

SOCI 2305 | Deviance | Spring 2026
Video Workshop: Elite deviance from imperiling lives to imperiling the future – Merchants of Doubt
Video Questions

Name _____ **ANSWERS**

As you watch the film, think about the answers to the following questions.

1. As early as the 1950s, what did tobacco companies already know — thanks to their own research?

cigarettes cause cancer and heart disease and nicotine is addictive

2. To solve the problem of public awareness of tobacco's harms, who did the tobacco industry turn to and what did they regard as the most important strategy to respond to the problem?

a public relations firm – Hill & Knowlton; to neutralize threats

3. What were the “experts” selling as part of their efforts to defend big tobacco?

doubt

4. The tobacco industry developed a playbook in responding to scientific claims that smoking was hazardous. As the screen pans, you can see a range of ways to counter scientific claims. Identify two of them.

question the science, find friendly scientists, create controversy, shift blame, attack the messenger, delay regulation

5. Naomi Oreskes tries to make sense of why eminent scientists Fred Seitz and Fred Singer would make common cause with the tobacco industry. Most people assume the answer was money. But Oreskes notes that these men also shared a kind of political ideology, deeply, deeply anti-communist. When the Cold War ended, they began to systematically attack other issues. First, what did all these other issues have in common? Second, the debate was a political one, not scientific. What was the debate about?

the need for government action; the role of government

6. Marc Morano has been particularly successful playing the role of climate change denier “scientist.” But who are the targets of his attacks? Scientific data and individual scientists? And what happens to the individuals subjected to doxxing and his attacks?

individual scientists; personal threats against their safety

7. Marc Morano also speaks about his objectives in pushing doubt about global warming – what does he really want? And what would that accomplish?

gridlock; stop stuff (action on climate change)

8. Stanton Glantz said that the tobacco companies knew they have to appeal to something more basic than an intellectual pursuit of science. He asks, “How do you do it?”

do it with freedom

9. ABC News correspondent Diane Sawyer reported that a federal court issued an extraordinary punishment for the country's big cigarette companies. A federal judge said they lied, and they have to take out ads and admit it publicly. Specifically, what did the tobacco companies have to do?

specifically, they have to say they deliberately deceived the American public about the dangers of cigarettes and that they designed them to be addictive

10. Naomi Oreskes comments that we now know the truth about the harms of tobacco. And the tobacco industry has been prosecuted for its illegal activities. That's the good news. What's the bad news?

the bad news it took 50 years; we may not have 50 years