it?

PLASTIC PARADISE

- What would it take to avoid disposable plastic products?
- What is one thing you can do every day to reduce your plastic usage?
- Discuss plastic clean up ideas.
- What are some alternatives to everyday plastic items?

STORY OF BOTTLED WATER

- Have you ever done a bottled water taste test? What did you find?
- Is bottled tap different than normal tap?
- Should water be privatized, sold to the highest bidder, or held in common for the benefit of all?
- Is water a right? Meaning should the government supply clean water to everyone?
- Should bottled water be banned on campus?

STORY OF BROKE

- Should big companies like big oil and Wal-Mart get tax breaks?
- Should the government continue subsidies?
- Are some kinds of subsidies more beneficial than others?
- What are your thoughts on lowering defense spending to potentially increase prosperity in other sectors of the United States?
- Is the EPA living up to what it is designed to do? If not, why not?

STORY OF CAP AND TRADE

- What do you think the EPA should do to limit CO2 emissions?
- What are the benefits and adverse consequences of coal?
- Are the U.S. and Europe responsible for the world wide "Ecological Debt"?
- Do you support Cap and Trade?

STORY OF CHANGE

- Do you vote? Why or why not?
- Do you actively search for fair trade products or other products made with similar standards? Why or why not?
- Have you ever organized or participated in an event you are passionate about? Why or why not?

- What kind of an activist are you?

STORY OF CITIZENS UNITED VS. FEC

- What is your number one priority in your life? In the future do you think it will be a job?
- In the specific case of Citizens United vs. FEC, corporations were given the same First Amendment Speech protections as humans essentially saying corporations are humans. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

STORY OF COSMETICS

- Will you change what you buy to avoid using products with potential carcinogens and other harsh chemicals?
- Are there advantages to synthetic products? are there benefits that outweigh negative human health and environmental impacts?
- Do you agree or disagree with the statement that “toxic substances in low doses are OK”?
- How do your cosmetics rate on the Think Dirty Shop Clean app?

STORY OF ELECTRONICS

- Why did you purchase new electronics over the past 5 years? What have you purchased?
- Have you had to get rid of any electronics? What did you do with them?
- Are you for or against having “Product Takeback” laws created in the United States? What do you think it would take to pass such a law?
- Who handles e-waste in your community; the local recycling center, the city or county Environmental Services Office? Where does it go?

STORY OF SOLUTIONS

- For what issues would you like to be part of the game changing solution? Who are other players who could join your efforts?
- What brings you happiness and security?
- How are the Enterprise Car Share and War Eagle Bike Share programs at Auburn University benefiting you and your friends?

- What types of tools and materials would you like available to share in the Residence Halls?

STORY OF STUFF

- How has this video changed the way you look at the stuff in your life?
- Where have you seen examples of limits in the system in your lives? In Alabama?
- What type of toxins do you think you might be exposed to now or in your future work situation?
- What can you think of in your life that is “designed for the dump”? How could you change it to something that can last?

TAPPED

- Has your view of bottled water changed after viewing this movie?
- If you purchase bottled water, do you have a right to know where it was bottled?
- What are some of the stigmas attached with drinking tap water? Where did you hear them? Have you ever investigated to see if they were true?
- 80% of Americans are served by publically owned water utilities. Do you think privately-owned service providers would be more effective? Why or why not?
- Is water as a resource taken for granted in the US? What are ways we as individuals and as a country can conserve water?

WAL-MART: THE HIGH COST OF LOW PRICE

- Is it possible to live off of a Wal-Mart salary?
- Are outsourced labor conditions overseas improving?
- What can Wal-Mart do to improve their worker’s conditions?
- Is shopping at Wal-Mart unethical?
- What can people who shop at Walmart do?

YEARS OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

- How have you seen evidence of climate change in your life? If you have not noticed them, what changes have your elders mentioned; more droughts or heat waves, record cold temperatures, more intense storms?
- What are the arguments made by climate change skeptics? How could you frame a conversation in a way that educated them? Are the facts alone going to allow them to change their opinion? What else does it take?
- Brainstorm simple solutions to help combat climate change.