Energy from whale oil to fossil fuels has made modern life what it is, supporting technologies of transportation and communication, building cities and empires, and shaping subjectivities, perception, and desires. With modernity as a starting point, the seminar explores energy in its broadest sense. As such, it affords a discussion of theories and materialities of energy across historical eras and geographic regions, focusing on how the arts, humanities, and human sciences take up, struggle with, critique, are informed by, satirize, or depend on energy.

Energy taken broadly encompasses a range of forces, materials, and their instantiations – of atmospheric qualities and conditions from weather to radio, of bodies and spirits, and of laws, theories and beliefs thereof. The study of energy as instantiated in, articulated by, or worked through the arts encompasses processes of alchemy and transduction; conduits and networks; experimentation and imaginaries. Energy is material foundation, subject matter, and thematic, opening into concepts such as plasticity, synthesis, and lubrication that apply equally to social relationships, sounds, and creative processes.

Readings

We will use the following texts as a course reader, available on Blackboard:


**Requirements**

**Attendance and participation:** [25%]
This is a seminar, and students are expected to be active participants throughout the quarter. The shape and outcome of a seminar is unknown at the outset, emerging through the engagement of all involved throughout the quarter. To this end, students should be prepared to engage in discussion with faculty, guest speakers, and each other. Each student will formulate at least one question or response while listening to presentations and be prepared to be called on.

**Inquiries:** [25%]
Inquiries will be during the second half of seminar following IARTS faculty presentations. Working in small groups, students will engage with the readings assigned by that faculty member as well as 1-2 additional texts from the course reader to analyze and interpret an art object of their choice and lead the rest of the class in discussion of the texts and art work/s. This should be a group effort, based on collaborative work done prior to the class session. Collaboration as well as each student’s contribution should be evident.

**Final paper** [50%]
A 15-20 page paper on a subject of your choice, related to energy. You are encouraged to develop an aspect of your dissertation research. Please consult the seminar leader and your primary advisor as you develop your papers. **Due Dec. 11 by 5 p.m.**

Students will present their research paper twice during the semester:

In Week 7, each student will submit a paper proposal, consisting of an abstract with thesis statement (250 words), bibliography (with at least 10 key sources addressing subject and
analysis), and an outline. The proposals will be read aloud. Please bring copies for the entire class. You must discuss your topic with the seminar leader prior to this presentation, and continue to do so as your work progresses. In addition, you are strongly encouraged to consult with other professors.

During the final class session, you will give a conference length presentation of your research paper.

**Academic Honesty:** The Ohio University Student Code of Conduct prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty. These include cheating, plagiarism and forgery. If a student engages in course-related academic dishonesty, he or she will automatically fail the course. Instructors may also report cases of academic dishonesty to the Director of University Judiciaries for further action; however, by so doing, an instructor does not in any way relinquish the right to assign a grade in a course.

In this class there will be no discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation or physical handicap.

We will maintain an ethos of respect for diverse opinions, backgrounds, and disciplinary approaches.
Week 1: August 28

Introductions

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Marina Peterson
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

“Sensory Attunements: Working with the Past in Appalachian Ohio”

Week 2: September 4

Bobcats Beyond Gas


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Harold Perkins
Department of Geography

“Climate Justice”

Readings:


Week 3: September 11

William Condee
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

“Fracking the Opera House”

Readings:

Chs. 1, 3 & 5

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**Inquiry**


**Week 4: September 18**

Andrea Frohne  
**School of Interdisciplinary Arts**

“Challenging the Nation State: Oil in the Niger River Delta”

**Readings:**  


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**Inquiry**


**Week 5: September 25**

Louis-Georges Schwartz  
**School of Film**

“Anti-Barthes: The Images of Gaza in the Time of Genocidal Nonreproduction”

**Readings:**  


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**Stephanie Howe**  
*Voinovich School*

PORTSfuture documentary with Q&A

http://www.portsfuture.com

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**Week 6: October 2**

**Karen Pinkus**  
*Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature*  
*Cornell University*

"Energo-Transmutations: Alchemy as a mode for thinking energy"

Readings:


Nicholas Flamel, "Exposition of the Hieroglyphicks that he caused...."  
On EEBO:  

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**Week 7: October 9**

**Thesis/outline/bibliography presentations**
Week 8: October 16

Michael Gillespie
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

“Tomorrow People: Futurestates and Speculative Visions of Race”

Readings:

Erica Edwards, “‘Welcome Back to the Living’: Twilight Memories of Martin Luther King, Jr. in Contemporary American Television.” South Atlantic Quarterly 112.2 (Spring 2013): 241-260. [Available on ALICE]

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Inquiry


Week 9: October 23

Charles Buchanan
School of Interdisciplinary Arts


Readings:


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Inquiry

Week 10: October 30

**Gretchen Bakke**  
Assistant Prof. of Anthropology  
McGill University

“Translating an Intractable Quasi-Object (or, Electricity mon amour)”

**Readings:**  


Week 11: November 6

**Sound of/as energy: A symposium**

Brian Harnetty

Josh Ottum

“Energy Soundscapes” collaborative

**Readings:**

Week 12: November 13

**Vladimir Marchenkov**  
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

“The Concept of Energy in Artistic Communication: A Historical Perspective”

**Readings:**  
Aristotle, Metaphysics, Bk IX (available on the Perseus Library web site, but I’ll upload a pdf as well).

John Meyendorf, Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes, ch. 3 “The Iconoclastic Crisis” (web e-resource through OU Library).

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**Inquiry**


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**Week 13: November 20**

**Garrett Field**

**School of Interdisciplinary Arts**


**Readings:**


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**Inquiry**


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**Week 14: December 4**

Final presentations

**Dec. 11: final paper due**