Class Sessions #7
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# Next assignment: “Different things we believe” paper

## How do you know what you know about climate change? How did you learn it?

## Why do you feel unsure about other things?

## Sources of information? Why do you believe some sources?

## What sources of information do you use? How many of you consciously use sources that run contrary to your existing thinking?

## In short, WHY do we believe what we believe?

## Lead in to: Why Should we Believe the “Science” and Which Science Should we Believe?

# Ethics, Religion and Climate Change

## Muslim: “The world is sweet and verdant, and verily Allah has made you stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit yourselves.” [Aug 2015: Int’l Islamic Climate Change Symposium Declaration](http://islamicclimatedeclaration.org/islamic-declaration-on-global-climate-change/)

## Since 2013, many [protestant churches have voted to divest](http://thinkprogress.org/climate/2015/07/06/3677181/episcopal-church-climate-change-divest/) of coal, or fossil fuels more generally

## Evangelical Environmental Network: [“Creation-care means caring for all of God’s creation”](http://creationcare.org/creation-care-resources/why-creation-care-matters/)

## [Interfaith Power & Light](http://interfaithpowerandlight.tumblr.com/about) (since 2000)

## [Jewish Environmental and Energy Imperative](http://www.coejl.org/resources/jewish-energy-covenant-campaign-declaration/)

## Catholic: [Pope’s 2015 Encyclical](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html)

## Australian Religious Response to Climate Change [network](http://www.arrcc.org.au/)

## Episcopal church votes to divest from fossil fuels: This is a moral issue, July 3, 2015 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/03/episcopal-church-fossil-fuel-divestment>

# Reframing climate change in religious/normative terms and why it might work better

## Various examples of major changes in social policy based on shifting the “framing” of the issue

### Framing defined: the organization (self-conscious or otherwise) of information and its communication in ways that

#### Discuss certain aspects of what happened and what exists and not others

#### Provide a preferred interpretation of how the audience should “make meaning of” what happened or what exists

### Examples

#### Chivalry or sexism

#### Manifest destiny and American progress (or a clear cut)

### Frames are usually “invisible” to us, even though we always use them, until we find ourselves pressed to replace existing frame with another

#### Which of you are con

### How issues are framed is VERY important for what people do in response, often because it causes a shift from a logic of consequences to an logic of appropriateness

#### Slavery as an economic strategy vs. as morally repugnant behavior

#### Landmines – International Campaign to Ban Landmines success

#### FGM as “Disfiguring, Hurtful, Wildly Festive” – New York Times article

#### ***Reframing*** involves drawing attention to new facts and perspectives that we otherwise ignore

# Perfect moral storm - Gardiner

## Is it a moral issue? Has to be, says Gardiner, since can’t discuss it without moral framing of some sort.

## Why “perfect storm?”

### “Unusual convergence of independently harmful factors where this convergence is likely to result in substantial, and possibly catastrophic, negative outcomes”

### Three characteristics of climate change that make it susceptible to perfect storm:

#### Dispersion of Causes and Effects: my behaviors harm others more than me. Simply a different name for what economists call a “negative externality” [Example of reading response “conversation” in which identify how different scholars use different names for the same phenomenon/thing.]

#### Fragmentation of Agency: This is what political scientists call a “Collective action problem” like a Prisoner’s Dilemma or Tragedy of the Commons.

#### Institutional Inadequacy: We don’t have the institutions that would overcome a and b.

### Other complicating factors

#### Scientific uncertainty: gives reasonable bases for inaction

#### Carbon is deeply embedded in social infrastructures

#### Skewed vulnerabilities: impacts, adaptive capacities, and vulnerabilities are unequal

## What are features of this storm?

### Spatial dispersion

### Temporal dispersion: impacts on others and, even if on us, its discounted in the future

### Moral obligation: do no harm

### Moral right: to not be harmed

### Creates “moral corruption”: encourages “manipulative or self-deceptive behavior”

#### Distraction

#### Complacency

#### Unreasonable Doubt

#### Selective Attention

#### Delusion

#### Pandering

#### False Witness

#### Hypocrisy

# Nature of climate change is such that it is NOT in the interests of the powerful to take action

## Individualism: Costs of action fall on individual taking action, benefits to others

## Future benefits: Costs of action are today, benefits are tomorrow

## Uncertainty: Costs of action are for sure, benefits are uncertain

## Collective action: Costs of action depend on own action, benefits depend on actions of others

## Rich can adapt: Costs of action are unavoidable, costs of INaction are avoidable for the rich

## Beneficiaries face obstacles to mobilization: Beneficiaries of action lack resources to mobilize

# But interest-based arguments are not the only option for altering behavior

## Faith-based claims are founded in “logic of appropriateness” rather than “logic of consequences”

## Two logics of human (and national) action

### Logic of consequences: examine alternatives and, after calculation of costs and benefits, decide which has lowest costs and largest benefits for the individual decision-maker

### Logic of appropriateness:

#### Act as appropriate, with little if any conscious thought – taken for granted what “correct” thing to do is

#### Assess one’s desired identity/role in society and then look at social norms to identify what is the “right” thing to do in that social setting

# Climate change and an ethical or religious framing

## What facts do you highlight?

## What “frame” do you put around those facts to create pressure for action?

## Non-religious re-framing:

### Focus on costs of INaction not costs of action

## Better strategy: shift ***terms*** of debate to logic of appropriateness from logic of consequences

### Not “the Earth” but “God’s creation” or “God’s 2nd greatest gift” (Katharine Hayhoe)

### Climate injustice not costs

### Focus on obligations to future generations rather than individualism

### Avoidance of harm as a right, rights are not negotiable or tradable