

## Geography 3443: Energy and Power Course Outline: Winter 2020 (Dec 11 draft version)

### 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 entangled 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 another room: see the schedule below

### Teaching team

Role	Name	Email	Office	Office hours
Instructor	Dr. Carol Hunsberger	<a href="mailto:chunsber@uwo.ca">chunsber@uwo.ca</a>	SSC 2409	Thurs 11-12:30
TA	Awâsis (Cortney) Dakin	<a href="mailto:cdakin2@uwo.ca">cdakin2@uwo.ca</a>	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

Readings will be provided via the course OWL site.

### Class schedule (may be adjusted, with notice)

Week	Monday class	Tuesday class	Due dates
Jan 6	Course overview	Set up hearings	
Jan 13	Foundations of energy justice	Justice activity	
Jan 20	Energy access: Availability and affordability	Prep Day	
Jan 27	<b>Hearing 1: Moot Court Room</b>	Follow-up Day	Stakeholders (Mon)
Feb 3	Process fairness: Who gets to decide?	Judgment Day	Panel, media (Tues)
Feb 10	Spatial equity: Local and global	Prep Day	<b>Proposal (Mon)</b>
Feb 17	NO CLASS: READING WEEK		
Feb 24	<b>Hearing 2: SSC 5220</b>	Follow-up Day	Stakeholders (Mon)
Mar 2	Temporal equity: Past, present, future	Judgment Day	Panel, media (Tues)
Mar 9	Environmental responsibility	Prep Day	
Mar 16	<b>Hearing 3: Moot Court Room</b>	Follow-up Day	Stakeholders (Mon)
Mar 23	Tough questions, hopeful examples	Judgment Day	Panel, media (Tues)
Mar 30	On hearings: mock and real	Course feedback	<b>Final paper (Mon)</b>

## Evaluation

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Mock hearing: Stakeholder role	30%	Jan 27, Feb 24 or Mar 16
Mock hearing: Panel role	10%	Feb 4, Mar 3 or Mar 24
Mock hearing: Media role	20%	Feb 4, Mar 3 or Mar 24
In-class participation	10%	Ongoing
Paper proposal	10%	Feb 10
Final paper	20%	Mar 30

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures and assigned readings. For Western's new [Policy on Accommodation for Illnesses](#) please refer to the Academic [Calendar](#) section on [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#).

### 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 (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)

Students will write an individual 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.

### Participation (10%)

During most classes (but not hearings), I will ask you to provide a written answer to a question or perform a small task. The questions and activities will draw on assigned readings or topics discussed in class. You can only earn in-class participation marks if you are present in class.

### Submission Policy and Late Policy

Hand in material 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. 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 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.

## Requesting Academic Consideration

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, etc.) serious enough to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may request academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) Submitting a [Self-Reported Absence form](#) provided the conditions for submission are met;
- (ii) For [medical absences](#), submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner; or
- (iii) For [non-medical absences](#), submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration. Students should contact their Academic Counselling unit to clarify what documentation is appropriate.

Students seeking academic consideration:

- are advised to consider carefully the implications of delaying handing in work;
- are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (upset stomach) or upsets (argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- **must communicate with their instructors within 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence.

Academic consideration is not normally intended for the following circumstances:

- **Students who require academic accommodation based on an ongoing physical or mental illness (recurring or chronic) or an existing disability.** Students with an ongoing physical illness or mental disorder or an existing disability are responsible, in consultation with their doctors or other health professionals, to determine if they are capable of pursuing their studies and, if so, with what accommodations. Students are expected to seek and arrange reasonable accommodations with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible in accordance with the [Policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disability](#). Students with pre-existing accessibility plans arranged through SAS may not need to provide additional documentation when seeking academic consideration where such request for consideration relates to their disability and where their accessibility plans allow for coursework deferral or deadline extensions.
- **Students who experience high levels of stress related to academic performance** (including completing assignments, taking part in presentations, or writing tests or examinations). Students with academic or exam stress should access supports through [Student Health and Wellness](#) and [Learning Skills Services](#) to deal with this stress in a proactive and constructive manner.

## 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.

**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 refer to someone's ideas, 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 between UWO and [Turnitin.com](#).

### **Support Services**

[Western's Support Services](#)  
[Student Development Centre](#)

### **Important Dates**

January 6: Classes resume

January 10: Last day to add a second term half course

February 17: Family Day – Department Office Closed

February 18-23: Spring Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

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

April 3: Classes end

April 6-26: Examination Period