***Discussion Questions and Class Activities***

What makes successful bargaining easier? What makes it more difficult? (1.1–1.5)

If successful politics almost invariably requires compromise, then why aren’t we seeing more of it in national politics? (1.1–1.6)

What insight does the prisoner’s dilemma provide us into why Democrats and Republicans find it so hard to work together to solve America’s problems? (1.3)

Do small groups always solve free-rider problems? Ask students to come up with examples of when they have experienced the frustration of the free-rider problem. They will likely come up with examples of group projects. If so, ask them (as a class or in small groups) to come up with ideas for how the teacher or professor could have designed the project differently to minimize free riding. (1.3)

Ask students to identify when they have been free riders. If you face a silent classroom, you might ask them whether they have ever looked something up on Wikipedia. Then ask how many of them have contributed to the site. Consider having them briefly discuss or debate in small groups whether Wikipedia should remain a free resource to those who do not contribute money or information. (1.3)

If you are not assigning writing assignment #2 (see below), adapt it for in-class use. Show students a news clip about a current tragedy of the commons and then ask them whether they think the current or proposed solution will work. Can they come up with other ideas for solving it? For example, you might ask them whether they think requests for water conservation are enough or whether toll roads are good ways of solving traffic problems on highways. (1.3)

Ask students to identify the challenges they would face if the whole class wanted to go out to lunch together. How would this change if they were only arranging to go to lunch with the person next to them? (1.3 and 1.4)

Ask students to identify some of the conformity costs they pay in exchange for enjoying the benefits of living in the U.S. Then ask students to identify some of the conformity costs they pay in exchange for being a student at your university. (1.4)

What is the least dangerous design principle in the Framers’ toolkit and why? What is the most dangerous design principle in the Framers’ toolkit and why? How did the Framers attempt to minimize its danger? (1.5)

Ask students to provide examples of when they delegated power to someone else. What was the outcome? (1.5)

What would be the potential danger of handing a signed blank check to your auto mechanic? What are some ways to avoid agency loss when getting your car repaired? (1.5)

What potential delegation problems are there in representative government? What are some ways of solving them? (1.5 and 1.6)

Given all the potential problems, why is collective action still worth pursuing? (1.3, 1.4, 1.7)