




# ENVS 3521



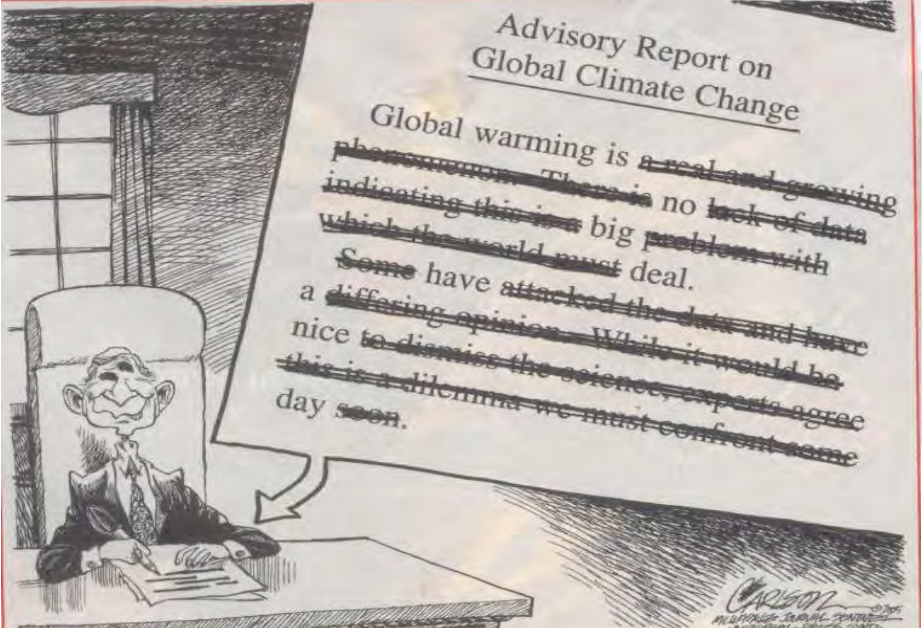
## Climate Politics & Policy



University of Colorado-Boulder ~ Spring 2012  
Component III – March 13

politicization of climate science

## U.S. climate histories



The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults. ~ Alexis de Tocqueville

### a military-climate-industry complex

→ e.g. General Eisenhower and war planning (1945)

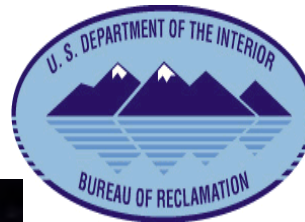
→ e.g. ‘An abrupt climate change scenario and its implications for United States national security’ (2003)

### National Academy of Sciences (NAS) (from 1863)

“We are just now beginning to realize that the atmosphere is not a dump of unlimited capacity, but we do not yet know what the atmosphere’s capacity is” (from 1966 report)

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## the greatest environmental advocate in U.S. Presidential history (?)



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negotiating the branches in the 90s –  
sawing off one’s own perch?



e.g. proposed BTU energy tax

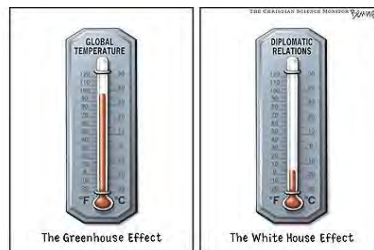
e.g.: ‘flexible mechanisms’



e.g.: 1997 U.S. Senate

Byrd-Hagel Resolution:

voted 95-0 against Kyoto Protocol ratification without commitments from developing nations



Bennett, *Christian Science Monitor*

negotiating the branches in the 00s –  
further sawing?



withdrawal from Kyoto Protocol (April 2001)

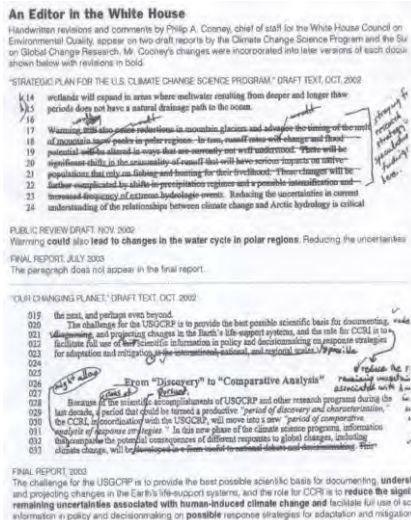
voluntary GHG ‘intensity’  
reductions plan (Feb 2002)



Asia-Pacific Partnership for  
Clean Development and  
Climate (July 2005)



## an example US climate science-policy interactions



*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*

from *The New York Times* (June 2005)

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## top themes in today's readings



### Schneider & Mastrandrea – Chapter 15

#### *Risk, Uncertainty & Assessing Dangerous Climate Change*

- Risk = consequence x probability (p. 163)
- Dangers of Type I and Type II errors (p. 164) → links to the 'precautionary principle'
- Special Report on Emissions Scenarios (SRES) (p. 165)

### Leiserowitz – Chapter 16

#### *Risk Perceptions and Behavior*

- American risk perceptions (p. 179)
- *Interpretive Communities* and 'naysayer interpretive communit[ies]' (p. 182-183)



contemporary climate governance in the three US branches



“...to achieve real emissions reductions, a variety of tools – carrots, sticks, and education – are required” ~ Gore & Robinson (p. 152 in Selin & Vanderveer)



climate governance in the executive: the EPA and fuel standards



**1975: Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards first adopted**

- tiered system between cars and light trucks
- currently approx 24 mpg across US automobile fleet

**2007: Bush plan – ‘The Energy Independence and Security Act’**

- increase CAFÉ standard to 35 mpg by 2020
- but kept a tiered system in tact with categories 1-6 and exemptions
- first CAFÉ improvements since 1975 establishment

**2009-present: Obama plans**

- also increase CAFÉ standard to ~ 35 mpg but by 2016
- closed light-duty truck loophole
- ‘Presidential Memorandum’ to include medium- and heavy-duty trucks by 2014

Obama’s Projected Fuel Economy Standard (mpg)	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Passenger Cars	33.6	34.4	35.2	36.4	38.0
Light Trucks	25.0	25.6	26.2	27.1	28.3
Combined Cars & Trucks	29.8	30.6	31.4	32.6	34.1



2008 – present: National Academy of Sciences Presidential  
Advisory Committee: **America's Climate Choices**



**“Policy advice, based on science, to  
guide the nation's response to  
climate change”**

Four panels of experts assembling  
consensus reports:

1. Limiting the Magnitude of Future Climate Change
2. Adapting to the Impacts
3. Advancing the Science
4. Informing Effective Decisions and Actions



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**activity #2 – climate communications**



→ groups of 4 and play the role of climate communicators.

→ develop plans for a 30-60 second commercial: connecting ‘climate policy and politics’ to **zero waste/waste reduction practices on the CU-Boulder campus through this prompt: ‘our atmosphere is a sewer’**

The product will be a film script of **no more than 2000 words** (roughly the equivalent of a 30 second spot), **due Thursday, April 12th**.

This script needs to be broken down as follows:

- up to 500 words summarizing the main point(s) of the commercial; and
- up to 1500 words for the script itself

When you turn in the project description/script on April 12<sup>th</sup>, your group will give a **short presentation** describing your film commercial, also briefly touching on your motivation and rationale.