

Geography 3443: Energy and Power Course Outline: Winter 2019

Course calendar description

This course investigates the political ecology of energy. Issues of politics and power, social equity, and environmental impact are examined through Canadian and international case studies. The concept of 'energy justice' is used both to critically assess current patterns of energy production and use and to explore more sustainable possibilities. (0.5 course)

Overview

Energy pervades everyday life, but its origins often remain hidden from view. Refilling a fuel tank may remind us that fossil fuels are finite – but the challenges faced by communities where oil is extracted, and the political and economic power driving the industry, are harder to see. The pooled nature of the electrical grid obscures whether it draws on coal, nuclear, hydro or wind – and the impacts linked to these sources. In many parts of the world fuelwood and charcoal remain dominant sources of household energy, with implications for forest cover, gender and health.

In short, patterns of energy use are infused with questions of social and environmental justice. *Who benefits most from current energy systems? Who bears the costs? Are biofuels sustainable? How do climate change politics shape energy policies? Is nuclear energy clean energy? How far can energy efficiency take us?* Through these and other questions, this course explores impacts of energy production, equity issues in energy distribution, and the political economy shaping energy decisions.

The course uses an energy justice framework to assess a series of case studies. Students explore real-life controversies over energy projects through a series of mock energy board hearings. In addition to problems, we consider possibilities for – and examples of – more just and sustainable energy systems.

Place and Time

Lecture: Monday, 12:30-2:20, SSC 1004*

Tutorial: Tuesday, 11:30-12:20, SSC 1004

*On Hearing Days class will be held in the Law Building, Moot Court Room. See the schedule below.

Teaching team

Role	Name	Email	Office	Office hours
Instructor	Dr. Carol Hunsberger	chunsber@uwo.ca	SSC 2409	Mon 2:30-4:00
TA	Awâsis (Cortney) Dakin	cdakin2@uwo.ca	SSC 1430	By appointment

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Explain the features and theoretical foundations of 'energy justice';
- Apply an energy justice framework to critically assess the impacts of different energy sources (e.g. oil, coal, nuclear, wind, solar, hydro, biofuels) and specific energy projects;
- Grapple with how to reconcile diverse values and priorities in resource decision-making; and
- Express well-supported arguments about how energy systems could better address social and environmental justice challenges, orally and in writing.



Format

3 hours per week. Lectures will be interactive and involve group discussions, debates and other activities. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned readings and prepared to take an active role.

Prerequisites: Third or fourth year status at the University. Senate regulation: “Prerequisite checking is the student’s responsibility. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

Readings

Course text: Sovacool, B. 2013. *Energy and Ethics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
Additional readings will be provided via the course OWL site.

Class schedule (may be adjusted, with notice)

Week	Monday class	Tuesday class	Due dates	Readings
Jan 7	Course overview	Set up hearings		Ch. 1
Jan 14	Foundations of energy justice	Justice activity		Schlosberg
Jan 21	Availability and affordability	Prep Day		Ch. 2, 3
Jan 28	Hearing 1: Moot Court Room	Follow-up Day	Stakeholder work (Mon)	
Feb 4	Due process, transparency	Judgment Day	Panel, media work (Tues)	Ch. 4, 5
Feb 11	Equity within generations	Prep Day	Proposal (Mon)	Ch. 7
Feb 18	NO CLASS: READING WEEK			
Feb 25	Hearing 2: Moot Court Room	Follow-up Day	Stakeholder work (Mon)	
Mar 4	Equity across generations	Judgment Day	Panel, media work (Tues)	Video
Mar 11	Prudence and responsibility	Prep Day		Ch. 6, 9
Mar 18	Hearing 3: Moot Court Room	Follow-up Day	Stakeholder work (Mon)	
Mar 25	Tough questions	Judgment Day	Panel, media work (Tues)	TBD
Apr 1	On hearings: mock and real	Essay help		TBD
Apr 8	Hopeful examples	Feedback	Final paper (Mon)	Ch. 10, D’Arcy



Methods of evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Mock hearing: Stakeholder role	30%	Jan 28, Feb 25 or Mar 18
Mock hearing: Panel role	10%	Feb 5, Mar 5 or Mar 26
Mock hearing: Media role	20%	Feb 5, Mar 5 or Mar 26
In-class participation	10%	Ongoing
Paper proposal	10%	Feb 11
Final paper	20%	Apr 8

Mock hearings

Throughout the term there will be three mock energy board hearings during class time, each concerning a different proposed energy project. The class will be split into three roles:

- 1) Stakeholders making submissions to the panel;
- 2) Panelists evaluating whether or not the project should proceed;
- 3) Members of the media covering the issue.

Each student will play each role once. The instructor will act as timekeeper and chair. **Attendance is mandatory on the dates of the hearings and associated work sessions.**

Stakeholders will be evaluated individually based on a written submission (20%) and an oral presentation (10%). Panelists will be evaluated as a group based on a written report explaining their decision and the reasons for it (10%). Members of the media will be evaluated in pairs based on a piece of media coverage they produce (20%). Detailed instructions for each role are provided in a separate file.

Research paper (10% proposal + 20% final report = 30% total)

The rest of the course grade will be based on a research paper, broken into two parts. The first part is a proposal outlining key arguments and providing an annotated bibliography (10%). The second step is the full paper (20%). More detailed instructions and expectations are provided in a separate file.

In-class participation (10%)

During most lectures (but not on Hearing Days), I will ask you to write a short answer to a question or perform an activity. The questions and activities will draw on assigned readings or topics discussed in class. Each will be worth 1-2% of your final grade. You can only earn these participation marks if you are present in class.

Submission Policy and Late Policy

Material will be handed in at the beginning of class or lab on the due date. Media reports should be uploaded to OWL (Dropbox area) the night before Judgment Day so I can test and cue up the files before class. The penalty is 5% per day for material handed in late (weekends count as one day; the clock “starts” at the beginning of class/lab on the due date). Please print reports double-sided on letter size paper and staple them. Do not use folders or covers. Late assignments should be placed in the drop box outside SSC 2322 with the course name, instructor’s name and TA’s name on the front page.

Additional Information

Mental Health: If you or someone you know is experiencing distress, there are resources here at Western to assist you. Please visit [this site](#) for more information.

Medical Issues: See the [UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and a downloadable SMC](#). Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for missed exams and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Students seeking accommodation for missed work worth less than 10% of their final grade should speak with the instructor.

Statement on Electronic Devices: To enhance student engagement and learning I propose a **laptop-free classroom** during lectures. Lecture slides (with blanks to be filled in) will be posted on OWL before class. Please do bring your laptop to tutorials as you may need to do online research or writing.

Accessibility: The Department of Geography strives to provide accessibility to all faculty, staff, students and visitors in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519-661-2147 with any questions regarding accommodation. More information about [“Accessibility at Western”](#) is available.

Academic offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a [Scholastic Offence](#). The most common offense is failing to cite properly. If you quote directly, you must cite the author!

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](#).”

Support Services

[Student Support Services](#)

[Student Development Services](#)

Important Dates

January 7: Classes resume

January 15: Last day to add a second term half course

February 18: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 18 to 22: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

March 7: Last day to drop a second term half course without penalty

April 9: Classes end

April 10: Study day

April 11-30: Examination Period