ENV 350H Energy Policy and Environment  
Fall 2018 Course Syllabus  
University of Toronto, School of the Environment

Time: Monday, 6-8 p.m.
Location: LM 159
Office Hours: Mondays, 5-6 p.m. in ES 2104
Instructor: Keith Stewart <climatekeith@gmail.com>
T.A.: 

Pre-requisite: (ENV221H1,ENV222H1) or permission of Academic Associate Director

Description

This course explores the connections between energy and environment policy and politics, including the connections with climate change.

The patterns of energy use of individual countries and of the global system as a whole reflect the accumulation of policy choices and have significant impacts on the environment, locally and globally. Not the least of these impacts is the potential to disrupt the global climate system. Decisions about energy technologies are strongly influenced by social organization, economics and politics.

The first part of the course provides a historical context for the physical, environmental, technological, economic and political aspects of energy systems and energy transitions before exploring the principal policy tools available to decision-makers. This includes both a more traditional academic approach to energy and environmental policy-making found in the textbook written by Andrea Olive, as well as a more radical critique found in Naomi Klein’s This Changes Everything.

These theoretical approaches are then applied to two contemporary case studies: the politics of pipelines and the development of a national climate plan.

The final part of the course explores how “disruptive” political (Donald Trump) and technological (renewable energy) change creates new opportunities and challenges for the policy community.

The objective of this course is that students should be able to apply the theoretical concepts learned in the course to current policy-making processes. Therefore students should follow the public and media debates on the case studies in addition to the required readings.

Assignments

Additional detail on each of the assignments will provided in class.

Blog entries (2 blogs, each worth 15%): As blogs are an increasingly important forum for policy discussion, you will be required to write a blog entry (between 800 and 1000 words) and upload it to Blackboard in order to practice this style of writing. Posts should be written as a commentary on a news story and must be relevant to the subject of energy and environmental policy. You should incorporate concepts from the course materials (i.e. you must reference at least one of the required readings) in a way that demonstrates your grasp
of the concept and ability to apply it to current events and debates. You should advance a point of view backed by evidence (i.e. it is not simply your opinion) while maintaining a thoughtful and respectful tone.

Blogs can be submitted at any point, the first must be completed no later than October 15 and the second blog must be completed no later than November 14. Blogs will be posted on Blackboard.

**Mid-term test (30%)**: To be administered in-class on November 19. The test is your opportunity to demonstrate your familiarity with the core concepts addressed in the required readings. It will include both multiple choice and short answer questions.

**Essay (40%)**: For the major paper, you will address one of the two following theses:

1. Carbon pricing is good policy, but bad politics.
2. Climate policy should focus primarily on reducing the demand for fossil fuels.

Note that there is no single ‘correct’ answer and that you will be assessed based on the strength of the argument that you make. You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts studied in the course, an ability to apply them to your chosen topic, and the capacity to situate these abstract policy questions within contemporary Canadian political debates. The essay should be handed in via Blackboard and is due on December 3.

**Evaluation criteria:**

**The primary criteria used in evaluating written work are the following:**

1) **Mechanics**: Your work must be completely free of grammatical errors, spelling errors or major factual errors. References can be in any style but the same format must be used consistently and they must be accurate.

2) **Writing style**: Your papers should be written in a clear and unambiguous style which assists, rather than impedes, communication with the reader.

3) **Structure**: Your written work should have a clear focus, provided by the research question, and a structure which logically flows from that focus.

4) **Precision and accuracy**: Precision means saying exactly and specifically what you mean, avoiding ambiguity and vague generalities. Accuracy refers to absence of major factual errors.

5) **Analysis**: Your analysis should display understanding of the topic and, based on that understanding, originality of thought.

**Late assignments**

Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 2.5%/day (i.e. an assignment 10 days late will lose 25% off of the assigned grade, so a grade of 7.5/10 would become 5/10).
Required readings

The two textbooks (The Canadian Environment in Political Context and This Changes Everything) are available at the bookstore. All of the other required readings are available electronically via Blackboard or via the links in the course syllabus.

Students are expected to follow the public and media debates on the case studies in addition to the readings identified below. The course instructor (@climatekeith on twitter) will also tweet relevant material, using the hashtag #env350. Students are welcome to tweet using this hashtag as well.

September 10: Introduction to Environmental Policy and Politics

No required readings

Recommended Reading:


September 17: Energy Transitions

Required:


David Roberts (June 27, 2017). “Exxon’s support for a carbon tax is the first step in big oil’s long, negotiated surrender”. Blog post on Vox.com.

Recommended:


September 24: Politics and Institutions

Required:


Recommended:


**October 1: Policy-making**

Required:


**October 8: No Class due to Thanksgiving**

**October 15: Policy Options - Carbon Prices**

Required:


Mark Jaccard (February 2, 2016). "Want an effective climate policy? Heed the evidence". *Policy Options*.

Recommended

Remainder of EcoFiscal Commission report.

**October 22: Policy Options – Demand-side Regulations**


**October 29: Policy Options – Change the system, not the climate?**


**November 6: Reading week so no class**
November 12: Indigenous People, Environment and Energy


November 19: Pipelines Politics


November 26: Disruptive Technology – Renewable Energy and Smart Grids

Ontario Smart Grid Forum (July 2015). *Smart grid-related innovation: the emerging debate*.


December 3: Disruptive Politics – Donald Trump and the Rise of the New Right

Required:

Keith Stewart (February 9, 2017). "Could Trump Derail Canada’s Climate Plan?" *Policy Options*.


Recommended:


Accessibility Needs:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca or https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.
Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including
  - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
  - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while ”editing”.
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else’s answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor’s notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

**You can get further guidance on academic integrity at:**
www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/students

Cases of suspected plagiarism will be addressed in accordance with the procedure established by the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters.