



COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Energy and Society
SOC*4250 (01)
Fall 2021

Class: Wednesdays 19:00am–21:50pm

Instructor: Dr. John R. Ferguson
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Course Description

Course participants examine ways of understanding the relationship between human society and the procurement of energy. 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 examined, discussed, and 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.

Required Reading:

Available online through ARES Course Reserves.

Evaluation May Include: Participation, Weekly Assignments, Written Submissions, Quizzes, Presentations, Peer Evaluations, Written Research Paper(s)/Submission(s).

Note: This draft outline is for informational purposes only and may change at the instructor’s discretion. A complete syllabus will be shared during the first class.