

SOCI 437 - Issues in Environmental Sociology and Climate Change: Corporate Power, Fossil Capital, Climate Crisis

Instructor: Dr. Bill Carroll
Course Schedule: MW 2.30 – 5pm

Course Description:

Since the industrial revolution, fossil fuels have been the lifeblood of capitalism. Since the turn of the 20th Century, large corporations have come to dominate economic, political and cultural life in an increasingly globalized world. Since the 1950s the average recorded temperature of the Earth has seen an unprecedented rise. This seminar combines the sociology of corporate power with the political economy of fossil capital and the political ecology of climate crisis. Topics will include:

- a) the sociology, political economy and political ecology of fossil capital, consumer capitalism and carbon democracy as a distinct way of life now in crisis;
- b) modalities of corporate power in this field, ranging from networks of capital ownership and governance, through practices and discourses of corporate hegemony in civil society, media and state, to labour processes, carbon commodity chains and popular resistance at flashpoints along them; and
- c) a survey of sociopolitical developments that could prefigure a just transition to energy democracy.

Our work in the course will centre to some extent upon the case of Canada, but will extend to other national cases and to the transnational level.

Course Pre/Co-requisites: Minimum third-year standing; and declared Honours or Major in Sociology; or permission of the Department.

Required Resources:

William K. Carroll (2021) *Regime of Obstruction: How Corporate Power Blocks Energy Democracy*. Edmonton: AU Press (free download at <https://www.aupress.ca/books/120293-regime-of-obstruction/>).

Other readings - TBA

Course Format:

Seminar, emphasizing in-class discussion of required readings and student presentations.

This online outline is only intended to give an overall sense of the course. Detailed course outlines will be made available for all registered students on the first day of class. Only those outlines are to be considered official.