

University of Guelph
College of Social and Applied Human Sciences
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Web Outline for SOAN 4250 (01): Energy & Society

a) **Course code and title:** SOC 4250 Section 01 Energy & Society

b) **Date of offering:** Wednesdays 19:00-21:50, CRSC 403

c) **Department:** Department of Sociology and Anthropology

d) **Course Instructor:** John R. Ferguson

e) **Course Description:**

Course participants examine ways of understanding the relationship between energy and human society. We consider the societal effects and implications of the use of our primary energy source (food) and changing exogenous energy sources (such as water, animals, wood, wind, animal and plant products, coal, natural gas, oil and “renewable” energy sources such as hydro, solar, wind, geothermal, tidal, biofuels, etc.). We examine the nature of energy itself (with related science and vocabulary) and its various manifestations and concentrations. We take a close look at the Canadian context of energy options and sociological theories of how energy affects social political and economic relations people through the lens of environmental sociology.

The transition from and through various forms of energy (from lower density more diffuse energy sources to more concentrated energy sources and the possibility of moving back again (from fossil fuel to the possibilities for a more sustainable, renewable energy-driven society) will be considered. We will grapple with the globalization of industrial consumerism and the “growth economy” in a context of global climate “weirding,” non renewable materials depletion and economic instability. We will use sociological theories to examine energy use, corporations, states, international organizations and popular ideology, environmental, conservationist initiatives and movements. Important topics include the environmental and social impacts of human energy-use, -waste and –conservation.

f) **Course Format:** Seminar style with some lecturing, student presentations, close use of required texts and use of on-line resources, discussions, media, music and films will be used.

g) **Assessment/Evaluation (subject to revision):**

Assessment Type	%
Participation	~10%
Readings, Annotations, Interactions	~30%
Presentation + Peer Evaluations	~30%
Proposal & Essay	~30%
Total	100%

Note: This web outline is subject to revision.

h) **Readings/resources:**

Available On-Line