

# Investigating the New Abnormal

**W**ildfires devastated California in 2017 and 2018. When asked whether this situation should be considered “the new normal,” Governor Jerry Brown replied, “This is the new abnormal.” Prior experience will have little predictive value when climate change dramatically alters innumerable influences on the environment.

In 2018, two Berkeley graduate students supported by CLAS and the Tinker Foundation looked at climate change from different perspectives unified by a common theme: this “new abnormal” is one of devastating extremes. From macro variables like the strength of hurricanes and the persistence of drought, they examine effects on a smaller level, in the daily lives of farmers in Central America and frogs in the Andes. In both cases, the implications span the planet.



“This is not the new normal; this is the new abnormal.”

— California Governor Jerry Brown on the Camp Fire, November 10, 2018.

Fighting the Camp Fire in northern California, 2018.  
(Photo courtesy of Pacific Southwest Region 5, U.S. Forest Service.)