POL438H(F)—Topics in Comparative Politics I: Global Energy, Local Resistance?

*Draft syllabus only – I will post the final version on Quercus well in advance of our first class*

Session: May/June 2020  
Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays 4-6pm (classroom to be announced)  
Instructor: Amy Janzwood (amy.janzwood@mail.utoronto.ca)  
Office hours: Thursdays 3-4 pm (office to be announced)

Prerequisites: 2.0 POL credits in comparative politics or permission of the instructor. See the Department’s website [http://politics.utoronto.ca/undergraduate/courses/fallwinter-timetable](http://politics.utoronto.ca/undergraduate/courses/fallwinter-timetable) for POL courses by area group.

*We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.*

**Themes**

Where does our energy come from? How is energy policy made and what are the implications? Why is there so much opposition to energy infrastructure? How do societies and economies transition away from fossil fuels?

In light of the urgent need to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, countries are struggling to transform their energy systems and balance competing economic, political, and environmental aims. Energy projects are receiving unprecedented public attention and, often, resistance. This course is designed to introduce students to the political, economic, social and ecological dimensions of energy politics. This course prepares students as citizens and scholars to understand, critically evaluate, and assess solutions to global and local energy dilemmas.

**Course overview and learning outcomes**

The course is divided into three parts: (i) foundations of energy politics, (ii) contestation in energy politics, and (iii) prospects for energy futures. The first part of the course develops the foundations for understanding energy politics. Students will learn about the key dilemmas facing governments around energy, changing trends in energy production, and the relationships between energy systems, the economy and the environment. The second part of the course explores contentious energy politics. Students will learn about ‘site fights’ and social movements in energy politics, as well as their dynamics and impacts. The final three classes look forward at prospects, visions and perspectives on energy systems and change. While this course relies heavily on concepts and literature in political science, the course goes beyond disciplinary boundaries and draws on economics, history, geography and sociology.

The learning outcomes for this course are threefold: (i) to understand how energy is governed and the role of ideas, interests and institutions in shaping energy politics, (ii) to apply
course texts, concepts and ideas to energy policies, decisions and debates, and (iii) to develop, communicate and share positions on energy issues. I will provide a more detailed list of learning outcomes in the first week of class.

**Course format and materials**
This is a seminar style course. Each class meeting will be two hours. Each class I will give a short lecture to situate the readings and topic for the class. I will then turn the class over to our facilitator who will guide the class through a one-hour discussion of the readings. Each class you will be required to complete either a short reflection or quiz (outlined below).

For most weeks I’ve assigned two readings. On most weeks I’ve assigned a third, short reading as background or for additional interest – in most cases this is optional although I’ve indicated when it is required reading. Required readings are available through Quercus. Grey literature readings (e.g., reports, policy briefs etc.) can be accessed using the links in the syllabus. I will occasionally share relevant grey literature on Quercus though this is not required reading.

**Assignments**

**Overview**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>20% (2% x10)¹</td>
<td>Each class</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class reflections (Tuesdays)</td>
<td>20% (2% x10)</td>
<td>Each class</td>
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<td>and quizzes (Thursdays)</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class facilitation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Sign-up in Class 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commentary assignment</td>
<td>40% (10% for outline, 15% for peer review, and 15% for final piece)</td>
<td>Outline – May 19  Peer review – June 9  Final product – June 15</td>
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**Active participation**
Participation is graded each class based on the quality, rather than the quantity of your contribution. Each class you should show you have read and understood the material. Active participation can include the following: (i) asking questions, (ii) actively listening, (iii) raising a topic directly related to the reading or providing relevant examples, (iv) comparing, contrasting or critiquing arguments made in the reading, and/or (v) engaging in discussion. Participation is graded as follows (out of 5): 0 for non-attendance, 1 for attendance, 2.5 for minimum participation, and between 3 and 5 depending on the quality of participation. If participation in class discussions is difficult for you, you must come see me during my office hours as soon as possible.

To prepare for class, the following questions are helpful to keep in mind:²

1. What are the central points or arguments being made in each reading?
2. What evidence and methods have the authors used to support their arguments?
3. How does the week’s reading relate to other material examined in the course?
4. How do you evaluate the authors’ positions?

¹ You will not be given a participation mark for the first class, and I will mark your in-class facilitation separately – thus there is a total of 10 classes for which you will receive active participation marks.

² Many thanks to Dr. Matthew Hoffmann for these questions.
In-class reflections and quizzes
Each class you will spend 15 minutes writing a reflection on a designated question (Tuesdays) or completing an online quiz (Thursdays). I am looking for evidence that you have read the readings and have spent time interpreting and evaluating them. You will complete 12 of these small reflections or quizzes over the course of the semester worth 1% each. I will use your top 10 marks (of 12). I will mark the reflections out of 5 as follows: 2 for completing a response, and between 3 and 5 depending on the quality of response. Your reflections will be submitted electronically on Quercus. You are encouraged to complete the reflection during class time, but you have until midnight to submit it.

Class facilitation
You will be given an opportunity to sign up for a week of your choosing during our first class. During the designated class, you will be asked to kick off and facilitate the discussion. The purpose of the “kick off” is to generate a productive discussion of the week’s readings. Please keep your “kick-off” to ten minutes or less. You can briefly summarize the reading(s) and the main argument(s), or flag something interesting or insightful. You should facilitate discussion about the connections between the readings, the theoretical and empirical evidence and issues raised, and/or relevant ‘real-world’ examples. During this class, you should pose at least two or three discussion questions. I will provide more details during our first class. Depending on our class size some weeks we may have co-facilitators.

Commentary assignment
This assignment requires you to write a crisp and focused article for a particular audience on an aspect of energy policy and politics. This exercise is fundamentally persuasive. You should try to convince your audience (e.g., policy makers or other practitioners) of something; for example, changing their mind about a particular issue, or convincing them about the benefits of a particular policy. You will adopt an op-ed style of writing, which is aimed to inform and engage a wider audience. You should aim to produce a piece that is of publishable quality.

I will provide some ideas for topics, but you are not restricted to these. Your topic can be related to but distinct from the readings you discuss in your facilitation week. Your piece should be between 1,200 and 1,600 words. Though this is shorter than a research paper, it does not require less research or work. You will become an expert on your topic, conduct research, and provide original analysis. You should cite relevant academic or grey literature on the topic. You may adopt a comparative approach, though it is not required.

Producing a piece of quality writing is an iterative process. In the first stage you will draft an outline that I will mark and provide feedback. For the second phase, you will exchange a full draft with a peer. You will provide constructive comments and feedback for your peer. You will submit the final assignment on the last day of class. I will post more detailed instructions and some writing samples on Quercus.
Course Schedule

Part I: Foundations of energy politics

Class 1: Mapping the global energy landscape (Tuesday May 5)
Guiding questions: How has global energy production and use changed over time, and what have been the most significant developments?


Additional reading (required):

Class 2: Energy and the economy (Thursday May 7)
Guiding questions: What are the linkages between capitalism and energy systems? Between the economy and energy production and consumption?


Additional reading (optional):

Class 3: Energy and the climate crisis (Tuesday May 12)
Guiding questions: What is the climate crisis and what does it mean for our energy systems? Can we have affordable energy and a low carbon transition?


Additional reading (required):
Class 4: Energy policies and politics, part I (Thursday May 14)
Guiding questions: Why do different jurisdictions have different energy systems and policies? How do jurisdictions choose between policy instruments?


Additional reading (optional):

Class 5: Energy policies and politics, part II (Tuesday May 19)
Guiding questions: In what ways do particular industries influence climate and energy policy?


Additional reading (required):

Part II: Contestation in energy politics

Class 6: ‘Site fights’ (Thursday May 21)
Guiding questions: What explains mobilization efforts around energy projects? Why is siting often controversial?


Class 7: Social movement dynamics and responses (Tuesday May 26)
Guiding questions: When do campaigns ‘scale up’? What are the implications?


Additional reading (optional):

**Class 8: Anti-fossil Fuel Campaigns** (Thursday May 28)
Guiding questions: What are the logics that drive these campaigns? Under what conditions are these campaigns successful?


**Class 9: Tar Sands & Pipeline Politics** (Tuesday June 2, **course drop deadline**)
Guiding questions: Why have pipelines attracted so much resistance in North America in recent years? What are the implications?


Additional reading (required):

**Part III: Energy futures**

**Class 10: The future of fossil fuels** (Thursday June 4)
Guiding questions: What is the future of fossil fuels in a carbon constrained world? How ought we think about the future of our energy systems?


Additional reading (optional):

**Class 11: Energy transitions** (Tuesday June 9)
Guiding questions: What does a low-carbon transition involve? What conditions are required?


Additional reading (required):

Additional reading (optional):

**Class 12: Just transitions—prospects and possibilities** (Thursday June 11)
Guiding questions: What is meant by a just transition? How is a just transition realized?


Additional reading (required, skim only):

Policies and Additional Information

Assignments
Assignment rubrics will be posted in advance. I grade assignments in line with the University Grading Practices Policy, available at:

Please carefully review your assignments before submitting them. Assignments are to be submitted electronically through Quercus. Please keep electronic copies until after I’ve returned the assignment and posted the grades.

Because this is a condensed course, it is very important that you submit your work on time. If you foresee problems with meeting coursework deadlines, please contact me as soon as possible. For late assignments, I will deduct 5% a day, including on weekends for up to a total of twenty five percent (25%) (or five days). I will not accept late assignments after five days. Requests for extensions will be approved only for reasons of health or family circumstances, and only when accompanied by documentation. University policy states that all term work must be submitted by the last day of classes.

Preferred Gender Pronouns
My name is Amy Janzwood – you can call me Ms. Janzwood or Professor Janzwood. I use the pronouns she, her and hers. Pronouns are the parts of speech we use to refer to someone instead of their name. Using the right pronoun, like using someone’s name or title, is a way to show respect.

Communication
I will generally use Quercus for posting announcements. Please use your UTmail+ email address when communicating with me. I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. Please note that I do not check emails on weekends, evenings or holidays. I ask that you email me for logistical issues or clarifications only, and please first double check that the syllabus does not answer your question. If you have substantive questions about course material or assignments, please see or call me during office hours. If you cannot make my office hours, please email me to arrange a time to meet.

Electronic devices
Research shows that students retain less, are less engaged, and are more distracted when electronic devices are prevalent in the classroom. Electronic devices should only be used to access readings for quick reference or for classroom activities. If you must make a call, text, or send an email, please step out of the class to do so and return once you have finished.

Participation and absences
Students are required to attend every class meeting. Accommodation of absences for religious or medical reasons is possible but should be discussed with me as early as possible.

Academic integrity
Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence. The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. Participating honestly and responsibly in this academic

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community ensures that your degree truly signifies your individual academic achievement. Examples of plagiarism in papers and assignments include the following: (i) submitting someone else’s work as your own or submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor, (ii) failing to use quotations around words, sentences or paragraphs written by someone else, (iii) adapting an author’s ideas without referencing them, (iv) making up sources or facts, (v) obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on an assignment. For a more complete explanation please see [http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/](http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/). As well, the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters is the rulebook for academic behaviour here, and you are expected to know the rules [http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm](http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm).

**Turnitin.com**

Normally, students will be required to submit written assignments to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their assignments to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. If you have an objection to the use of Turnitin for the submission of your work, please make an appointment to speak with me to discuss alternative arrangements, which will usually require you to hand in all your rough drafts and notes made while preparing your work. A guide for students is available at: [https://qstudents.utoronto.ca/how-to-get-turnitin-to-work-for-you/](https://qstudents.utoronto.ca/how-to-get-turnitin-to-work-for-you/).

**Grade appeals**

If you believe your assignment was unfairly marked, you may submit a one-page typed statement explaining why, citing course materials. I will meet with you during my scheduled office hours to discuss the assignment and your appeal. I will not adjust final grades, as this is unfair to your fellow classmates.

**Health and wellness**

If you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, unsafe, or need additional support, please reach out to a trained professional. If you are in immediate danger call 911. If you are in crisis, contact Good2Talk: 1-866-5454. Good2Talk is a free, confidential helpline for students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Go to [https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed](https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/feeling-distressed) for additional mental health resources. For personal safety concerns, contact the Community Safety Office at 416 978 1485 or [https://www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca/](https://www.communitysafety.utoronto.ca/).

**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: [disability.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:disability.services@utoronto.ca) or [http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility).

**Religious accommodation**

If you require accommodation regarding assignment deadlines or other course requirements due to religious observance, please see me within the first three weeks of class.