Energy Policy: Historical and Contemporary Issues

**STS 6234**  
Spring 2015  
3 Credit Hours  
**Time:** Wednesday, 7-9:45PM  
**Locations:** NVC, room TBA

**Instructor:** Sonja D. Schmid  
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Office Hours: by appointment

**Short Description**  
This course will use perspectives developed in Science and Technology Studies to provide an introduction to energy policy. We will discuss national and international topics and controversies, including the 1970s oil crisis, climate change, energy security, and the renewed debate over nuclear power. Throughout, we will use historical and contemporary sources, and will compare discussions in the U.S. with events elsewhere in the world. The goal of this seminar is not only to expand our knowledge of energy options, but also to connect ongoing controversies to historical debates, and to develop the ability to engage history meaningfully to address contemporary problems of our global energy situation. **Prerequisites:** Introduction to STS and/or Introduction to Science and Technology Policy recommended, but not required.

**Readings**  
Five books are recommended for purchase (available online):

All other readings will be made available online to registered students through the course website on Scholar. The readings will include recent articles from journals such as *Energy Policy*, and *Innovations*, as well as sections from books such as John Deutch’s *The Crisis in Energy Policy* (2011), Vaclav Smil’s *Energy Transitions* (2010), and Chris Jones’s *Routes of Power* (2014). At least one guest speaker will visit our class during the course of the semester.

**Expectations**  
Active participation in class discussion and regular attendance is expected. Students will lead class discussion at least once a semester, post short weekly responses to the readings, and write a research paper on a topic of their choice (including peer review and presentation). The VT Honor Code will be enforced in this course (http://ghs.graduateschool.vt.edu).