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## Climate Change and Vaccines: Distrust of Science in Politics and the Media

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# NATALIE MONTALBANO (Health Studies)

## Climate Change and Vaccines: Distrust of Science in Politics and the Media

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

Distrust in science and the scientific process has increased significantly over the last fifty years, and this distrust is particularly apparent in the fields of climate change and vaccination. Climate change, a relatively new scientific issue, has become one of the hottest topics discussed in both U.S and world politics. The existence and real threat of anthropogenic global warming was publicly declared by National Geographic in 2004, but climate scientists had acknowledged that humans were causing the warming of our Earth as early as the 1980's. Vaccines, despite being safe and effective in curbing the spread of infectious diseases, have also become highly debated and a growing number of persons worldwide now distrust vaccination. In trying to discredit the scientific backbone of both climate change and vaccination, people have developed similar arguments and have unfortunately used both politics and social media to their advantage. This paper will explore shared trajectories of efforts to challenge trust in scientific research supporting climate change and vaccines and explain how politics and the media influenced the public's ability to receive accurate information on each topic. In my research I have also compiled a timeline that demonstrates how deeply political both topics are and why social media has only exacerbated the distrust in fundamental science. I will also propose several solutions to combat the epidemic of distrust in science and what we can do to further scientific discovery and success.