Post -truth: Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2016

Based on work by Dan Kahan at Yale University. Brendan Nyhan at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Stephan Lewandowsky, a psychologist at the University of Bristol, UK.
https://theconversation.com/the-post-truth-era-of-trump-is-just-what-nietzsche-predicted-69093
Seeing reason: How to change minds in a 'post-fact' world by Dan Jones in New Scientist 30 Nov 2016

1) Going round the group what examples do we have of post-truth?

2) So what do we mean by post truth?

3) What do we understand by the word "expert"?

4) A comedy sketch in the USA Donald Trump is being interviewed by Erin a network interviewer…
"Why are you defending her, Erin?" Donald asks the network interviewer in the sketch. "Are you a lez with her? Because I've heard from a lot of people that you're lezzing her?" "That doesn't even make sense." "It doesn't matter, Erin, because I said it. And now half the country believes it."

5) Take climate change. The science here is unambiguous: climate change is happening and human activity is driving it. Yet despite this, and the risks it poses to our descendants, many people still deny it is happening and it is split along political lines. Many like to think this is a product of scientific illiteracy but it has been shown that among conservatives it is the most scientifically literate who are least likely to accept climate change.
When it comes to climate change, "you can say 'All the scientists have made a mistake', which is a hard sell, but it's much easier to say 'They're all corrupt'

6) Taking poisonous partisan politics out of factual issues like climate change is part of what Kahan calls "detoxifying the science-communication environment". A major pollutant of this ecosystem, argues Lewandowsky, is the influence of dark money in politics " Dark money" - money from lobbyists that skew the playing field to their advantage.

7) According to Kahan the scientifically curious rather than scientifically literate are more likely to see the picture which most closely follows the facts.

8) What do we think "truth" is?
In a world of *rational empiricists*, facts and a careful weighing of the evidence would determine which claims we accept and which we reject. But we are biased. In the real world of flesh-and-blood humans, reasoning often starts with established conclusions and works back to find "facts" that support what we already believe. And if we're presented with facts that contradict our beliefs, we find clever ways to dismiss them.
According to Nietzsche the idea of an absolute, objective truth is a philosophical hoax, the only alternative is a position called "*perspectivism*" – the idea there is no one objective way the world is, only perspectives on what the world is like. According to *perspectivism*, we agree on "facts" like Paris is the capital of France not because these propositions are "objectively true", but by virtue of sharing the same perspective.

9) Is cynicism the answer?

10) Nietzsche's answer is ..
"The more eyes, different eyes, we know how to bring to bear on one and the same matter, that much more complete will our "concept" of this matter, our "objectivity" be."

11) So is there any hope for facts? Restoring their power is not going to be easy. But despite the challenges, Nyhan cautions against despondency. "It's important not to overstate what's different about today from the past, when there were other ways of circulating misinformation," he says. Although slower than today's instant-access 24-hour news and all-consuming social media, they still allowed politicians to introduce false claims into the national debate.

"There was no Golden Age of democracy when facts dominated public opinion or political discourse," says Nyhan. "But we've survived nonetheless".