

Northwest Energy Policy and the Columbia River

(PA 567 Energy Resources Policy and Administration)

2021 Winter Term: Wednesdays, January 6 – March 17, 2021, from 6:40pm to 9:20pm
Stream the course live on Zoom or watch recordings at your convenience.

Faculty Team: [Dr. Hal Nelson](#), the lead instructor, will be assisted by a team of first-rate guest speakers who are among the Northwest's top energy policy makers and advisers, including Jeff Hammarlund who was the lead instructor for this course for 25 years and now serves as an informal course adviser, and [John Hairston](#), the Bonneville Power Administration's new Acting Administrator and CEO. This course was created in 1982 at the request of BPA, and BPA administrators regularly participate as the concluding guest speakers to explain how they attempt to address and find the right balance among the energy policy opportunities and challenges we have studied.

Course Content:

This course explores the history, politics, and institutions related to current energy policy and administration, with particular attention to the distinctive nature of energy policy issues in the Pacific Northwest and the Columbia River Basin. It provides social science theories and analytical tools to help graduate students and energy professionals navigate the complexities of the energy sector.

It begins by exploring some fundamental questions about energy policy in the Pacific Northwest:

- Why is energy policy an important topic for academic study and professional knowledge?
- What are some of the most important energy policy decisions and deals in our region over the past century that remain relevant today?
- What is distinctive about the institutional context for Northwest energy policy?
- What are some of the most important features we should know about the electricity and natural gas sectors?

This background information prepares us to explore some of the most important current and emerging energy policy issues impacting our region. We will do so with the help of some of the region's most knowledge and prominent energy policy experts. Student suggestions will help guide the selection of policy topics, but candidate topics include:

- The movement to incorporate energy and climate justice perspectives into the energy policy-making process by advocating for equity in the social and economic participation in the energy system, while also remediating social, economic, and health burdens on marginalized "frontline communities" that have been historically harmed by the energy system.
- Emerging strategies to support resilience, reliability, and flexibility in the generation, transmission, distribution, and consumption of energy.
- The latest developments in integrated resource planning and distribution planning.
- The role of energy sector economics, modeling, and policy analysis.
- Carbon and renewables regulation and management.
- Community-scale solar systems.
- The latest developments involving energy efficiency, demand response, distributed generation, energy storage, and other demand side management tools.
- Grid modernization and the greening of the grid.

- Balancing salmon recovery, hydropower generation, and the other multiple uses of the Columbia and Snake Rivers: Lower Snake River Management and the pros and cons of dam breaching.
- Where the Rubber meets the Road: How the BPA Administrator balances the energy policy and management opportunities and challenges faced by BPA and the region's broader energy community.
- Student presentations on relevant and cutting-edge energy policy topics.

Who Should Attend?

This course has been designed to serve three important audiences:

- Graduate students from PSU and other Northwest universities who:
 - Are pursuing degrees in a wide range of disciplines (such as public administration and policy, urban planning, engineering, sustainability, environmental sciences & management, engineering & technology management, business, economics, system science, history, and more), and
 - Appreciate the benefits of gaining a solid understanding of the historical, political, and policy dimensions involved in the development of sustainable approaches to energy and river operations in the Pacific Northwest and Columbia River Basin.
- Mid-career professionals with a wide range of academic and professional backgrounds who are already working in this or a related field, or are considering a career transition, and are interested in advancing their careers, or just learning more about this fascinating subject. Since this course has included a distance learning option for many years, we have been blessed with the participation of energy professionals from throughout the Northwest and from California, British Columbia, and beyond.
- With the launch of PSU's [**Graduate Certificate in Energy Policy and Management**](#) in late 2015, this course also serves an important new audience. It is one of the Energy Certificate's core courses.

For many years, BPA, consumer-owned and investor-owned utilities, the Energy Trust of Oregon, Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance, the region's state energy offices and public utilities commissions, advocacy organizations, and law and consulting firms, have encouraged and supported employees they have identified as future leaders to enroll in this course. This participant mix leads to lively and informative class discussions. In fact, by participating in this class, employers have identified and recruited excellent future employees, and students have found excellent jobs in this fascinating field. Many of the Northwest's most respected energy leaders enrolled in this course earlier in their careers. Many have generously returned as guest speakers to help us prepare the next generation of energy leaders.

We Have a Proven Track Record with Remote Learning:

Recognizing that this professional development or graduate credit opportunity would be just as valuable to the region's energy professionals and graduate students based outside the Portland area, PSU began offering this course through one of its Distance Learning Center classrooms in 2014. Participants living in other parts of the Northwest and beyond, and Portland-based students who needed to travel during some class sessions could still stream the class live, ask questions, and participate in class discussions. They could also stream recordings of any class session they missed or wanted to review. As a result, we have years of experience offering this course remotely. With the COVID pandemic, all participants (students, faculty, and guest speakers) will now stream class sessions live on their computers using PSU's Zoom account. In addition, all class participants will still have access to recordings of each session, which they can view at their convenience.

Registration and Additional Information:

This course can be taken for graduate university credit or through our non-credit “professional development option.” Links to these registration options are available on the [course website](#).

Additional Questions?

Contact Josh Metzler, Program Coordinator, at 503-725-5190 or jmetzler@pdx.edu.

PSU’s Graduate Certificate Program in Energy Policy and Management:

The energy industry is an important cornerstone of the regional economy, and Portland area is the epicenter of Northwest energy policy and innovation. PSU departments have offered graduate courses focusing on energy issues and techniques for energy analysis, and many PSU graduates are currently active in the industry. In late 2015, PSU announced plans to launch a new [Graduate Certificate Program in Energy Policy and Management](#). It is the result of a unique collaboration among five PSU units—Public Administration, Urban Studies and Planning, Economics, Engineering Technology Management, and Systems Science—to bring together relevant coursework in new combinations that will allow the next generation of energy professionals to address the unique challenges of the region’s future. [Dr. Hal Nelson](#), Associate Professor in the Department of Public Administration, is the Energy Certificate Program Director.

The Energy Certificate Program was designed with the help of extensive interviews and input from colleagues throughout the region’s energy industry and within the university. So far, 33 program alums have already received their Graduate Energy Certificate. In addition, 25 more students have taken Certificate Program courses, with more on the way. Student feedback on the value and quality of the courses has been very positive and the widespread support from energy industry leaders has been heartening.

The Energy Certificate Program already has an Academic Counsel composed of faculty representatives from each of the five participating departments. PSU is now in the process of forming an advisory board to provide additional guidance and support the program director and faculty team. Jeff Hammarlund, who taught energy policy courses at PSU for 25 years prior to his retirement, has agreed to be the founding chair of the advisory board.

The program offers a wide range of classes designed to create a foundation of knowledge about energy issues and possibilities, while also providing advanced skills and flexible course selection so that students can customize their studies to match their goals and areas of interest. It is available as an add-on for students in existing graduate programs, as well as a stand-alone option for professionals and college graduates to advance their existing careers or prepare for a transition to an exciting career in the fast-moving energy fields of energy policy and management.

For more information and to apply, visit the Energy Certificate Program [website](#).