

Please select ONE of the following as a prompt for your term paper and write no more than eight double-spaced pages. The most successful essays will draw heavily from class readings, our classroom discussions, and your own knowledge about environmental problems and solutions. Please cite your sources using parenthetical in-text citations and include a “works cited” page.

*You must reflect on and build upon ideas from class to get credit for your work. You need not draw upon all our readings, but think through the relevance of them all and make sure that you are not relying on just a few. **Your grade depends on you making explicit use of our class readings. Make them an explicit part of your analysis.***

Your essay is due on Canvas at 3pm on Dec 5, 2016. I encourage you to get an early start on this assignment, and seek out my feedback on early drafts and outlines in office hours.

1) Democratic and progressive pundits like to argue that contemporary Republicans are anti-science. In 2013, [Mischa Fishcer wrote in The Atlantic](#) that the political left in this country is just as “anti-science” as the political right. It is an interesting piece, and worth a read. Analyze it: Do you agree with his characterization of what constitutes being anti-science on the left? On the right? Are the examples he sites on the two sides equivalent? Enviros, in his characterization, are anti-science. Are you okay with that assertion?

Full article available here:

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2013/11/the-republican-party-isnt-really-the-anti-science-party/281219/>

2) Representative Lamar Smith (R, Tex, 21st dist, Chairman House Science Committee) introduced, and the House subsequently passed, the Secret Science Reform Act of 2015. I have pasted in the Library of Congress summary of the bill below, but see <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/114/hr1030/summary> for links to the full text (only 3pp) and voting history.

Analyze this bill based upon what you know from this class. What is the logic? Is this a good or a bad idea?

Summaries for the Secret Science Reform Act of 2015

Library of Congress Summary

The summary below was written by the Congressional Research Service, which is a nonpartisan division of the Library of Congress.

3/18/2015--Passed House amended.

(This measure has not been amended since it was reported to the House on March 2, 2015. The summary of that version is repeated here.)

Secret Science Reform Act of 2015

Section2 -

This bill amends the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act of 1978 to prohibit the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from proposing, finalizing, or disseminating a covered action unless all scientific and technical information relied on to support such action is the best available science, specifically identified, and publicly available in a manner sufficient for independent analysis and substantial reproduction of research results.

A covered action includes a risk, exposure, or hazard assessment, criteria document, standard, limitation, regulation, regulatory impact analysis, or guidance.

Scientific and technical information includes:

- (1) materials, data, and associated protocols necessary to understand, assess, and extend conclusions;
- (2) computer codes and models involved in the creation and analysis of the information;
- (3) recorded factual materials; and
- (4) detailed descriptions of how to access and use the information.

This Act may not be construed as requiring the EPA to disseminate scientific and technical information, or superseding any nondiscretionary statutory requirement.

The EPA may not spend more than \$1 million per fiscal year on carrying out this Act.

3) Writing in The Honest Broker about the decision to invade Iraq, Roger Pielke, Jr argues: "The Bush Administration used information like an Issue Advocate seeking to carefully select and shape information that best supported the political agenda that it had already decided on" (p. 109).

In many essay prompts, we ask students to begin the writing process by defining a thesis. The next step, typically, is then to seek out information that supports that thesis. Is this any different than the process that the Bush Administration used? If it is the same, can you defend that practice? Should professors change the way we teach you to write essays?

4) Should nominees for science advisory panels be asked their political affiliations? Why, or why not? Pielke (p147) offers his direct thoughts, but other authors have insights that you should consider as well.

Graduate students: Use the content of this course, alongside your other outside readings, to write a section of your thesis or a background paper justifying/informing your thesis topic. This can be in the format that is most beneficial to you. Come talk with me.