

**Abstract Submission for the 11th INTERNATIONAL MEETING on
STATISTICAL CLIMATOLOGY**

Session: Bayesian statistics for climate research (Seung-Ki Min, Jonathan Rougier)

Title: Are Current Flaws in Bayesian Approaches to Climate Projection Fatal?

Leonard A Smith

London School of Economics and Pembroke College, Oxford

L.Smith@lse.ac.uk

Bayesian approaches to the statistical analysis of observational data relevant to climate science offer tremendous advantages both to the science and to decision makers. When applied to climate projections with an eye to supplying conditional probabilities for adaptation or mitigation, on the other hand, in-practice Bayesian approaches can be expected to yield false confidence and poor decision support. Fatal flaws in currently deployed methods, such as the estimation of an irrelevant "discrepancy" term, are illustrated in a simple celestial mechanics example. Here an ensemble of Newtonian models is deployed in an application solvable given the theory of general relativity, but in which the discrepancy term estimated from an ensemble of Newtonian models yields false over-confidence and poor decision support. A relevant point here is that one may be able to identify the estimated discrepancy as irrelevant long before one can rectify the physics. The empirical inadequacy of the Newtonian model was identified 50 years before the proposal of general relativity;