

IART 8901: Seminar in Interdisciplinary Arts

Energy

Fall 2014
Thursdays 2:05-5 p.m.
31 S. Court St. Room 067

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OH: W 1-3

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:

- Barad, Karen. 2011. "Nature's Queer Performativity." *Qui Parle* 19 (2): 121–58.
- Ferguson, Frances. 2013. "Climate Change and Us." *Diacritics* 41 (3): 32–38.
- Helmreich, Stefan. 2013. "Potential Energy and the Body Electric: Cardiac Waves, Brain Waves and the Making of Quantities into Qualities." *Current Anthropology* 54 (Supplement 7): S139–S148.
- Kahn, Douglas. 2013. "The Aelectrosonic and Energetic Environments." In *Earth Sound Earth Signal*, 53–68. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LeMenager, Stephanie. 2011. "Petro-Melancholia: The BP Blowout and the Arts of Grief." *Qui Parle* 19 (2): 25–56.
- Masco, Joseph. 2010. "Bad Weather: On Planetary Crisis." *Social Studies of Science* 40 (1): 7–40.
- Mitchell, Timothy. 2009. "Carbon Democracy." *Economy and Society* 38 (3): 399–432.
- Morton, Timothy. 2009. Introduction. In *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Nisbet, James. 2014. "The Art of Processing: Anti Form, Energy, and Ecological Materiality." In *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems in Art of the 1960s and 1970s*, 129–80. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Rukeyser, Muriel. 1938. "The Book of the Dead." In *U.S. I*. <http://murielrukeyser.emuenglish.org/writing/the-book-of-the-dead/>.
- Shannon, Laurie, Vin Nardizzi, Ken Hiltner, Saree Makdisi, Michael Ziser, and Imre Szeman. 2011. "Editor's Column: Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power, and Other Energy Sources." *PMLA* 126 (2): 305–23.
- Van Wyck, Peter C. 2012. "Northern War Stories: The Dene, the Archive, and Canada's Atomic Modernity." In *Bearing Witness: Perspectives on War and Peace from the Arts and Humanities*, edited by Sherrill Grace, Patrick Imbert, and Tiffany Johnstone, 174–88. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Watts, Michael. 2001. "Petro-Violence: Community, Extraction, and Political Ecology of a Mythic Commodity." In *Violent Environments*, edited by Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael Watts, 189–212. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Wenzel, Jennifer. 2006. "Petro-magic-realism: Toward a Political Ecology of Nigerian Literature." *Postcolonial Studies* 9 (4): 449–64.
- Yenelouis, Bernard. 2013. "Images." *Diacritics* 41 (3).

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

Marina Peterson
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

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

Week 2: September 4

Bobcats Beyond Gas

McDaniel, Caitlyn. 2014. “Bobcats Leap Beyond Gas.” *College Green Magazine* June 17.
<http://www.collegegreenmag.com/bobcats-leap-beyond-gas>

Harold Perkins
Department of Geography

“Climate Justice”

Readings:

Gervey, J. 2008. Responsibility. In *The Ethics of Climate Change*. Pp. 57-87. London: Continuum.

Ferguson, Frances. 2013. “Climate Change and Us.” *Diacritics* 41 (3): 32–38.

Week 3: September 11

William Condee
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

“Fracking the Opera House”

Readings:

Condee, William Faricy. 2005. *Coal and Culture: Opera Houses in Appalachia*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Chs. 1, 3 & 5

Kenarov, Dimiter. 2013. Unlikely Dissidents: Two States, Three Countries, Four Opponents of Fracking. *Virginia Quarterly Review* Spring: 160-197.

Inquiry

+ Mitchell, Timothy. 2009. "Carbon Democracy." *Economy and Society* 38 (3): 399–432.

Week 4: September 18

Andrea Frohne
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

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

Readings:

Maja-Pearce, Adewale. *Remembering Ken Saro-Wiwa and Other Essays*. Lagos: The New Gong, 2005. p. 2-48.

Urry, John. *Societies Beyond Oil. Oil Dregs and Social Futures*. London & New York: Zed Books, 2013. p. 136-154, +259-261.

Inquiry

+ Watts, Michael. 2001. “Petro-Violence: Community, Extraction, and Political Ecology of a Mythic Commodity.” In *Violent Environments*, edited by Nancy Lee Peluso and Michael Watts, 189–212. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week 5: September 25

Louis-Georges Schwartz
School of Film

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

Readings:

Strand, Trude. “Tightening The Noose: The Institutionalized Impoverishment of Gaza, 2005–2010.” *Journal Of Palestinian Studies* 43, no. 2 (Winter 2014): 6-23

Barthes, Roland. 1982. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, Roland. 1983. The Photographic Message. In *A Barthes Reader*. Edited by Susan Sontag. Pp. 194-211. New York: Hill and Wang.

Baxandall, Michael. 1988. The Period Eye. In *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*. Pp. 29-108. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yenelouis, Bernard. 2013. "Images." *Diacritics* 41 (3).

Stephanie Howe
Voinovich School

PORTSfuture documentary with Q&A

<http://www.portsfuture.com>

Week 6: October 2

Karen Pinkus
Professor of Italian and Comparative Literature
Cornell University

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

Readings:

Pinkus, Karen. 2009. Digital Gold. In *Alchemical Mercury: A Theory of Ambivalence*. Pp. 158-174. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

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

On EEBO:

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99838066

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:

Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics.” In *Biopolitics : A Reader*, edited Timothy Campbell and Adam Sitze. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013 [2003]: 161-192.

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]

Inquiry

+ Barad, Karen. 2011. “Nature’s Queer Performativity.” *Qui Parle* 19 (2): 121–58.

Week 9: October 23

Charles Buchanan
School of Interdisciplinary Arts

“Energy Production Visualized in a Twelfth-Century Cistercian *Moralia in Job* (Dijon: Bib. Municipale, MSS 168-170, 173): Issues of Interpretation”

Readings:

Conrad Rudolph, Violence and Daily Life: Reading, Art, and Polemics in the Cîteaux *Moralia in Job* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 3-14, 29-42, 62-83.

T.A. Heslip, review of Rudolph’s book, Art History 23:4 (Nov. 2000), pp. 642-643.

St. Bernard’s letter to William of St. Thierry, in Caecilia Davis-Weyer, Early Medieval Art, 300-1150: Sources and Documents (Toronto, 1996), 168-170.

Inquiry

+ Nisbet, James. 2014. “The Art of Processing: Anti Form, Energy, and Ecological Materiality.” In *Ecologies, Environments, and Energy Systems in Art of the 1960s and 1970s*, 129–80. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Week 10: October 30

Gretchen Bakke
Assistant Prof. of Anthropology
McGill University

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

Readings:

Ruddick, Nicholas. 1998. “Life and Death by Electricity in 1890: The Transfiguration of William Kemmler.” *Journal Of American Culture* 21(4): 79-87.

Fisker, Jacob Lund. 2005. “The Laws of Energy.” In *The Final Energy Crisis*. Edited by Andrew McKillop and Sheila Newman. Pp. 74-86. London: Pluto.

Week 11: November 6

Sound of/as energy: A symposium

Brian Harnetty

Josh Ottum

“Energy Soundscapes” collaborative

Readings:

Kahn, Douglas. 2013. “The Aelectrosonic and Energetic Environments.” In *Earth Sound Earth Signal*, 53–68. Berkeley: University of California Press.

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

Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," J. Natoli and L. Hutcheon (eds.), *A Postmodern Reader*, SUNY Press, 1993, pp. 223-242 (electronic resource via OU Library).

Inquiry

+ Morton, Timothy. 2009. Introduction. In *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Week 13: November 20

Garrett Field School of Interdisciplinary Arts

"Tractors, Factories, and Planes: The Modernizing World in Mahagama Sekera's Free Verse"

Readings:

Sekera, Mahagama. *Mak Nisāda Yat (The Reason Is...)*. Colombo: S. Godage & Brothers, 2007 [1964].

Sekera, Mahagama. *Rājatilake Lionel saha Priyanta (Rajatilake, Lionel, and Priyanta)*. Colombo: S. Godage & Brothers, 2006 [1967].

Rukeyser, Muriel. 1938. "The Book of the Dead." In *U.S. I*.
<http://murielrukeyser.emuenglish.org/writing/the-book-of-the-dead/>.

Inquiry

+ Shannon, Laurie, Vin Nardizzi, Ken Hiltner, Saree Makdisi, Michael Ziser, and Imre Szeman. 2011. "Editor's Column: Literature in the Ages of Wood, Tallow, Coal, Whale Oil, Gasoline, Atomic Power, and Other Energy Sources." *PMLA* 126 (2): 305–23.

Week 14: December 4

Final presentations

Dec. 11: final paper due