

**Study Questions
Week 4**

Topic for the Week:

Population Change and the Environment

Readings for the Week:

Paul Ehrlich. 1968. "The Problem," from *The Population Bomb*. Ballantine Books, New York. Chapter 1, pp. 3–44.

UNFPA. 2001. *Footprints and Milestones: Population and Environmental Change*. The State of the World Population 2001, United Nations Population Fund, New York, pp. 37–58.

Barry Commoner. 1971. "The Environmental Crisis," from *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology*. Random House, New York. Chapter 1.

Julian Simon. 1994. "Population Growth is Not Bad for Humanity," from Norman Myers and Julian Simon, *Scarcity or Abundance? A Debate on the Environment*. W.W. Norton, New York. Chapter 2.

Study Questions:

(1) What, according to Ehrlich, are the significant population issues facing the world? How do these differ in industrialized countries (ODCs in his terminology) and developing countries (UDCs)?

(2) Why is Ehrlich sometimes called a "neo-Malthusian?" Cite evidence from his writings to support your reasoning.

(3) The authors of the UNFPA report assert "sustainable development demands recognition and value for the multitude of ways in which women's lives intertwine with environmental realities" (p. 40). Explain the conditions in which women live, and how these affect population change and the environment. What might be done to alter these relations?

(4) In what ways does population change affect people's health? What role does the environment play in this relationship?

(5) Consider the various initiatives undertaken at the global, regional, national and local levels that address issues of population, environment and health. What common themes are evident in the approaches these programs employ? What do these approaches tell us about sustainable development?

(6) What are the major criticisms of the neo-Malthusians (e.g Paul Ehrlich, Lester Brown)? What evidence do the critics cite to support their positions?

(7) What, according to Commoner, are the primary causes of the environmental crisis that he aims to understand? Would you classify Commoner as a neo-Malthusian? Why or why not?

(8) Explain Julian Simon's critique of Ehrlich. What neo-Malthusian assumptions does Simon challenge? What assumptions does Simon make about human well-being and development?