Understanding Energy Policy and Climate Change: A Federal, State and Local Government Perspective

Course Number: PAD-699-Spring 2017

Class time -Monday 5:45-9:25 – Class Location: Husted Hall- 214

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Office Hours - by appointment

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Course Overview:

Energy and environmental issues, including climate change, represent among the more intensely debated and controversial topics in today’s political world. To comprehend fully the debate, it is essential to understand the fundamentals of energy markets and the energy policy impacts of federal, state and local government initiatives. For example, the energy crisis of the seventies ushered in a new more aggressive era of Federal policy and, in 2014, energy regulators in New York State promised a “regulatory overhaul” to address an “unsustainable” twentieth century power system and lead the transition to a cleaner energy environment.

The study of energy policy reflects an intricate interplay of economic, legal, regulatory, technological environmental, geopolitical and ethical dimensions.

This course will explore these dimensions encouraging class discussion of critical energy policy issues and the analysis of approaches to a clean, secure and equitable energy future. We plan to include several prominent guest lecturers including a Nobel Laureate to discuss climate change and a former Chairman of the New York Public Service Commission.

Educational Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, the students will be able to:

✔ Identify key energy and climate change issues
✔ Recognize the factors (e.g., political, economic) that drive energy policy
✔ Understand how Federal, state and local government actions impact climate change and energy policy
✔ Prepare accurate and concise issue briefs that critically investigate key energy/climate change issues
✔ Identify key sources of relevant and reliable energy and climate change data
Course Requirements:

A series of reading will be assigned to coincide with each class and the related subject matter. These readings were selected from a wide range of public documents and are available at no charge on the internet. They vary in length from 1-2 page fact sheets to complete research reports.

One book is assigned, “Panic at the Pump: The Energy Crisis and the Transformation of American Politics in the 1970s,” by Meg Jacobs (2016). The book is easily obtained and reasonably priced. I purchased a hardcover copy for less than $6.00 (plus postage) from the Book Outlet in Buffalo. In addition, copies were ordered through Mary Jane Books.

To facilitate class discussion, students are expected to complete the readings prior to the class they are assigned. Considering that the focus is on recent documents, there is a possibility that some assignments will be changed to reflect more current data and events.

Moreover, please keep in mind that the purpose of this syllabus is to provide a general course outline. It is likely that modifications will be made to the syllabus to accommodate the needs of the class and the schedules of the guest speakers.

Energy Policy/ Climate Change News:

With the arrival of the Trump administration with what appears to be dramatically different views on energy policy and climate change compared to the Obama administration, we can anticipate a period of intense debate, turbulence and change. It is recommended that students keep track of these events. Below are example of sources of reliable energy and climate change news:

An excellent source of energy and environmental news is “Living on Earth” heard locally on WAMC- 90.3 FM (Albany). For more information about the program, including archives dating back to 1991, see:

http://www.loe.org/index.html

The Washington Post and The New York Times offer reliable coverage of energy and climate change issues. Subscriptions to The Washington Post are available to students at no charge. See:

http://help.washingtonpost.com/link/portal/15067/15080/ArticleFolder/78/Digital-Subscriptions

The New York Times offers a heavily discounted subscription rate. See:

https://www.nytimes.com/subscriptions/edu/lp8LQFK.html?campaignId=69KUJ

The Guardian newspaper is also a great source of energy and climate change news. Access is free, but they encourage donations. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-change

Also, consider Yale University’s Environment 360, an online magazine offering opinion, analysis, reporting and debate on global environmental issues. http://e360.yale.edu/

CSPAN - offers a variety of presentations by leading experts in climate change, energy and environmental policy.

https://www.c-span.org/search/?searchtype=All&query=climate+change
Energy Policy - Historical Background:

For exploring the history of energy and energy issues, there are numerous sources. Two classic books in this area are by Daniel Yergin—“The Prize” (offers a comprehensive history of oil) and “The Quest” (focuses on energy and security issues- pages 419-520 are devoted to climate change).

Assignments:

Three issue briefs will be required. There is no final exam. The issue briefs will offer students an opportunity to probe in more detail the topics discussed in class and sharpen their writing, analytical and oral presentation skills.

Students may select their topic areas, but it is highly recommended that for each issue brief the topic area and research approach be outlined and discussed with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the assignment due date. Sample topics include:

- Analyze the threats to the implementation of the Clean Power Plan including the legal challenges.
- Research conducted by ACEEE finds that low-income households devote up to three times as much income to energy costs as do higher-income households. How would you address this issue?
- Analyze the threats to successful implementation of the Paris Agreement.
- What are the pros and cons of a Carbon Tax?

Each issue brief will be 4-6 pages in length. The use of charts, graphs and tables does not count against the page count. Please use 12 font, Times New Roman and double space. All references should be cited in MLA style. Additional information about the MLA can be found here: http://library.albany.edu/cfox?type=mla

For additional writing resources, see http://www.albany.edu/wci/resources.php

Grading:

Class participation- 20%

Several factors will be considered in assessing class participation including:

- Attendance
- Contributions in class (e.g., thoughtful comments, focused questions)
- Quality of the oral presentation of issue briefs
- Sharing additional insights uncovered during the course (e.g., articles, research, relevant energy news)

Issues Briefs- 80%

Issues briefs will be judged on several factors including:

- Responsiveness to the question(s) the brief is designed to address
- Accuracy
Section One: The Big Picture -- the Linkage Between Energy Policy and Climate Change

Week 1 (1/23) -- Setting the Stage

Lecture Topics: It is important to gain a basic understanding of the world’s energy profile and how energy policy interacts with a wide range of issues, some obvious and some not so obvious. We will also kick off the course (e.g., review course scope, requirements, and expectations).

- The course objectives
- Why does energy policy matter?
- Overview of how energy policy interplays with a multitude of critical, and often controversial, issues (e.g., climate change, environmental quality, economic growth, conflict between free market/small government solutions and dynamic government intervention)
- Trends in energy usage- Global, National, New York State
  - Review the types of energy resources that fuel the world (e.g., oil, hydro, geothermal)
  - Energy consumption (gross, percent of GDP)
  - How is the energy mix evolving (consumption by sector and fuel type)
  - Projections for the future energy mix (e.g., future of coal)
  - Energy price trends

Discussion Topics:

- Why did you select this course? What are your expectations?
- What issues do you think are the most important and why?
- What do the patterns and trends in energy consumption, energy mix and energy prices tell us? Globally? Nationally? In New York State?

Readings/Assignments:

A treasure trove of energy related statistics can be found at the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) web page-- https://www.eia.gov/

- Become familiar with the resources available from EIA. Review the current “Monthly Energy Review.” These lengthy reports (about 250 pages) consisting primarily of tables, charts and graphs Updates occur around the 22nd of each month. Please review Chapter One, “Energy Overview” in the most recent edition (approximately 12 pages). Here is the link to the December report:
  
  https://www.eia.gov/totalenergy/data/monthly/?src=home-b2
A rich source of New York State specific energy data is the **New York State Energy Research Development Authority (NYSERDA)**. The site also offers a wealth of information on what is going on in New York energy wise.

https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/Researchers-and-Policymakers/Energy-Prices/Annual-Prices

- Review NYSERDA’s publication, “**Patterns and Trends 2000-2014.**” (October 2016). Like the EPA monthly report, this report consists primarily of tables, charts and graphs. Skim the entire document, but focus on pages 1-35.

  https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/Publications/EA-Reports-and-Studies/Patterns-and-Trends

- Review the “**Renewable Energy Data Book**” (Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory). This document also consists primarily of tables, charts and graphs. Skim the entire document, but focus on the data summary pages (usually 1-2 pages) which precede each topic.

  http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy17osti/66591.pdf

**Optional Reading:**

International Energy Agency (IEA) -- http://www.iea.org/

BP Statistical Review of World Energy --


**Week 2 (1/30) - Climate Change and Energy Policy**

Climate change has proven to be one of the more controversial issues in recent years. Senator Bernie Sanders considers climate change the single greatest threat facing our planet. President Trump declared climate change a “hoax.”

Regardless of the “true” threat of climate change, it is often cited as a key driver behind current energy policy. Greenhouse gas emissions, especially CO₂, are considered by many as major contributors to climate change. In the United States, the energy sector contributes nearly 70 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. Approximately 90 percent of these emissions are represented by CO₂.

**In week 2, we will define climate change, explore its history and examine key statistics and data.**

**Lecture Topics:**

- Climate Change- an overview
  - The basics for the non-scientist
  - A brief history of climate change dating back to circa 1850
  - A review of key statistics and data

**Discussion Topics:**

- Did you find the statistics convincing? Any surprises?
Readings/Assignments:

Climate Change

☐ Read the climate change Q&A (Source: New York Times):


☐ Review the climate change timeline from BBC News (about 7 pages):


☐ Become familiar with the resources available at the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) climate change web site. It is a rich source of data that will likely prove helpful in your research.

https://www.epa.gov/climatechange

☐ Review the EPA’s “Climate Change Indicators in the United States 2016” This is a well-organized document featuring excellent graphics. Read pages 1-24 and the skim the remainder of the report.


☐ Read the Fact Sheet covering EPA’s assessment of climate change impacts on New York State (pages 1-2):


☐ Review the American Meteorological Association “State of the Climate in 2015“ report. The report is over 300 pages long and technical. I suggested only skimming the full document and focusing on the briefing slides. Here are the links:


The briefing slides (pages 1-20) highlight the key report findings:


☐ Read “National Security Implications of Climate-Related Risks and A Changing Climate,” a report by the US Department of Defense (May 2015), Pages 1-14


☐ Optional assignment--Try calculating your own carbon footprint:

https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/household-carbon-footprint-calculator
Optional Readings:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) offers a great source of climate change statistics and so does the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). See:

http://climate.nasa.gov/
https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/indicators/

The Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES)

The Center is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization promoting policies and actions to address climate and energy challenges. It is an excellent information source.

See: https://www.c2es.org/

The Center for Climate Strategies (CCS)

CCS offers a good source of information. Description from the Center’s web page—“CCS is a nonpartisan, non-advocacy, nonprofit 501(c) (3) organization. CCS’s mission is to help governments and stakeholders tackle issues of climate, economic, energy and environmental security through development and implementation of consensus-based, innovative, policies, plans, and actions.”

http://www.climatestrategies.us/

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Description from the IPCC web page—“IPCC is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change. The IPCC was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to provide policymakers with regular assessments of the scientific basis of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for adaptation and mitigation.” https://www.ipcc.ch/index.htm

IPCC’s climate change assessment report for policy makers provides valuable research and insights. See:


Week 3 (2/6) - Climate Change and Energy Policy (Continued)

In week 2, we focused on understanding the basics of climate change. In week 3 we explore the politics of climate change, including the perspective of the climate change skeptics, and examine two major initiatives designed to combat climate change (the Paris Agreement and the Clean Power Plan). Both initiatives face an uncertain future.

Lecture Topics:

✓ The politics of climate change
✓ The Paris Agreement
✓ The Clean Power Plan
✓ Status of climate change and energy policy under President Trump
Discussion Topics:

✔ Is the Paris Agreement too little, too late?
✔ What is the future of the Paris Agreement under the Trump administration?
✔ The Clean Power Plan is praised by some as an effective component of the United States effort to fight climate change and improve the environment. On the other hand, some see it as a job killer, decimating coal towns and contributing to higher electricity to costs to those who can least afford it. The legality of the Plan is expected to be tested by the Supreme Court. What is your opinion?
✔ Is the climate change debate more about politics than science?

Assignments:

The Paris Agreement

☐ Review the Paris Agreement... it is filled with legalize, but try to get the flavor of the document.


☐ As noted in the optional reading for Week 2, the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions is an excellent source for climate change information. (http://www.c2es.org/) Read: “UNFCCC Climate Transparency: Lessons Learned,” November 2016, by Jennifer Huang. Pages 1-4. Here is the link:


☐ A good source for background and updates on international energy/climate change events is the United Nation’s Framework Convention on Climate Change. Take a look:

http:// unfcc.int/2860.php

The Clean Power Plan

☐ Read the “Clean Power Plan Opportunity” from the Union of Concerned Scientists (9 pages):


Also check out the Union of Concerned Scientists web page for additional detail and updates.

http://www.ucsusa.org/our-work/global-warming/reduce-emissions/what-is-the-clean-power-plan#WIJ_4ZozW1t

☐ Watch President Obama’s press conference on the Clean Power Plan:

The President’s Press conference on the Clean Power Plan is also insightful. Here is the YouTube link to the 27-minute video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4ITx56WBv0
Read “The Climate-Change Gang,” by Scott Pruitt & Luther Strange, May 17, 2016 in the National Review. Pages 1-4. Pruitt was nominated by President Trump to head the US EPA.

http://www.nationalreview.com/article/435470/climate-change-attorneys-general

There are several “think tanks” that view concerns over climate change as greatly exaggerated. Two leading groups in this space are the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

Explore the Cato Institute’s opinions on climate change/energy policy by skimming their web page--https://www.cato.org/research/global-warming

Read “Trump Should Shine Spotlight on Shrouded Climate ‘Science.’” by Patrick Michaels of the Cato Institute (approximately 2 pages).


Review the Heritage Foundation’s views on climate change/energy policy. Read a sample of the blog posts.


Listen to Richard Lindzen, an MIT atmospheric physicist, offer a skeptical view of the dangers of climate change (about 5 minutes). Here is the link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwqIy8Ikv-c

Listen to Stephen Moore, along with the other co-author of “Fueling Freedom: Exposing the Mad War on Energy,” Kathleen Hartnett White discuss their book at a Texas Public Policy Foundation forum. They argue the need for continued dependence on fossil fuel and the limitations of renewables. The recording is about 45 minutes long.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iqILNhI_Bo

Naomi Oreskes is the author of the book “Merchants of Doubt” (Bloomsburg Publishing, 2010). She offers a provocative case that the doubts about the negative impacts of climate change was created by the same people that claimed that cigarette smoking was not dangerous to your health.

Watch the Oreskes presentation, “Answering Climate Change Skeptics” recorded at the University of Rhode Island (2010), about 73 minutes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXyTpY0NCp0
Optional Readings:


Read “Merchants of Doubt.” It is well written.

The book, “This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate” by Naomi Klein (Simon and Shuster, 2014) provides a provocative view that climate change is a monumental challenge requiring a restructuring of the global economy.

Section Two: Making the Sausage: The Mechanics of Energy Policy (State, Federal, Local)

Week 4 (2/13) - Energy Policy-The Role of the States

We lead this section with state policy because states often play a strong role in energy policy. This is especially true in certain states both small (e.g., Rhode Island, Vermont) and large (e.g., New York, California). Some states, however, have traditionally played a less aggressive role (e.g., states in the Deep South). In week four we explore the role of states in energy policy with a focus on New York State.

Lecture Topics:

✓ Overview of the role of the states in energy policy
✓ Major players in New York State Energy Policy
  o New York Power Authority (NYPA)-model for public power, established by Franklin D. Roosevelt as NY governor
  o The Governor’s Office (Republican and Democrat)
  o New York Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)
  o New York Public Service Commission (arguably the most powerful in the nation)
  o Other State agencies (e.g., Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of State)

Discussion Topics:

✓ Should New York play a less activist role because energy issues are often national and international in scope? A more activist role?
Assignments:


- Read a brief history of NYSERDA (about 2 pages)
  https://www.nyserda.ny.gov/About/History-of-NYSERDA

- First briefing paper due this week (2/13). Approximately 10 minutes will be allocated for students to share their results.

Optional Readings:

Fracking was a highly controversial issue in New York. Here is New York Health Department’s report on the safety of fracking-- http://www.health.ny.gov/press/releases/2014/2014-12-17_fracking_report.htm

Week 5 (2/20) - New York State Energy Policy

In week four, we explored the role of states and some of the key players in New York’s energy government framework. This week we explore some of the specific actions planned or undertaken by New York State.

Lecture Topics:

- Recent New York’s energy policy actions
  - New York State Energy Plan
  - Governor’s ban on fracking in New York State
  - State Energy Conservation Construction Code (updated in 2016)
  - Executive Order 88 (sets energy reduction targets for state buildings including SUNY-Albany- 20% reduction by 2020)
  - The University at Albany commitment to reach climate neutrality by the late 21st century

Discussion Topics:

- Is the New York Energy Plan headed in the right direction?

Assignments:

☐ Read Executive Order #88 “Directing State Agencies and Authorities to Improve the energy efficiency of State Buildings” (2 pages)


☐ Check out what is happening at SUNY-Albany regarding energy/environmental policy.

http://www.albany.edu/gogreen/

http://www.albany.edu/gogreen/sustainability_at_ualbany.shtml

☐ Read about what other colleges and universities are doing regarding renewables, see Ben Goldfarb’s article on Yale’s “Environment 360.” Here is the link:

http://e360.yale.edu/feature/on_college_campuses_progress_on_renewable_energy/3048/

Optional Readings:


Fracking was a highly controversial issue in New York. Here is New York Health Department’s report on the safety of fracking:


Week 6 (2/27) - Regulation of Electric and Gas Utilities

America’s power plants are the single largest source of carbon emissions, responsible for approximately 40 percent of emissions nationwide. For the most part, utilities are regulated at the State level. In the late 1800s, early 1900’s, regulation of electricity was primarily a local government responsibility. The development of the transformer, circa 1900, allowed power to travel long distances leading to the rise of state regulation.

Lecture Topics:

✓ Why utilities are heavily regulated?
✓ The primary objectives of utility regulation
✓ How state regulatory commissions play a key role in energy policy and climate change.
✓ New York’s Public Service Commission (PSC) - established in 1907- a brief history
✓ The PSC moved from primarily a body to secure reliable service at just rates to a policy making body, arguably the most powerful utility Commission in the country. Examples of PSC actions:
  o Ushered in the era of “effective competition and increased customer choice” (Order-96-12)
Divestiture of power plants by mainline utilities
Implementation of a non bypassable System Benefits Charge
Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (EEPS)

Discussion Topics:

☑ How do you see the role of regulation? Do we over regulate or under regulate?
☑ Should the Legislature play a more prominent role?

Assignments:

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) is a non-profit organization dedicated to representing the State public service commissions who regulate the utilities that provide essential services such as energy, telecommunications, power, water, and transportation. The organization was founded in 1889. Check out the NARUC web page: [http://naruc.org/](http://naruc.org/)

☐ Read a brief history of the Systems Benefit Charge at the Department of Public Service Web page.


Here is the link: [http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1399&amp;context=pelr](http://digitalcommons.pace.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1399&amp;context=pelr)


Optional Readings:

Read NARUC’s research paper—“Critical Infrastructure Protection: An Introduction for State Utility Regulators,” Keogh and Thomas, 09/2016, Pages 1 -23. This paper gives you an idea of the tradeoffs that confront regulators and how they might meet the challenge. This issue may become more urgent if the trend toward more severe and destructive weather continues.

[https://pubs.naruc.org/pub/D10AF40A-AD04-3983-7421-9FBE970D87F3](https://pubs.naruc.org/pub/D10AF40A-AD04-3983-7421-9FBE970D87F3)

Read about Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard (EEPS). Key documents can be found on the PSC web page:

Week 7 (3/06) - Energy Efficiency as a Resource

Energy Efficiency equals energy savings and less need to produce energy. In recent years, most energy-consuming devices from light bulbs to jet engines have experienced significant improvements in energy efficiency. For example, today’s refrigerators are as much as 75 percent more efficient than those manufactured in the seventies and eighties. According to the EIA, from 1950 to 2011, energy intensity in the United States decreased by 58% per real dollar of gross domestic product.

Lecture Topics:

✓ History of New York State’s leadership role in energy efficiency
✓ How are energy efficiency programs funded? How are they administered?
✓ Are the programs cost effective?
✓ Roles beyond energy savings (e.g., “economic justice,” economic growth, health and safety)
✓ How are energy efficiency programs evaluated?
✓ What are the long-term impacts?

Discussion Topics:

✓ Is energy efficiency an adequate substitute for building a power plant?
✓ Can we trust the estimates of energy savings? Do the energy savings persist?

Assignments:

☐ Become familiar with the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) web page: http://aceee.org/


http://aceee.org/research-report/u1604


http://aceee.org/state-policy/scorecard


Week 8 (3/20) – Recent NY Public Service Commission Actions and Goals

The PSC has been responsible for more groundbreaking activity in the last 20 years or so years than in previous 90. It is one of the most powerful Commissions in the country. This week we look at PSC actions over about the last three years.

Lecture Topics:

- REV (Reforming the Energy Vision)—goal is to establish New York as a leader in the transition to a clean energy economy. (ongoing effort began in 2014)
  - REV proposes a comprehensive “regulatory overhaul” that will reinvent how we produce, deliver and consume energy
  - Increased emphasis reducing electricity demand at peak times
  - Demand response/real time pricing
  - Micro grids
- Modernization of electricity grid (e.g., transmission lines, transformers)
- Distributed Energy Resources
- Technological innovation (e.g., smart meters, cost effective energy storage)
- New York’s Clean Energy Standard (2016) - 50 percent of the state’s power to come from renewable sources by 2030.

Discussion Topics:

- Does New York need a “regulatory overhaul” as prospered through REV? Is the PSC on the right track?
- Are there unintended consequences of innovative regulatory solutions (e.g., what does increased use of “off grid” power means to the cost to ratepayers of maintaining the existing infrastructure?)
- Can we depend on renewables, even on a cloudy day with no wind?

Assignments:

- Read the overview of REV found at the Department of Public Service web page:
  
☐ Read the “Rev Order,” 14-M-0101 – “Proceeding on Motion of the Commission in Regard to Reforming the Energy Vision” Read pages 1-29

☐ Read about the Clean Energy Fund. Here is the order authorizing the “framework”- CASE 14-M-0094, January 21, 2016. Read pages 1-14. Here is the link:


Week 9 (3/27) - The Role of the New York Independent System Operator

The New York Independent System Operator (NYISO) operates competitive wholesale markets to manage the flow of electricity across New York—from the power producers who generate it to the local utilities that deliver it to residents and businesses.

Lecture Topics:

✓ The NYISO Mission
  o Operating open, fair and competitive wholesale electricity markets
  o Planning, forecasting, research
  o Maintaining and enhancing regional reliability
✓ NYISO’s view on New York’s Energy Future

Discussion Topics:

✓ Tentative plan is to have a guest speaker from the NYISO...will include Q&A session.

Assignments:

☐ Second briefing paper due, week 8 (3/20). Approximately 10 minutes will be allocated for each student to share their results.

☐ Become familiar with the NYISO web page- https://home.nyiso.com/
Read “Power Trends 2016” (NYISO)— pages 1-56
http://www.nyiso.com/public/webdocs/media_room/publications_presentations/Power_Trends/Po
wer_Trends/2016-power-trends-FINAL-070516.pdf

Read the NYISO 2016-20 Strategic Plan, pages 1-13:

Optional Readings:

Read “Powering New York” (NYISO)

Weeks 10+11 (4/3, 4/17) - The increasing role of the Federal government involvement in Energy Policy

The Federal Government role in energy dates back to the early 1900s with a significant acceleration during the depression and the New Deal. The next major jump in Federal activity resulted from the “Energy Crisis” of the seventies and early eighties. This topic will be covered over two weeks to allow time for a discussion of the book “Panic at the Pump.” The assignment list covers both weeks.

✓ The early history-FDR to Nixon
  o Federal Water Power Act of 1920
  o The Public Utility Holding Company Act of 1935
  o The Federal Power Act of 1935
  o Clean Air Act (1970)- created the EPA

✓ The Energy Crisis results in a more significant Federal role
  o Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007
  o Appliance Standards (e.g., Energy Star)
  o “CAFE” Standards
  o Federal Energy Regulatory Commission(FERC)- select rulings

Discussion Topics:

A case can be made that government initiative has proven a cost effective method of moving energy efficiency faster and more completely that leaving progress to the whims of marketplace. On the other hand, some have argued that government involvement in energy markets is too heavy handed. For example, do you think that the government was correct in mandating vehicle mileage standards to the auto industry and limiting consumer choices in light bulb technologies?
Assignments:


☐ Read about CAFE Standards (pages 1-3):

☐ Read an opposing point of view on the value of CAFE Standards- “Fleet-Wide Regulations Costly and Unwarranted” by Diane Katz of the Heritage Foundation. Pages 1-3.


Week 12 (4/24) - The Role of Local Government

In recent years, we have seen a dramatic rise in local government involvement in energy policy. Initiatives include carbon taxes, building codes, and sustainability programs.

✓ The rise of local governments in energy policy
✓ Examples of local initiatives:
  o “Five Cities” program (energy plans for five of New York’s larger cities)
  o The City of Albany’s Sustainability Advisory Committee
  o Seattle WA commitment to have carbon neutral municipal operations by 2050 (e.g., city buildings and vehicles, street lighting)
  o Boulder CO Climate Action Plan Tax
  o OneNYC – NYC commits to being a global leader in the fight against climate change and the “most sustainable big city in the world.”
  o San Diego CA - Renewable Energy and Efficiency Program
     https://www.sandiego.gov/water/quality/reports/2013/sustainability/renewable

Discussion Topics:

✓ Is this a proper role for local government or should they stick to basic services such as police, fire and road maintenance?
✓ Does your community have an energy program?

Assignments:

☐ Take a look at the City of Albany’s Sustainability Plan activities
   http://www.albanysustainability.org/
Read Albany’s Plan as part of the Five Cities program, pages 1-61: http://www.nypa.gov/buildsmartny/fivecities.html


Section Three-Bringing it all Together

Week 13 (5/1)

TBD (I want to allow some flexibility at the end in case we need more time to complete the above topics and to accommodate guest speakers.)

Third briefing paper due, week 13 (5/1). Approximately 10 minutes will be allocated for students to share their results.

Week 14 (5/8) - Wrap Up

Tie up loose ends
Class summary
Feedback for future classes

No final exam!