

# GEOG 3770 – Geographies of Energy, Environment and Society



Edward Burtynsky - Oil Fields #19a. Belridge, California, USA, 2003

University of Manitoba  
Department of Environment and Geography  
Tues-Thurs 2:30-3:45  
St. John's College 125  
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## Course Objectives:

- (1) To assess, question and complicate the intimate connections between human societies and our energy production and consumption.
- (2) To analyse the social, economic and environmental inequalities that emerge from (and are built into) our energy systems.
- (3) To analyse the legacies of our energy systems at multiple scales – from the local to the global, from the natural to the social, from the micro-organic to the market.
- (4) To consider how our energy pasts and presents might inform our energy futures.

**Course Outline:** The course will be organized into weekly lecture/seminar pairings to create a kind of logic for our semester. Each week will have a lecture during the Tuesday session and a discussion-based seminar during the Thursday session. Each seminary

session will require that every student has prepared for the discussion beforehand – you should have read, analysed and thought critically about the assigned and be prepared to talk about the arguments and evidence at hand. Don't think of these lectures/seminars as self-contained units – there will be a great deal of overlap as we weave our way through the intimate connections and contradictions of energy, environment and society. Topics for the year will focus more generally on the interconnections between: (1) Energy and Environment (2) Energy, Development and Geopolitics; (3) Energy Futures: Renewables and Alternatives; (4) Social Movements and the Contradictions of Public Policy.

**Required Reading:** There is no textbook for this course – instead, we will read and analyse scholarly, newspaper, and popular articles as well as relevant policy documents, more popular media (film, websites, commercials, etc) and industry materials. All required readings are available through the University Library e-journal system or online. Links and pdfs will be provided where appropriate.

**Referencing Style Guide:** Students will be encouraged to choose a citation method that suits their own work. Students are free to choose any method as long as the styled chosen fits an accepted academic format and they are consistent throughout their work. Further instruction and assistance will be provided in class.

### **Course Etiquette**

*What to expect from your professor:* provocative, challenging and informative seminars; wrapping up discussions on time; a willingness to listen to and learn from you; prompt and fair grading of your assignments; timely responses to your questions and comments.

*What I expect from you:* being prepared for class, arriving on time, and not engaging in disruptive behaviour (you can sleep, browse Instagram, talk to friends, and send texts in the many hours when you are not in this class); completing the readings and preparing questions and comments for class discussions; a willingness to listen and learn from your instructors *and* your classmates.

### **Weekly Schedule (Note: Readings subject to change)**

#### **Week 1 – Introductions: What are the human dimensions of energy?**

- Pablo Neruda, *Imperial Oil Co.* (Canto General, 1940)  
<https://analepsis.files.wordpress.com/2016/01/3nerudapoems.pdf>
- “An Open Letter from Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver” *The Globe and Mail* (January 9, 2012) <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/an-open-letter-from-natural-resources-minister-joe-oliver/article4085663/>

#### **Week 2 (Sept 10/12) – Placing Energy in Historical and Global Context**

- Amory Lovins, “Energy Strategy: The Road Not Taken?” *Foreign Affairs* October 1976.
- Kirby Calvert, “From ‘Energy Geography’ to ‘Energy Geographies’” *Progress in Human Geography* 40.1 (2016): 105-125.
- BP, “Statistical Review of World Energy” (2018) & “A Year in World Energy Markets” (2018)

- <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy.html>
- <https://www.bp.com/worldenergystatistics2017>

### **Week 3 (Sept 17 only) – Energy Actors, Energy Externalities**

- Timothy Mitchell, “Carbon Democracy” *Economy and Society* 38.3 (2009): 399-432.
- NOTE: There will be no class on Sept 19.

### **Week 4 (Sept 24/26) – Athabasca: Oil Sands/Tar Sands**

- Toban Black, Stephen D’Arcy, and Tony Weis, eds. *A Line in the Tar Sands: Struggles for Environmental Justice*. Oakland: PM Press, 2014.
- NOTE: You will choose any **TWO** chapters from this book (available as an e-book through the UM Library). Be prepared to briefly outline and discuss the main arguments and evidence of the chosen authors.

### **Week 5 (Oct 1/3) – Scarcity, Peak Oil, Petrostates, Dutch Disease?**

- Matthew Huber, “Enforcing Scarcity: Oil, Violence and the Making of the Market” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 101.4 (2011): 816-826.
- Anna Zalik, “Resource sterilization: reserve replacement, financial risk, and environmental review in Canada’s tar sands” *Environment and Planning A* 47 (2015): 2446-2464.

### **Week 6 (Oct 8/10) – Local Focus: Manitoba Hydro**

- Peter Kulchyski, Ramona Neckoway, Gerald McKay and Robert Buck “The Town that Lost Its Name: The Impact of Hydroelectric Development on Grand Rapids, Manitoba” in *Doing Community Economic Development* edited by John Loxley, Jim Silver and Kathleen Sexsmith (Fernwood, 2007).
- Manitoba Hydro, “Major Projects” <https://www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/>

### **Week 7 (Oct 15/17) – Local Focus 2: Oil/Energy Culture on the Prairies**

- Robert Collins. “The Splash Oil’s Making in Manitoba.” *Maclean’s* (September 29, 1956) <https://archive.macleans.ca/article/1956/9/29/the-splash-oils-making-in-manitoba#!&pid=18>
- Emily Eaton and Simon Enoch. “Oil’s Rural Reach: Social Licence in Saskatchewan’s Oil-Producing Communities.” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 43.1 (2018).

### **Week 8 (Oct 22/24) – Colonial Legacies: Energy, Development and Violence**

- Michael Watts, “Imperial Oil: Anatomy of a Nigerian Oil Insurgency” *Erdkunde* 62.1 (2008): 27-39.

### **Week 9 (Oct 29/31) – Free Week**

- Note: There is no lecture or seminar planned for this week. Instead, we will conduct a ‘workshop’ on important aspects of research and essay writing.

### **Week 10 (Nov 5/7) – Energy in the Global South**

- William Langewiesche, “Jungle Law” *Vanity Fair* (May 2007)  
<http://www.vanityfair.com/politics/features/2007/05/texaco200705>
- Lawrence Wright, “Lithium Dreams: Can Bolivia Become the Saudi Arabia of the Electric Era?” *The New Yorker* (March 22, 2010): 47-59.  
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2010/03/22/lithium-dreams>

### **Week 11– Reading Break**

### **Week 12 (Nov 19/21) – Nuclear Promise, Nuclear Perils**

- Sarah Pritchard, "An Envirotechnical Disaster: Nature, Technology, and Politics at Fukushima," *Environmental History*, 17:2 (2012): 219-243.  
<http://envhis.oxfordjournals.org/content/17/2/219.full.pdf+html>
- Laura J. Martin, “Proving Grounds: Ecological Fieldwork in the Pacific and the Materialization of Ecosystems” *Environmental History* 23 (2018): 567-592.
- [Optional] Gabrielle Hecht, “Nuclear Ontologies” *Constellations* 13:3 (2006): 320-331.

### **Week 13 (Nov 26/28) – Arctic Energy Frontiers in “The New North”**

- Paul Warde, “Constructing Arctic Energy Resources: The Case of the Canadian North, 1921–1980” In N. Wormbs (Ed.), *Competing Arctic Futures: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Springer, 2018): 19-46.
- Elena Wilson Rowe, “Promises, Promises: The Unbuilt Petroleum Environment in Murmansk” *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* 8 (2017): 1-14.
- Mark Nuttall, “Oil and Gas Development in the North: Resource Frontier or Extractive Periphery?” *The Yearbook of Polar Law Online* 2.1 (2010): 225-243.

### **Week 14 (Dec 3/5) – Class Choice!!**

#### **Option A: Media, Protest and Popular Movements Around Energy**

- Readings by Naomi Oreskes, Nick Estes, Winona Laduke

#### **Option B: Rock and Hard Place: Mountaintop Coal Removal**

- Readings by TBD

### **Assignments & Evaluation**

Op-Ed (800-900 Words) – **20% (due Oct 15)**

Major Research Paper/Project (3000 Words min) – **40% (due Dec 3)**

Briefs/Reaction Papers (4 X 5%) – **20% (due 4 times per term)**

Participation – **20% (throughout term)**

**OP-ED Assignment:** This is an ‘opinion editorial’ – common to major newspapers and popular magazines. The term ‘opinion’ is slightly misleading – this is not something off of the top of your head, it is a concise, argumentative and well-researched piece intended for an educated, popular audience. Think of an Environment, Energy and Society topic that 1) you care about; 2) will be relatively simple to research (information on the topic is readily available); and 3) is important for a contemporary audience to understand and/or

pay attention to. Your op-ed idea must address some aspect of energy geographies – topic options are broad, but I strongly suggest confirming with me beforehand. Full handouts will be distributed in mid-September in class.

**Major Research Paper:** You have a choice between three final assignment formats: a term paper, a policy brief, a creative or public piece of writing (i.e., a magazine article). Whichever option you choose, remember, your major assignment must contain suitable references to academic sources and be at minimum 3000 words.

- **OPTION A: Term papers** can explore any issue discussed in class; you may also propose to explore something related to class materials that we have not discussed directly in class (though you should clear this in person or in writing with the professor). A good term paper will identify and articulate a strong argument throughout the paper, engage with key sources in the academic literature, and be framed in relation to academic issues and debates. Don't be afraid to take a normative stance in your term paper – but be sure to back up your stance with research, a coherent analytical approach and empirical data taken from your academic sources (and beyond).
- **OPTION B: Policy briefing papers** will develop a practical, solutions-based approach to a problem or conflict discussed in class. Your policy brief should be addressed to a real or imagined leader (an MP or MLA, local government representative, CEO of a corporation, Band Chief, head of an ENGO, etc.) who has hired you to brief them on the policy and other political dimensions of a particular extraction/development/resource conflict case. You are a dispassionate/objective observer of the circumstances surrounding the case you have been asked to analyse. Your brief should (a) identify the recipient's interest in the issue, (b) pressing events or emerging issues, and (c) suggested courses of action.
- **OPTION C:** This is for those of you who wish to reach a wider audience. **Creative or public writing pieces** should be written in the style of imagined venue (if you are writing a piece for Orion magazine or The Narwhal, adopt the idiom of this magazine; if you are writing for the Literary Review of Canada, ditto; if you are writing for BuzzFeed, consider choosing another option). The exception here is around referencing and citations - even if the venue does not typically provide academic and other references, please ensure you provide these (you might footnotes or endnotes, which are less distracting to the reader than in-text referencing). You might also consider how a visual component (photos, tables, graphs, illustrations, etc.) can add to your creative piece

**Briefs:** Students will be required to hand in 4 reaction papers over the course of the term. These should be about 300 words. They should be concise appraisals of the weekly readings. They may be synthetic or specific but they should demonstrate an analytical engagement with the main topic under discussion for that particular week. They should also include at least one question to prompt discussion in class. You can hand these in at any point during the term, though briefs should correspond to that week's readings. Reflections/reactions will be marked/graded when they are handed in – 4 briefs are

graded out of 5 marks each for a total of 20 marks. You are also permitted to hand in 5<sup>th</sup> briefs - it can replace your least successful mark out of the 4 briefs.

**Participation:** Participation is an essential component of a upper-level undergraduate education. This includes coming to class having read all of the assigned readings carefully and critically. You should be prepared to offer your comments and questions to your colleagues for discussion. Please be mindful of balanced participation (ie. sometimes holding back if you tend to talk a lot, or finding other ways to contribute if you find it difficult to speak in the group). We will do our utmost to establish and maintain a respectful and generous tone in our seminar room.

The **Grading Standard** for this course is as follows:

*A+ (90-100%) is Exceptional*

*A (80-89%) is Excellent*

*B+ (75-79%) is Very Good*

*B (70-74%) is Good*

*C+ (65-69%) is Satisfactory*

*C (60-64%) is Adequate*

*D (50-59%) is Marginal*

*F (0-49%) is Failure*

**Course Policies and Miscellaneous Information:**

### **Late Assignments**

Students may hand in assignments late but will be assessed a late penalty (– 2 marks per day including weekends).

### **Feedback**

Evaluative feedback will be provided by the voluntary withdrawal deadline date on November 18

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating and examination impersonation (see University of Manitoba General Calendar). Please submit your own unique work – I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty very seriously. Consult the U of M Calendar “academic regulations” for more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. I will talk about proper citation methods when we get closer to assignment due dates. Please see me if you have any questions about sources, citations or academic/research ethics.

### **Student Accessibility Services**

If you are a student with a disability, please contact SAS for academic accommodation supports and services such as note-taking, interpreting, assistive technology and exam accommodations. Students who have, or think they may have, a disability (e.g. mental illness, learning, medical, hearing, injury-related, visual) are invited to contact SAS to arrange a confidential consultation.

*Student Accessibility Services* <http://umanitoba.ca/student/saa/accessibility/>

520 University Centre  
204-474-7423

[Student\\_accessibility@umanitoba.ca](mailto:Student_accessibility@umanitoba.ca)

**A Note on Email:** I will happily answer email queries that you might have about course administration or other housekeeping duties – but I will only be checking email during regular office hours (ie. not on evenings and weekends). I will aim to answer you're emails within 48 hours. If your questions are more substantive (requiring a longer answer or explanation) I will ask you bring them to me before/after class or during office hours. Feel free to stop me in the halls or to make an appointment if you're not able to make it to the regularly scheduled office hours. In general, personal face-to-face communication is much preferred over email.

Here is the U of M blurb about class communication:

The University requires all students to activate an official University email account. For full details of the Electronic Communication with Students please visit:

[http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Electronic\\_Communication\\_with\\_Students\\_Policy\\_-\\_2014\\_06\\_05.pdf](http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/media/Electronic_Communication_with_Students_Policy_-_2014_06_05.pdf)

Please note that all communication between myself and you as a student must comply with the electronic communication with student policy

([http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing\\_documents/community/electronic\\_communication\\_with\\_students\\_policy.html](http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/community/electronic_communication_with_students_policy.html)). You are required to obtain and use your U of M email account for all communication between yourself and the university.

**A Note on Technology:** Many students prefer to take notes on laptops. This is fine as long as you use the computer only for this purpose (ie. not for reading blogs or Tumblr, using Facebook, writing emails, playing games, etc.). This is disruptive for your classmates.

Cell phones should be turned off at the beginning of class... and texting is a big-time breach of classroom etiquette. Please do not text during class.

Unless a specific dispensation has been made, students should not record lectures. Posting of any class materials or recordings to the Internet is prohibited.

**A Note on Lectures:** I'll be using powerpoint and links during the lectures to illustrate and supplement the things we talk about in class. I'll post the slides and links so that you can use them as study guides. I tend to use little text on the powerpoints so don't use them as a substitute for lecture/seminar attendance. The slides should be used as a general outline but not as a comprehensive guide to what we will be talking about. You should still take notes.