

DEPARTMENT:	School of Political Studies
PROFESSOR:	Monica Gattinger
RESEARCH TITLE:	Canada's Energy Future in an Age of Climate Change
NUMBER OF STUDENT:	2-3
LANGUAGE:	English (bilingualism an asset but not required)

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION:

Canada's energy future has become a very contentious topic. On the one hand, the country has committed to transitioning its energy system to a low-emissions configuration – this is one of the biggest challenges facing the country. On the other hand, Canada has some of the largest oil and gas reserves in the world, which brings many opportunities for economic development both at home and abroad.

Charting Canada's energy future in an age of climate change requires far better decision-making systems about energy and environmental policies, regulations and projects, but in an era of declining trust in governments, industry, and experts, public confidence in government authorities making energy decisions cannot be taken for granted. Recent political controversies and partisan polarization around issues like the federal carbon tax and the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion Project underscore that building and maintaining public confidence in energy decision-makers will be crucial to the country's energy and climate future.

Positive Energy, a research and engagement program at uOttawa chaired by Professor Monica Gattinger (see <https://www.uottawa.ca/positive-energy/>), is undertaking a three-year project to investigate weaknesses in Canada's energy decision-making systems and to propose solutions to build and maintain public confidence in energy decision-making now and into the future. In particular, the project examines the sources, consequences and ways of addressing polarization over energy and climate issues, the respective roles and responsibilities of public authorities involved in energy decision-making (policymakers, regulators, the courts, Indigenous governments, municipal governments), and innovative models for (and limits to) building consensus on energy issues. The project delivers solution-focused academic research, engagement with senior energy leaders from business, government, ENGOs and Indigenous communities, and evidence-based recommendations for public decision-makers.

Students participating in this project through FSS4150 will work with a multi-disciplinary team of professors, senior researchers, postdoctoral researchers and graduate students exploring these issues. In particular, students will work directly with members of the research team to prepare and present literature reviews on models of and limits to consensus-building and gain a stronger understanding of knowledge mobilization by assisting with initiatives such as report releases, panels and media

engagement. The majority of the students' time will be dedicated to the literature review, which will inform primary research to be undertaken in the coming year of the project.

KEY LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

By the end of the course the student(s) will:

- Apply and expand their ability to summarize, analyze and succinctly present academic and grey literature: Students will prepare literature reviews that examine key aspects of Canada's energy decision-making system and low-emissions transition. Key literatures explored will include those on and models of and limits to consensus building in energy decision-making. These reviews will be used to inform discussions amongst research team members and will directly contribute to research studies undertaken by the team (previous FSS4150 students have been included as collaborating authors on research studies published by Positive Energy).
- Develop and refine their ability to conduct a literature review: Students will expand and refine a key scientific communication skill - the literature review. This will be carried out in a stepwise fashion. First, students will prepare an annotated bibliography of a number of readings to improve their foundational understanding of energy decision-making in Canada and of the readings that informed the research focus of the project in question. Second, they will seek out and review relevant literature examining models of and limits to consensus building in decision-making. Third, they will prepare an outline of a literature review to seek input from members of the research team on the manner to organize the literature. Fourth, they will prepare and present a draft of the review to seek comments from the team. Finally, they will revise and submit the final draft of the review.
- Exposure to a wide range of energy and climate subject matter experts: Reconciling Canada's energy and climate goals is one of the greatest challenges our country faces and will have enduring relevance for decades to come. Students will have the opportunity to work with a wide range of experts from across Canada and the United States and walk away with a much stronger understanding of the institutional and social obstacles to successfully charting Canada's energy future in an age of climate change.
- Gain practical experience in working with a diverse research team: Students will have the opportunity to interact with professors and other senior researchers from uOttawa and other universities in Canada and the United States as well as senior policy practitioners. This will include working with the research team to organize and host virtual knowledge mobilization events (workshops, panels), which will expose students to a range of disciplines and a range of specialists in both the academic and policy worlds. Students will also be exposed to the report production process, which is vital for a career in the public, private, civil society or academic sectors.

Throughout the course, regular meetings between the professor, students and members of the research team will be scheduled to assess progress, discuss and resolve challenges, and collectively review and comment on drafts of material prepared by participants in the course.