

POLS 196-06: Climate and Extractive Politics

(American Politics / Comparative Politics)

SPRING 2022

Course meetings:

Mondays 2:00-4:50pm

Instructor:

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00pm-2:00pm, Tuesdays 9:00-10:00am

Course description

This senior seminar is an evaluation of the politics of oil and other fossil fuels in the context of the clean energy transition. Course topics include the fundamentals of the energy transition, the political consequences of extractive resource wealth (commonly referred to as the “resource curse”), decarbonization, “net zero” targets, obstacles to moving away from fossil fuels, and an assessment of how energy policy is implemented in practice. Readings will be drawn from the political science and economics literatures, news articles, case studies, and policy memos from leading energy think tanks and research institutions.

Course Objectives

There are four learning objectives for this course. First, students will develop an understanding of energy policies that have been pursued in a variety of contexts, ranging from developing authoritarian or democratic states to advanced, developed democracies or autocracies. Second, students will gain a detailed understanding of decarbonization and what it means for energy incumbents. Third, students will acquire literacy in evaluating successful vs. failed policy approaches. Lastly, students will learn the tools and skills necessary to evaluate state, national, and international energy policies with attention to how policies can be designed to improve domestic governance and mitigate climate change.

Prerequisites

Open only to Seniors. Requires a 3.0 GPA in all GPA (UCSB cumulative; POLS overall major; and POLS upper division major) categories, as well as at least a B in an upper division POLS course of the same subfield.

Requirements

This course is in seminar and lecture format. Students are required to . . .:

1. Complete the required readings before each class and **actively** participate during class;
2. Make one 10 minute presentation (in groups of 2-3 students) in class about an energy-exporting state or country. For these presentations, students will generate five (5) original graphical summaries (graphs, charts, tables, other visuals, etc.) of the energy history and politics of the selected state or country using data gathered from any publicly available sources (either online or in print from the library). *Students in the group with the best graph/visual will each “win” 2 grade points added to their final grade;*
3. Write a final paper in memo format (max 2000 words) on one of the course topics with an application to a specific policy, regulation, or government intervention. A one page proposal is due at the beginning of class in **Week 3**. The final paper is due in **Week 10**;
4. Present a short (3 minutes!) version of the final paper in class in **Finals Week**. The objective of the presentation is to visually summarize the primary findings of the final paper.

Grading

1. Class participation and attendance: 30%
2. Group presentation: 10%
3. Paper presentation: 20%
4. Final paper: 40% (including one page proposal)

Academic Resource Center/Disability Support

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Disabled Students Program (DSP) for further information. The DSP is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ASA) and University policies.

For more information, go to <https://dsp.ext-prod.sa.ucsb.edu/>

Important Academic Policies and Academic Integrity

UCSB students are expected to uphold the academic policies set forth by the university. Students should therefore familiarize themselves with all the rules, regulations, and procedures relevant to their pursuit of degree.

The policies are located at: <https://studentconduct.sa.ucsb.edu/academic-integrity>

Course Webpage

All readings for the course can be downloaded from the course webpage on Gauchospace.

Course Outline and Readings

1. Introduction: Fundamentals of the Energy Transition

Week 1 - Reading:

- International Energy Agency. (2021). *Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector*. Executive Summary (pp. 13-25).
- Goldthau, Andreas, Kirsten Westphal, Morgan Bazilian, and Michael Bradshaw. (2019). “How the energy transition will reshape geopolitics.” *Nature*.
- Busby, Joshua. (2018). “Why Climate Change Matters More than Anything Else.” *Foreign Affairs*.

2. Political Economy of the Oil Curse

Week 2 - Readings:

- Beauchamp, Zach. (2014). “The oil curse — how black gold makes countries more authoritarian, corrupt, and violent.” *Vox*.
- Baker Institute. “The Resource Curse – Episode 1 of the CES Film Series.” (watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNUuIA1Pam8>)
- Ross, Michael L. (2015). “What Have We Learned about the Resource Curse?” *Annual Review of Political Science*.
- Colgan, Jeff D., Cullen Hendrix, Emily Meierding, Hye Ryeon Jang, and Benjamin Smith. (2021). “Oil and War: An Exchange.” *Security Studies*.
- Ross, Michael L. (2012). *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 4.

Week 3 - Readings:

- Wenar, Leif. (2016). “How to End the Oil Curse: Stop Trading With Autocrats.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Karl, Terry Lynn. “Overcoming the Resource Curse.”
(watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORkgMaHkv6U>)
- Andersen, Jorgen J., J. H. Hamang, and Michael Ross. (2022). “Declining oil production leads to more democratic governments.”
- Menaldo, Victor. (2016). *The Institutions Curse: Natural Resources, Politics, and Development*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 6.
- Paler, Laura. (2013). “Keeping the Public Purse: An Experiment in Windfalls, Taxes, and the Incentives to Restrain Government.” *American Political Science Review*.

3. Oil and the Energy Transition: What does Net Zero mean for fossil fuels?

Week 4 - Readings:

- Green, Jessica, Jennifer Hadden, Thomas Hale, and Paasha Mahdavi. (2022). “Transition, Hedge, or Resist?” *Review of International Political Economy*.
- SEI, IISD, ODI, E3G, and UNEP. (2021). *The Production Gap Report*.
- Gillies, Alexandra et al. (2021). *National Oil Companies and Climate Change: Insights for Advocates*. NRGi Briefing.
- Indigenous Environmental Network, Oil Change International, and Indigenous Climate Action. (2021). *Indigenous Resistance Against Carbon*. OCI Report.
- (Optional) Manley, David, James Cust, and Giorgia Cecchinato. (2017). “Stranded Nations? The Climate Policy Implications for Fossil Fuel-Rich Developing Countries.”

Week 5 - Readings:

- Mike Coffin. (2021). *Absolute Impact 2021: Why oil and gas ‘net zero’ ambitions are not enough*. Carbon Tracker Initiative.
- Greenpeace, IISD, and Oil Change International. (2022). *Zeroing In: A guide for the finance sector on the IEA’s Net Zero Emissions scenario and its implications for oil and gas finance*. OCI Report.
- Kusnetz, Nicholas. (2020). “What Does Net Zero Emissions Mean for Big Oil? Not What You’d Think.” *Inside Climate News*.
- Fankhauser, Sam et al. (2021). “The meaning of net zero and how to get it right.” *Nature Climate Change*.

- Hale, Thomas, Stephen M. Smith, Richard Black, Kate Cullen, Byron Fay, John Lang and Saba Mahmood. (2022). “Assessing the rapidly-emerging landscape of net zero targets.” *Climate Policy*.
- (Optional) International Energy Agency. (2021). *Net Zero by 2050: A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector*. Sections: 1, 2, 3.1-3.2, 4.3

4. Obstacles to decarbonizing the energy system

Week 6 - Readings:

- Aklin, Michaël and Mildenerger, Matto. (2020). “Prisoners of the Wrong Dilemma: Why Distributive Conflict, Not Collective Action, Characterizes the Politics of Climate Change.” *Global Environmental Politics*.
- Colgan, Jeff D., Jessica Green, and Thomas Hale. (2019). “Asset Revaluation and the Existential Politics of Climate Change.” *International Organization*.
- Supran, Geoffrey and Naomi Oreskes. (2021). “Rhetoric and frame analysis of Exxon-Mobil’s climate change communications.” *One Earth*.
- Bazilian, Morgan. (2015). “Energy Poverty.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- A Matter of Degrees. (2021). “The Devious Plan to Keep Us Hooked on Gas.” (listen here: <https://www.degreespod.com/episodes/episode-15>)

5. “Failed” Policies? Carbon pricing, fuel subsidy reform, flaring bans

In the next two weeks we will consider various political economy theories about energy with an application to two policy cases, supply-side fossil fuel policy and renewable industrial policy. For this week we consider the following question: Are viable are government policies on restricting fossil fuels?

Week 7 - Readings:

- Carbon pricing
 - Stokes, Leah, and Matto Mildenerger. (2020). “The Trouble with Carbon Pricing.” *The Boston Review*.
 - Green, Jessica. (2021). “Does carbon pricing reduce emissions? A review of ex-post analyses.” *Environmental Research Letters*.
- Fossil fuel subsidy reform
 - Mahdavi, Paasha, Cesar Martinez-Alvarez, and Michael Ross. (2022). “Why Do Governments Tax or Subsidize Fossil Fuels?” *Journal of Politics*.

- Kyle, Jordan. (2018). “Local Corruption and Popular Support for Fuel Subsidy Reform in Indonesia.” *Comparative Political Studies*.
 - (Optional) Rentschler, Jun and Morgan Bazilian. (2016). “Reforming fossil fuel subsidies: drivers, barriers and the state of progress.” *Climate Policy*.
 - (Optional) Inchauste, Gabriela and David G. Victor. (2017). *The Political Economy of Energy Subsidy Reform*. The World Bank. Chapter 1 / pp. 1-44.
- Flaring and methane policy
 - Rabe, Barry. (2021). “Containing Methane Emissions.” Milken Institute Review.
 - Calel, Raphael, and Paasha Mahdavi. (2020). “The unintended consequences of antiflaring policies—and measures for mitigation.” *Proceedings of the National Academies of Science*.
 - (Optional) Rabe, Barry, Claire Kaliban, Isabel Englehart. (2020). “Taxing Flaring and the Politics of State Methane Release Policy.” *Review of Policy Research*.

6. “Successful” Policies? Solar and Wind Industrial Policy

This week we turn to solar and wind power and how industrial policies have drastically reduced the cost of solar and wind energy. When reviewing these readings, consider how renewable fuels differ from conventional fuels, and why this might or might not explain the successes and failures of renewables policies in general.

Week 8 - Readings:

- Breetz, Hanna, Matto Mildenerger, and Leah Stokes. (2018). “The political logics of clean energy transitions.” *Business & Politics*.
- Helveston, John and Jonas Nahm. (2019). “China’s key role in scaling low-carbon energy technologies.” *Science*.
- Nahm, Jonas. (2022). *Collaborative Advantage: Forging Green Industries in the New Global Economy*. Oxford University Press. Selections TBD.
- Sivaram, Varun. (2018). *Taming the Sun: Innovations to Harness Solar Energy and Power the Planet*. MIT Press. Selections TBD.

7. Future of energy policy

For our last week of discussion we will review policy implications that have resulted from research on the political economy of oil, gas, and other resources.

Week 9 - Readings:

- Victor, David G., F. Geels, and S. Sharpe. (2019). *Accelerating the Low Carbon Transition: The case for stronger, more targeted and co-ordinated international action*. The Energy Transitions Commission.
- Victor, David G. (2021). *Energy Transformations: Technology, Policy, Capital and the Murky Future of Oil and Gas*. Engine No. 1.
- Azevedo, Inês, Michael R. Davidson, Jesse D. Jenkins, Valerie J. Karplus, and David G. Victor. (2020). “The Paths to Net Zero: How Technology Can Save the Planet.” *Foreign Affairs*.
- A Matter of Degrees. (2020). “We Have the Solutions Now.”
(listen here: <https://www.degreespod.com/episodes/episode-03>)
- (Optional) Evergreen Collaborative. (2021). *A Roadmap to 100% Clean Electricity by 2035*.
- (Optional) Green, Jessica. (2018). “Why We Need a More Activist Academy.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Week 10 - Memorial Day; no class

Week 11 - Final presentations