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## How To Make Ethical Principles More Influential In Climate Change Policy Formation

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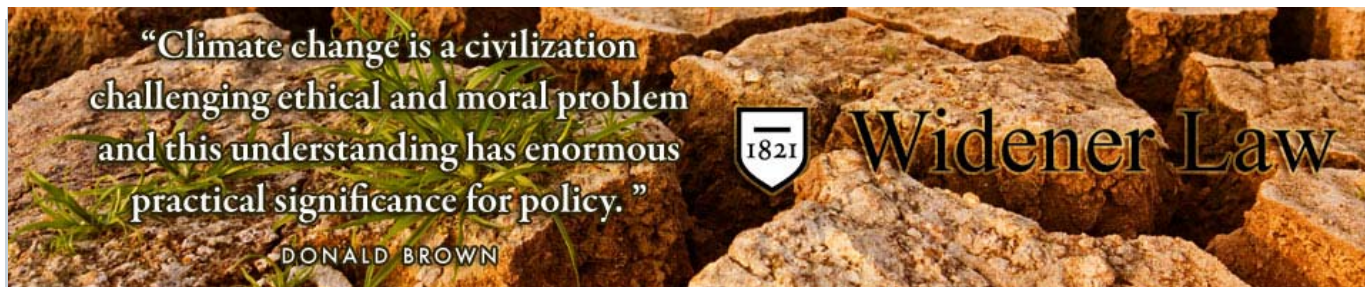
Item Type	Preprint
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Publisher	Widener University School of Law
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# Ethics and Climate

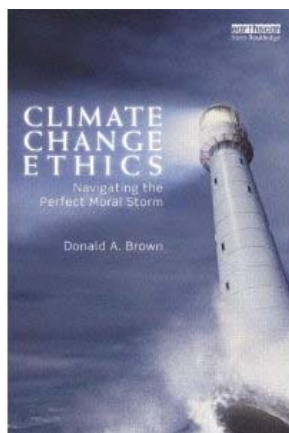
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## How To Make Ethical Principles More Influential In Climate Change Policy Formation: A New Book, Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm, Climate Change Ethics



Many observers of climate change policy developments around the world agree that climate change is a civilization-challenging ethical problem, yet most governments have utterly failed to enact climate change policies consistent with what ethics and justice would require of them. For instance, nations continue to approach international climate negotiations as if their economic interests alone are a legitimate guide for domestic climate change

policy formation rather than their ethical responsibilities to others.

Yet climate change is obviously a civilization challenging ethical problem because:

- High emitting nations and individuals are putting poor people around the world at greatest risk of harm, people who have done little to cause the problem.
- The harms to the victims are not mere inconveniences but potentially catastrophic losses of life or damages to ecological systems on which life depends.
- Most of the victims in poor countries can do little to protect themselves from harsh climate impacts including petitioning their governments to protect them; their best hope is that high emitters will see that they have duties to the victims to lower their greenhouse gas emissions.

A new book ***Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm: Climate Change Ethics***, by Donald A. Brown, Scholar in Residence, Sustainability Ethics and Law at Widener University School of Law has been published that examines the major ethical questions raised by human-induced global warming, looks at how these ethical issues have been mostly ignored in a thirty-five year debate about climate change, and makes recommendations for getting greater traction for ethical guidance in climate change policy formation in the years ahead.

Most climate change ethics literature has been focused on analyzing specific ethical

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issues entailed by climate change. Because different ethical theories may reach different conclusions about what should be done in respect to many of these issues, much of the existing climate change ethics literature provides little practical guidance to policy-makers about what should be done in developing policy. Yet by following positions actually taken by disputants in a thirty-year climate change policy debate, ***Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm*** makes it clear that most of the arguments made in opposition to climate change policies have been clearly ethically bankrupt even in regard to issues about which different ethical theories would reach different conclusions about what should be done. And so it is easy to spot and clearly identify injustice of the positions that governments and individuals have taken on climate change issues even for those issues about which determining what perfect justice requires may be difficult. For this reason, ***Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm*** argues climate change ethicists should be more engaged in policy formation rather than focus exclusively on theoretical ethical issues if they desire to give ethical principles more influence in climate change policy formation.

***Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm*** also makes it clear that despite a thirty-five year policy debate about climate change in the United States, neither the US press nor disputants in the controversy have identified the obvious civilization-challenging ethical questions raised by climate change. This had been the case because arguments in support of and in opposition to climate change have mostly been framed as "value-neutral" economic and scientific controversies, a framing which hides the obvious ethical questions. For this reason, ***Navigating the Perfect Moral Storm*** demonstrates that there is an important practical need for the public to turn up the volume on the ethical dimensions of climate change. The book ends with specific recommendations on how to do this.

The book can be ordered with a 20 % discount and free shipping at:  
<http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415625722/>

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November 13, 2012 at 4:21 am      No comments      Donald A. Brown

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