

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Global Energy Regimes

Course Number and Section:

CGS

3531F 550

Instructor Name(s): Dr. Matthew McBurney

Instructor Email(s): mmcburn2@uwo.ca

Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This course investigates the political economy and ecology of global energy systems to identify historical patterns of how the effects of global energy regimes are localized through place-based social, economic, cultural, and environmental destruction while at the same time globalized through a set of political-economic relationships between points of extraction and points of consumption. We will also investigate the ways in which global energy regimes are both “singular point[s] of origin” and “multiple sites of intervention”, offering “multiple opportunities for resistance” (Riofrancos, 60). By exploring case studies of energy regimes, we will attempt to answer the following questions:

- How was nature turned into a commodified resource for human exploitation?
- How have different energy regimes transformed social and natural landscapes around the globe?
- How are the effects of global energy regimes both local and global?
- Is there such a thing as green or sustainable energy?
- What effects have global energy regimes had on local communities and how have communities resisted hegemonic energy regimes?
- Who benefits and who bears the burdens of energy regimes?
- What could more just energy systems look like? And how could this be accomplished?

To answer these questions, we will explore the ways in which energy regimes shape our interactions with nature through capital, infrastructure, regimes of property ownership, political power, labour, (neo)colonialism, dispossession, and livelihoods. We will consider how these energy systems reinscribe historical inequalities and dispossessions. Critiques and resistance movements will also be examined.

Learning Outcomes:

Formulate a coherent research paper, which includes a central thesis and supporting arguments.

Identify and explain the historical contexts of global energy regimes, which includes the social, political, cultural and economic factors.

Articulate theoretical perspectives and sound critiques of global energy regimes and energy alternatives

Understand the relationship between modernity, colonialism, and capitalism in constituting energy regimes.

Understand and articulate community resistance to global energy regimes.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

The book below can be purchased, but it is also accessible as a free, digital copy through the Huron Library. Therefore, if you choose to use the digital copies available through the Huron Library, there is no cost to you as a student.

Riofrancos, Thea. (2020). Resource Radicals: From Petro-Nationalism to Post-Extractivism in Ecuador. Duke University Press.

All other readings in the course outline can be accessed for free using the Huron Library.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Participation and Attendance	Ongoing	30
Research Paper Proposal and Bibliography (700-1000 words)	Oct 29-31	15
Final Research Paper (1750-2000 words)	Dec 3-5	35
Final Paper Presentations	Nov 20 and 27	20%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Monday, August 11, 2025