Energy Policy & Human Behavior

Instructor: Kim Wolske, PhD
Research Associate (Assistant Professor), Harris Public Policy
wolske@uchicago.edu

Office hours: Thursdays, 1:30 – 2:30 pm. If that doesn't work for you, please e-mail me to setup another time. I am generally not on campus on Fridays.

Office location: Harris 167, 1155 E. 60th St. (West side of the building)

TA: Kaleb Nyquist, kdnyquist@uchicago.edu
Office hours by appointment.

COURSE OVERVIEW
The success of many environmental and energy-related policies depends on the support and cooperation of the public. This course, drawing from multiple fields of behavioral science, will examine the psychological and social aspects of different energy-related behaviors, ranging from household energy conservation and adoption of efficient and renewable energy goods, to public support and opposition for emergent energy technologies and climate mitigation policies. Through a mix of lecture and discussion, we will explore questions such as: what are potential motivations and barriers to the uptake of energy efficient and renewable energy technologies? Why are incentives and providing information often inadequate to effect change? Why is climate change such a divisive issue and what are the challenges of generating broad support for mitigation policies? Why do people support clean energy broadly but object to developments when proposed in their own communities? By taking a behavioral approach, the course aims to equip students with an enhanced framework for evaluating energy and environmental policies that goes beyond traditional economic and regulatory perspectives.

COURSE FORMAT:
Classes will be a mix of lecture and seminar-style discussion focused on topics presented in the readings. You are highly encouraged to participate in class. You will get more out of the material the more you try to apply it to the topics of interest to you.

COURSE MATERIALS
All course materials are available on Canvas. The “Pages” section of Canvas is a dynamic version of the syllabus. Pages provide direct links to the reading materials, occasional pre-reading activities, links to interesting websites, and where helpful, introductory text to orient you to the readings. If you’re looking for past lecture slides, see the Files section where materials are organized in four folders: the syllabus, readings, assignments, and lecture slides.

COURSE POLICIES
Attendance: Attendance will be taken every day. You may miss one class after the first day for any reason without contacting me. (If you are a hot mess of germs, please stay home, take care of yourself, and help limit the spread of illness around Harris.) Any unexcused absences beyond this will affect your participation grade. That said, I understand that life happens. If there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., death in the family, ongoing illness, etc.) that will cause you to
miss more than one class, please contact me. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out from fellow classmates what you missed.

Laptops, Tablets & Cell Phones: Please keep laptops and electronic devices silenced, put away, and out of sight. The research is pretty clear: distractions and (attempted) multi-tasking can be detrimental to your ability to pay attention and retain information. Plan to take notes longhand on paper. I will provide printouts of the lecture slides. Empirical research has shown that taking notes by hand leads to better comprehension and retention – plus creates a less distracting classroom environment for others. Most of my past students have been grateful for this policy.  


Academic Integrity: Cheating and plagiarism are serious forms of academic misconduct and will result in a failing grade. Be aware, plagiarism goes beyond copying text word-for-word. See the examples at the bottom of this page: https://internationalaffairs.uchicago.edu/page/honest-work-and-academic-integrity-plagiarism. All written submissions must be your own original work. As described in the student handbook, “Proper acknowledgment of another’s ideas, whether by direct quotation or paraphrase, is expected. In particular, if any written or electronic source is consulted and material is used from that source, directly or indirectly, the source should be identified by author, title, and page number, or by website and date accessed. Any doubts about what constitutes ‘use’ should be addressed to the instructor.”

Turning in Assignments: Please submit completed assignments to the Assignments section of Canvas. Unless otherwise noted, assignments will be docked 10% for each 24-hour period that they are late. I will not accept assignments that are more than 72 hours late. (See exceptions for reading reflections). Please do not include your name on written assignments, as we will grade anonymously. Only use your UChicago ID number.

Communication: I try to respond to email within a reasonable time frame, but please allow up to 24 hours for a response. I may be less responsive over the weekend. Announcements to the class will be sent via Canvas, so be sure your accounts are setup to receive those messages.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES
If you require any accommodations for this course, please bring a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Services office) to me as soon as possible so that we may discuss how your accommodations may be implemented. The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the University’s programs or services, you are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. To receive reasonable accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with Student Disability Services. Please contact the office at 773-702-6000/TTY 773-795-1186 or disabilities@uchicago.edu, or visit the website at disabilities.uchicago.edu. Student Disability Services is located at 5501 S. Ellis Avenue.

Fall 2018
PPHA 39925
### Overview of Course Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance and Participation</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>You are encouraged to participate in the class by offering insights, asking questions, and sharing relevant examples from your own experiences. I understand that not everyone is naturally outgoing or comfortable speaking up. You can still engage by posting additional questions, insights, and examples to the Canvas discussion boards, or by coming to discuss material with me during office hours. On occasion, I might ask the class to complete brief activities (e.g., a survey or other thought exercise) to help illustrate course content. While these activities will not be graded, your completion of them will count toward your participation grade.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Reading Reflections</strong></th>
<th>8%</th>
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<td>To help ensure quality class discussions, you are expected to post 8 reflections on the readings (300 words max.) over the quarter. Each reading reflection is due <strong>by 10:00 pm the night before class</strong>. Reflections will be graded on a ✓-, ✓, ✓+ basis. See handout for more details.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Article Presentation &amp; Co-facilitator Outline</strong></th>
<th>15%</th>
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<td>Once during the quarter, you will be a designated co-facilitator for the class discussion (there may be more than one person for a given class period). This assignment has two parts: (1) During class, you will give an 8-minute presentation that summarizes an empirical journal article related to the day’s topic. (See readings marked [P]). Your job is to be the resident expert on the paper and to help your peers extract policy-relevant insights. (2) In addition to the presentation, you will be responsible for preparing an outline of discussion points and interesting questions related to the day’s topics – and drawing from that outline to help facilitate the discussion. See handout for additional details. Please sign up for your co-facilitator day by <strong>Sunday, October 7th, 5pm</strong>.</td>
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<th><strong>Take-Home Midterm</strong></th>
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<td>A take-home midterm exam comprised of short essay questions will be assigned during week 4. Your responses will be due the following week on <strong>November 1st</strong> by the start of class.</td>
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<th><strong>Class Debate</strong></th>
<th>20%</th>
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<td>On <strong>December 13</strong> during our final exam period, we will have two in-class team policy debates. Your grade will be based on the quality of your team’s arguments and counter-arguments, as they draw from material discussed in the class. You will also submit (on an individual basis) a written document summarizing and justifying your main arguments. Additional details will be provided later in the term. The debate part of this assignment is worth 10%; the accompanying written assignment is worth 10%. Additional details will be provided later in the term.</td>
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<th><strong>Policy Issue Brief</strong></th>
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<td>Using what you have learned in the course, you will write a policy issue brief on an energy or climate change-related topic of your choice. Issue briefs are common tools used to influence the design or evaluation of policies. Compared to policy memos, they go in more depth about the background on an issue and the evidence-base for different recommendations. The purpose of your brief will be to inform decision-makers about relevant dimensions of human behavior that could enhance policy effectiveness for your chosen topic. More information will be provided later in the term. Topic selection is due <strong>October 23</strong> at the start of class. Final brief is due <strong>Friday, November 30th by 5pm</strong>.</td>
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## COURSE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due By Start of Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due By Start of Class</th>
<th>Other deadlines</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>PART 1: HOUSEHOLD ENERGY USE</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>Course Overview &amp; Introduction: Why take a behavioral approach to energy policy?</td>
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<td>10/4</td>
<td>Perceptions of Energy &amp; Implications</td>
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<td>Presentation Sign-up due Sunday, 10/7 by 5pm</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>Limits of Providing Information I: Bounded Rationality &amp; Cognitive Biases</td>
<td>10/11</td>
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<td>Limits of Providing Information II: Psychological &amp; Social Factors</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10/16</td>
<td>Labels &amp; Information Disclosure</td>
<td>10/18</td>
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<td>Feedback</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>10/23</td>
<td>Social Influence</td>
<td>Submit Issue Brief Topic</td>
<td>10/25</td>
<td>Incentives &amp; Contextual Factors</td>
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<td><strong>PART 2: PUBLIC (DIS)ENGAGEMENT WITH CLIMATE CHANGE</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10/30</td>
<td>Perceptions of Climate Change &amp; Psychological Barriers to Engagement</td>
<td>11/1</td>
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<td>The Role of Weather &amp; Personal Experience</td>
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<td>Take-Home Midterm due</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11/6</td>
<td>Climate change as culture war I: Ideology &amp; Motivated Reasoning</td>
<td>11/8</td>
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<td>Climate Change as culture war II: Cultural cognition, morals &amp; other worldviews</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11/13</td>
<td>Reframing Climate Change</td>
<td>11/15</td>
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<td>The Role of the Messenger</td>
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<td><strong>PART 3: PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR/OPPOSITION TO ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES</strong></td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11/20</td>
<td>Public Perceptions &amp; Acceptance of Energy Systems</td>
<td>Debate Topics Due</td>
<td>11/22</td>
<td>NO CLASS - THANKSGIVING</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>11/27</td>
<td>Opinion formation of new tech Case study: Geoengineering</td>
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<td>11/29</td>
<td>Risk Perceptions Case study: Hydraulic Fracturing</td>
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<td>Issue Brief Due by 11/30, 5pm</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>12/4</td>
<td>“NIMBYism” &amp; Local Opposition Case Study: Wind farms</td>
<td>12/6</td>
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<td>Trust and Process Case study: Wind farms</td>
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<td>Course Wrap-up</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>12/11</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<td>12/13</td>
<td>Class Debates during Final Exam period 8 – 10:50 am, 140B</td>
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SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

This schedule may change depending on class interests. The most up-to-date version of the syllabus will be on Canvas.

All readings unless otherwise marked are required and available on Canvas. Articles are listed in the recommended order for reading.

[<] = Readings marked with the “less than” symbol mean that you are only required to read the indicated excerpts.

[P] = Potential Presenter article. Once everyone signs up for a presentation slot, I will update Pages on Canvas to indicate which articles have been chosen. Unless you are the presenter, you are not required to read these articles. However, I encourage you to at least look through the abstract.

[A] = Additional resources of interest that are not required.

PART 1:
Household Energy Use

Oct. 2: Course Overview:
Why take a behavioral approach to energy policy?


Oct. 4: Common Perceptions of Energy & Their Implications


Revisit Dietz et al. 2009 from the first day, particularly the concept of RAER.

Additional readings of interest:


Oct 9:  **Limits of Providing Information I: Cognitive Biases**


**Presenter Article:**


**Additional readings of interest:**


Oct. 11:  **Limits of Providing Information II: Other Psychological Factors**


**Presenter Article:**


Oct. 16:  **Labels & Information disclosure**

<]  Lehner, M., Mont, O., & Heiskanen, E. (2016). Nudging – A promising tool for sustainable consumption behaviour? *Journal of Cleaner Production, 134*, 166–177. **Feel free to skip sections about nudging food choices.**


**Potential Presenter Articles:**


**Additional Reading of Interest**


**Oct. 18: Feedback: Making energy consumption and savings salient**


**Potential Presenter Articles:**


**Additional Readings of Interest:**


**Oct. 23: Social Influence: How others influence our behavior**


**Potential Presenter Articles:**


**Additional Reading of Interest:**


**Oct. 25:** **Incentives & Contextual Factors: Structuring the decision environment to facilitate household energy investments**

Fuller, M. C. (2010). *Driving demand for home energy improvements: motivating residential customers to invest in comprehensive upgrades that eliminate energy waste, avoid high utility bills, and spur the economy* (No. LBNL-3960E). Berkeley, CA: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. *Read Executive Summary (pp. 1-6); Sections 4-5 (pp. 22-27); Section 7 (pp. 36-42)*


**Presenter Articles:**


**Additional Readings of Interest:**


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**PART 2:**

**Public (Dis)Engagement in Climate Change**

**Oct. 30:** **Perceptions of Climate Change & Barriers to Engagement**


**Nov. 1:** The Role of Weather & Personal Experience


**Potential Presenter Articles:**


**Additional Readings of Interest:**


**Nov. 6:** Climate Change as a Culture War I: Political Ideology & Motivated Reasoning


Potential Presenter Articles:


Additional Readings of Interest:


Nov. 8: **Climate Change as a Culture War II: Values, Morals, and other Worldviews**


Please take the Moral Foundations survey here: [http://www.yourmorals.org/](http://www.yourmorals.org/) (You will have to register on the site, but your participation contributes to science!). Please take a screenshot of your results and post to Canvas. See Canvas Page for further instructions.

Presenter Article:


Additional Reading of Interest:


Nov. 13: **Reframing Climate Change & Climate Change Policies to Speak to Different Audiences**


Potential Presenter Articles:

One presenter should focus on how climate change is framed, choosing one of these:

The other presenter should pick a paper about the framing of policies:

Additional Readings of Interest:

Nov. 15: The role of the Messenger


Potential Presenter Articles:
PART 3:
Public Support for/Opposition to Energy Technologies

Nov. 20:  **Perceptions and acceptability of different energy sources**


**Potential Presenter Articles:**


**Additional Reading of Interest:**


Nov. 22:  **NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING.** Have a good break!

Nov. 27:  **Opinion Formation of Emergent Technologies**

**Case Study: Geoengineering**


**Potential Presenter Articles:**


Additional Resources of Interest:


Nov. 29: Risk Perceptions

Case Study: Hydraulic Fracturing

Watch this video to familiarize yourself with hydraulic fracturing for shale gas: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tudal_4x4F0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tudal_4x4F0)


Potential Presenter Articles


Dec. 4: Not In My BackYard!? Understanding Local Opposition

Case Study: Wind Energy


Potential Presenter Articles:


Additional Reading of Interest:


Dec. 6:  Building Public Support: Trust, Fairness, and Compensation
Case Study: Wind Energy


Potential Presenter Articles

*One presenter should pick a paper on procedural fairness (either of the two below).*


*The other presenter should focus on community payments.*


Additional Reading of Interest:


Dec. 11  NO CLASS (Exam week)

Dec. 13  Class Debates (in lieu of final exam), 8 – 10:50am, Harris 140B