

When you think of  
**'global warming' or 'climate change'**,  
what images come into your mind?



**The emergent science-policy-celebrity complex**  
*How do celebrities inform & influence environmental governance in the (new) 'carbon economy'?*


- spur multi-scale meaningful change?
- provide chances to dismiss issues?
- enroll a new set of 'actors'?
- add to a politics of distraction?
- inspire reflexivity in everyday spaces?
- coddle ongoing consumerism?

**Is it more effective to 'plant' celebrities instead of trees?**

- confluence of media-science-politics in everyday spaces
- "Celebrity is a bit silly, but it is currency..." ~ Bono



bringing climate change to life:  
some comments on  
everyday spaces of culture & politics




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for *Barclay's International Climate Challenge*  
Consultation Day  
St. Hilda's College




**A Facebook page for Planet Earth?**

**Name:** Earth  
**Nickname:** big blue  
**Description:** a slightly oblate sphere  
**Height:** surface area ~  $5.1 \times 10^{14}$  m<sup>2</sup>  
– highest point: Mount Everest  
– lowest point: Marianas Trench  
**Weight:**  $5.98 \times 10^{27}$  grams  
**Age:** 4.6 billion years (but youthfull)  
**Interests:** supporting life; rotating and revolving

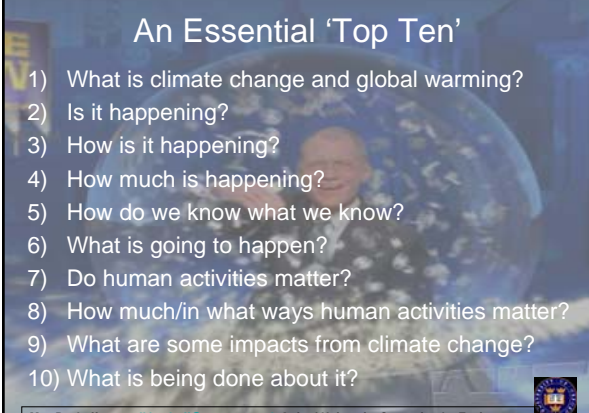


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**An Essential 'Top Ten'**

- 1) What is climate change and global warming?
- 2) Is it happening?
- 3) How is it happening?
- 4) How much is happening?
- 5) How do we know what we know?
- 6) What is going to happen?
- 7) Do human activities matter?
- 8) How much/in what ways human activities matter?
- 9) What are some impacts from climate change?
- 10) What is being done about it?



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some questions/issues that can 'bring climate change to life'

**how (much) do our activities matter?**  
 transport, land use, industry & households

**what are we doing/going to do about it?**




**how (much) do human activities matter?**  
 Our carbon-based industry and society




The Anthropocene Era  
 - Paul Crutzen

As a collective society we have worked hard to make progress, but have we worked smart?



Where are the efforts of past & present generations carrying us now?

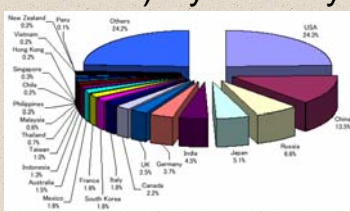
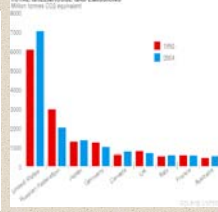

Revkin (1992) Revkin (1992)



**how (much) do human activities matter?**

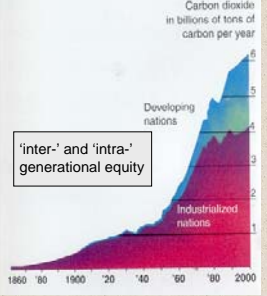
2 ways to view human contributions

1) By Country/Nation

**how (much) do human activities matter?**

2) survival vs. luxury emissions




Carbon dioxide in billions of tons of carbon per year


per capita greenhouse gas emissions

'inter-' and 'intra-' generational equity

UNEP Vital Climate Change Graphics (2005)




**what are we doing/going to do about it?**  
 can we take our time to respond to the challenge?  
 abrupt vs. gradual change



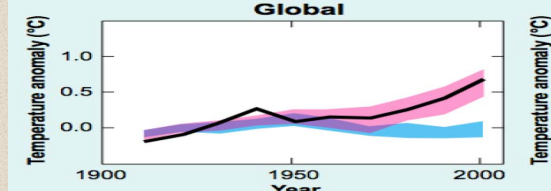
Current Information

"Dangerous" Change Threshold

© Larson



**ATMOSPHERIC TEMPERATURE & MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS**

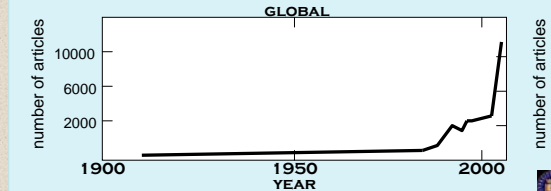


Temperature anomaly (°C)

Global

1900 1950 2000

Year




number of articles

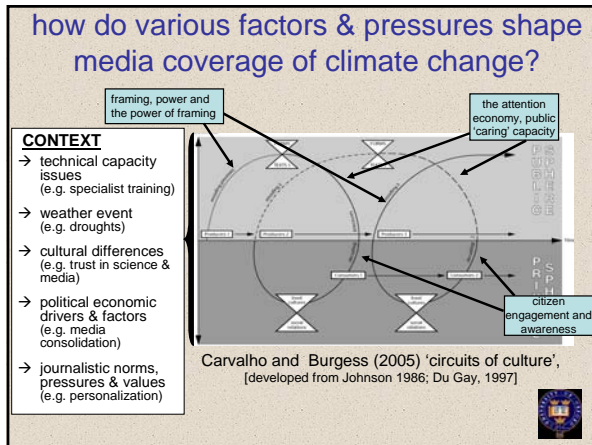
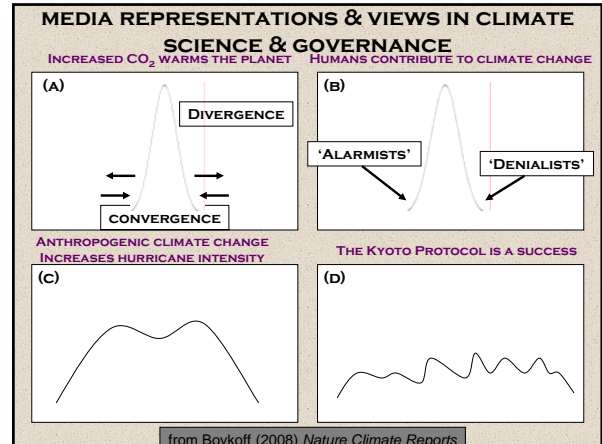
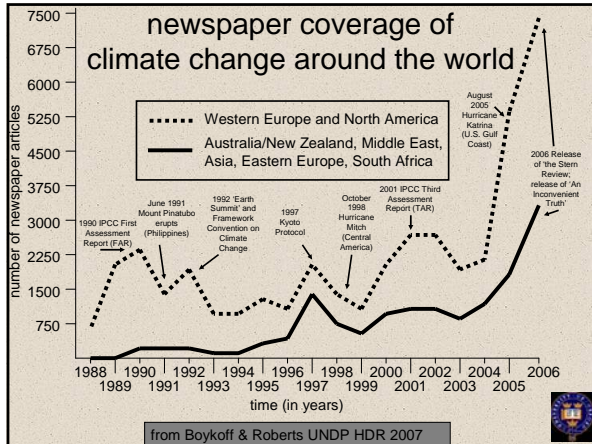
GLOBAL

1900 1950 2000

Year

from Boykoff (2008) Nature Climate Reports





example #1: what does this mean for scientists interacting with the media?  
 language: caution/probability/jargon  
 ↔ crisp commentary/certainty/brevity

the challenge of "translating error bars into ordinary language"  
 ~ from my interview with Henry Pollack *University of Michigan*

"...we [scientists] are a little too unwilling to say things as we see the misuse of information in policy..."  
 ~ from my interview with Malcolm Hughes *University of Arizona*

"climate change is an incremental story that is nearly impossible to fit into the standard template of what we call 'news'"  
 ~ from my interview with Andrew C. Revkin *New York Times*

from Boykoff (2007) *Transactions of the Institute of British Geography*

example #2: what does this mean for journalist & editor interactions?  
 headline & text correspondence

what are we doing/going to do about it?  
 the cultural politics of climate change  
 linking representations & action

- climate change/global warming permeates all aspects of our lives & livelihoods
- need new tools to fix the problem: creativity, innovation & a new generation of thinking/acting
- this global problem requires a global response: international coordination & collaboration
- business and education are two the potentially most effective levers for change
- we must turn awareness to engagement & action
- we must turn political issues into moral & ethical issues

thank you

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