



Bergen Summer
Research School

› Global Development Challenges

BSRS2011: Norms, Values, Language and Culture 20th June – 1st July 2011

PhD-Research Course: *Climate change narratives: language use in the circulation of climate knowledge*

Course leader: [Trine Dahl](#), Professor, Dept of professional and intercultural communication, NHH

Deputy course leader: [Kjersti Fløttum](#), Professor, Dept of foreign languages, UiB

Invited course leader: [Michal Krzyzanowski](#), Senior Research Fellow, Dept of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University County College, UK

In collaboration with: [Professor Gisela Bøhm](#) (Dept of Psychosocial Science, UiB), [Professor Helge Drange](#) (Geophysical Institute, UiB), [Senior scientist Trond Martin Dokken](#) (Uni Bjerknnes), [Associate professor Elisabeth Eide](#) (Dept of Information Science and Media Studies, UiB & Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science, HiO), [Associate professor Jill M. Walker Rettberg](#) (Dept of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies, UiB) and [Dr. Andrew Salway](#) (Uni Digital).

Course description, goals and objectives

Climate change is a major global challenge which affects both advanced and less advanced economies. The complexities and uncertainties of climate change are presented, circulated and interpreted in a large variety of text and talk. Thus, the circulation of knowledge among scientists, media, politicians, activists and the general public constitutes an additional challenge. In the communication of climate change, language may seem to represent a limitation. However, language is also a resource, which may be used or misused in the circulation of the many different climate change 'stories'. This course will focus on how the IPCC and other research-based organisations present climate change knowledge and on how this knowledge is received, interpreted and responded to in both mainstream and social media, in political and NGO contexts as well as by the general public. Different perspectives from different parts of the world (in a global North versus global South perspective) will be included. The course will deal with the climate change challenge in a multidisciplinary perspective, and in this way hopes to enhance our understanding of both the complexities and uncertainties inherent in the climate change issues themselves as well as in the various communication contexts dealing with these issues.

Outline of lectures

Helge Drange: Global warming in perspective: Background - past, present and future climate changes - opportunities and challenges

An overview will be given of the science and key observations describing key features of the global climate system. The overview will be given based on past changes, the present day situation, and scenarios for the following 100 years. Some of the key challenges will be highlighted, like possible changes in extreme weather, drought, sea level rise, with some discussion of possible impacts on societies and ecosystems. The talk will also discuss some of the discussions and misunderstandings among non-experts and (a few) experts, and possible ways forward.

Elisabeth Eide: Global Climate - Local Journalism: Media making sense of Climate Summits

This lecture draws upon theories of public spheres and discusses the concepts of global commons and the emergence of a global public sphere combined with a presentation of empirical studies. The analysis of media coverage of the climate summits in Bali (2007) and Copenhagen (2009) will be the central case study. Results from a transnational media research project involving researchers from 18 countries across the world will be presented and discussed. The degree of domestication of journalistic coverage of world problems and events is an important part of this, as is the way media represent the new emerging global order. Helped by theories of framing, important likenesses and differences between the news coverage monitored will be explored.

Jill Walker Rettberg: Social Media and Climate Change Narratives: How are stories about climate change shared and retold in social media such as blogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube?

In social media, your first audience is your friends and followers, but they may republish or share what you have published, with or without modifications, and a message first sent by an individual may eventually reach millions of people. The stories you see in social media are likewise determined by the friends and others you choose to follow, which can lead to an insular echo chamber effect where you are never confronted by different opinions, but can also lead to the exchange of very specific expertise. What are the consequences for our perceptions of climate change?

Andrew Salway: Who says What about Climate Change? A corpus linguistics approach
Information and opinions about climate change are expressed in a wide variety of texts, e.g. scientific articles, policy documents, newspaper stories, blog posts and tweets, most of which are available in digital form. This talk will consider the potential affordances and limitations for applying automated text analysis techniques to massive collections of such texts, with regards to investigating how information and opinions about climate change are presented and how they spread.

Michal Krzyzanowski: The Discourse-Historical Approach in Critical Discourse Analysis

The aim of this lecture is to make students familiar with theoretical foundations as well as key concepts and terms in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). In particular, the lecture highlights one of the major trends in CDA i.e. its Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), widely known for diachronic analyses of different instances of public discourses across a range of contexts. The lecture will start from presenting the development of applied linguistics and (critical)

discourse studies in the last fifty years. Offering an insight into both classic and the more recent theories of language and discourse in society, the lecture will move to explore 'basic notions' of DHA such as, inter alia: discourse, text, genre, context, intertextuality or interdiscursivity. Then, students will become acquainted with the pathways of analysis in DHA as well as with analytical application of its key notions to interdisciplinary research of social change. The lecture will point to the viability of DHA in studying discourses of media, politics and other fields comprising the increasingly complex, late-modern public domains.

Michal Krzyzanowski: Crisis, Threat or Risk? Analysing European Discourses on Climate Change in a Comparative Perspective

This lecture aims to present the applicability of CDA's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) to a comparative study of constructions and framings of climate change in contemporary public discourses. The lecture will start from highlighting different conceptions of the public sphere and the role therein of discourses from within such social fields as politics, media, economy, etc. Following a presentation of theoretical underpinnings of such relevant concepts as 'crisis' or as 'threat-' or 'risk-society', the lecture will focus on the omnipresence of conceptual frames of 'crisis' 'threat' or 'risk' in contemporary public discourses. It will then show inasmuch the discursive processes associated with constructing/using those frames in relation to a range of social, political and economic phenomena are also salient in discursive constructions of climate change across a range of contexts (in both Europe and elsewhere across the globe, e.g. the USA). Here, following a brief introduction into relevant analytical procedures in DHA (incl. the so-called discourse conceptual analysis), the lecture will draw on analyses of such genres as EU policies, media texts and speeches of politicians and other public figures. The presented analyses will help drawing comparison between specifically-European and other ways of framing and perceiving climate change in public discourses.

Kjersti Fløttum: Climate change narratives through explicit and implicit voices

The notion of "climate change narratives" will be introduced, and illustrated by a sample of scientific, media and political discourses taken from different geographical parts of the world (North and South). Questions related to the presence of explicit and implicit (or hidden) voices as well as expressions of uncertainty will be emphasised, with a theoretical point of departure in approaches of dialogism and linguistic polyphony (multivoicedness).

Trine Dahl: Knowledge claims in climate change narratives

Climate change knowledge, with a basis in various natural science disciplines, circulates among many different audiences and in a number of different textual shapes. The linguistic realization of such knowledge claims when they appear in various rhetorical contexts will be focused on. With a basis in rhetoric of science and the notion of text as interaction, issues such as knowledge asymmetry, trust-building and risk communication will be discussed.

Gisela Böhm: Perception and understanding of climate change

Climate change involves many uncertainties and complexities with respect to the natural processes but also regarding social and political aspects. This part of the course addresses the question of how uncertainty and complexity affect people's understanding and their reactions to climate change. For example, what do people know about climate change, what is their understanding of the involved processes, how do they react to climate change (e.g., emotionally), and what are their general attitudes towards climate change?

Targeted students, prerequisites and ECTS

Climate change narratives: language use in the circulation of climate knowledge welcomes PhD students doing research within all the disciplines represented in the course as well as in other fields dealing with aspects of climate change.

The course literature, which will be available by 1 May, must be read prior to the course. Group work and presentations will be set during the course. Students are required to attend all

sessions of the course and participation is also mandatory in the plenary events of the overall programme of the Bergen Summer Research School 2011.

3 ECTS will be awarded upon the successful participation and completion of the full programme.

Required readings (as at May 4, 2011)

NB! Please note that a new version of this list with a few more titles will be available shortly

- Biber, D., Conrad, S. and Reppen R. 1998. *Corpus Linguistics, Investigating Language Structure and Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-9.
- Böhm, G. and Tanner, C. In press. Risk perception. In L. Steg, A. E. van den Berg, & J. I. M. de Groot (Eds.), *Environmental psychology: An introduction*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Eide, E. and Kunelius, R. 2010. Domesticating Global Moments. In: E. Eide, E., R.Kunelius, & V. Kumpu (Eds.), *Global Climate, Local Journalisms. A Transnational Study of how Media Make Sense of Climate Summits*. Dortmund: Projekt Verlag
- Fahnestock, J. 1986. Accommodating science: The rhetorical life of scientific facts. *Written Communication* 3, 275-296.
- Fløttum, K. and Dahl, T. Forthcoming. Climate change narratives: scientific claims in a policy setting. To appear in: *Fachsprache –International Journal of Specialized Communication*, December 2011.
- Fløttum, K. 2005. The self and the others - polyphonic visibility in research articles. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 15 (1), 29-44.
- Garvin, T. 2001. Analytical paradigms: The epistemological distances between scientists, policy makers, and the public. *Risk Analysis* 21 (3), 443-455.
- Hulme, M. 2008. The conquering of climate: discourses of fear and their dissolution. *The Geographical Journal* 174 (1), 5-16.
- Leskovec, Backstrom and Kleinberg. 2009. Meme-tracking and the Dynamics of the News Cycle. *Procs. KDD '09*. Sections 1 and 5.
- Michel et al. 2011. Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books. *Science* 331 (6014), 176-182.
- Newell, B. R., Andrew, J., Pitman, A. J. 2010. The psychology of global warming. *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 91 (8), 1003-1014.
- Reisigl, M. and Wodak, R. 2009. The Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA). In: R. Wodak and M. Meyer. (Eds.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (2nd Edition). London: Sage, 87-121.
- Reynolds, T. W., Bostrom, A., Read, D. and Morgan, M. G. 2010. Now what do people know about global climate change? Survey studies of educated laypeople. *Risk Analysis* 30, 1520-1538.
- The IPCC. 2007. Summary for Policymakers. IPCC Working Group I report (4th Assessment Report).
- The National Climatic Data Center. 2009. The State of the Climate. NOAA, U.S. Dept of Commerce.
- The Royal Society. 2010. Climate change: a summary of the science.
- Van Dijk, T.A. 2007. Editor's Introduction: The Study of Discourse: An Introduction. In: T.A. van Dijk (Ed.). *Discourse Studies*. Vol.1. London: Sage, xix-xlii.
- Weber, E. U. 2010. What shapes perceptions of climate change? *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 1, 332-342.