

## Make-up task for September 26

# Framing the Apocalypse: Analysing *The Collapse of Western Civilization*

On September 26, we had a seminar reflecting on the course book *The Collapse of Western Civilization. A View From the Future* by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway. If you could not attend the seminar, you need to submit this make-up task until October 16<sup>th</sup> at 17:00 (5pm) on Studentportalen instead. Answer the questions below and give references to the book as well as the mandatory readings for the week in the Course Reader.

1. What are the main reasons that humanity couldn't prevent what happened, according to the book? (ca. 150 words)
2. Name a quote from the book, a scene that sticks with you, or a discussion question that you would like to share. Explain why you chose that quote/scene/question. (ca. 150 words)
3. What elements of 'tragic' and 'comic' apocalypse can you find in the book? What do you find good and what do you find problematic about the way they talk about the apocalypse? (ca. 250 words)



Foust & O'Shannon Murphy (2009) differentiate two ways how we frame the dystopic future of our planet in times of climate change: 1. The 'tragic apocalypse' frame portrays climate change as a matter of fate. The world will soon end, polar bears are dying, cities are flooded and there is nothing we as humanity can do about it. 2. The 'comic apocalypse' frame portrays it as an issue that we can act towards. It assigns responsibility, gives clear time frame of what will happen when, if we don't act - and it sees climate change as an issue that affects some more than others.

4. Whom do the authors of "The Collapse of the Western Civilization" see as responsible for climate change? Do you agree/disagree with them? (ca. 250 words)



Swyngedouw (2010) criticises that climate change is often portrayed as a 'global humanitarian cause' ('us' as humanity vs. our enemy CO2). He argues that this framing is harmful, because it leads us away from thinking about climate change as an issue that has political actors who are responsible for it (= the biggest emitters of carbon emissions, Western countries). This 'depoliticized' way of framing climate change claims that there is a consensus around climate change, but actually this consensus does not prevent global warming.

5. How do you think we should frame climate change? Give at least three guidelines that you think media should follow, when talking about climate change, and why. Refer to Lakoff (2010) in your answer. (ca. 250 words)

Polar Bear Icon made by Freepik; CO2 Icon made by Webalys