

Assignment #2 (150 points)

Draft Due: **Friday, September 19, in class – on paper**

Final Due: **Monday, October 6, in class – on paper, with draft attached**

In this assignment we are going to look at the role of consensus and skepticism in generating knowledge in science. We will look particularly at the debate over modern climate change. The articles listed below are all accessible from the course website.

First, read part of a summary of how knowledge about Earth system science develops:  
IPCC, 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment, Climate Change 2007, Physical Science Basis, Chapter 1,  
pages 93-99 (1.1-1.2)

Next, skim through the bullet points of the most recent summary conclusions of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:  
IPCC, 4<sup>th</sup> Assessment, Climate Change 2007, Physical Science Basis, Summary for Policymakers, pages 1-18

Then, read some insights onto public perception of science in Meyer et al. (2006), Journalism and Science: How to Erode the Idea of Knowledge.

Finally, consider some writings from/ about well-known climate change skeptics. You are encouraged to search for others (please cite). On the back, I list a few websites.

1. Reid Bryson profiled in Capital Times, Is Warming Our Fault?
2. Richard Lindzen article in the Wall Street Opinion Journal, Climate of Fear
3. Roger Pielke Sr.'s blog post: <http://climatesci.org/main-conclusions/>

Then consider these questions:

- In what ways is it believed that knowledge is generated in science in general and Earth system science in particular? How do consensus and contrary views assist or hinder this process?
- What is the consensus view on climate change and on which findings do climate skeptics tend to focus? In your opinion, are the skeptics right? Are the skeptic blogs deliberately misleading? Is the IPCC deliberately pessimistic?
- From your experience, how does the media portray global warming and how does it compare to the consensus view? What is the role of the press in reporting science? What should be their role (i.e., should they be biased)? In what ways might you become a more careful reader of science stories in the media?

This paper should be 4-5 pages and otherwise follow the same formatting rules as the first assignment (1" margins, 12 point font, ...). Unlike the first assignment, this paper will require an initial draft that will be reviewed by the UW Writing Fellows. This draft should be a complete paper. The draft, meeting with fellows, and final paper are all required components of this assignment. Because writing fellows will be marking up your paper, please submit this assignment as a paper copy in class.

## **Other sites**

<http://www.climate-skeptic.com/>

[http://www.climate-skeptic.com/skeptic\\_summaries/index.html](http://www.climate-skeptic.com/skeptic_summaries/index.html)

<http://www.climateaudit.org/>

<http://www.climatechange facts.info/>

<http://www.worldclimatereport.com/>

<http://wattsupwiththat.wordpress.com/2008/06/06/brian-sussman-global-whining-vs-the-truth/>

<http://www.realclimate.org/>

<http://www.realclimate.org/index.php/archives/2005/01/is-climate-modelling-science/>

[http://www.friendsofscience.org/assets/documents/FOS%20Essay/Climate\\_Change\\_Science.html](http://www.friendsofscience.org/assets/documents/FOS%20Essay/Climate_Change_Science.html)