


THE PHYSICS OF ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT (PHYSICS 161) FALL 2018	PROFESSOR RAGHUVeer PARTHASARATHY (Par-tha-sa-ra-thē) Office: 362 Willamette Hall EMAIL: raghu@uoregon.edu
--	---

SYLLABUS

*Welcome to “The Physics of Energy and the Environment!” This syllabus has a lot of detail on many components of the course that we’ve constructed to help you learn, and to make the term run smoothly. Don’t memorize it, but do **read it**. – Prof. Parthasarathy*

INSTRUCTORS AND LOGISTICAL INFORMATION

CLASS TIMES	TuTh 10:00-11:50 am, 30 Pacific
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Raghuvēer Parthasarathy (Par-tha-sa-ra-thē) Office: 362 Willamette Hall, Email: raghu@uoregon.edu
TEACHING ASSISTANTS	This course has a graduate student teaching fellow (GTF): Deepika Sundarraman , deepikas@uoregon.edu and a graduate student grader: Philippe Nguyen , pnguyen@uoregon.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Prof. Parthasarathy: Tu 1:00-1:50pm, Th 2:30-3:20pm, Willamette 362 Deepika Sundarraman: M 9:00-9:50am, F 12:00-12:50pm, Willamette 354C (walk through 354 to get to it.) Philippe Nguyen: Thurs. 1:00-1:50pm, Willamette 315 <i>Office hour times may change</i> , both by request (if particular times are not good for many students) and due to scheduling conflicts that arise. Make use of office hours! Even if you don’t have specific questions, feel free to drop by and chat about course topics.
EMAIL	Email: You can certainly ask questions of me and the teaching assistants by email! I usually respond within 24 hours; I rarely respond to emails that begin “Hey...” or are otherwise poorly constructed. Please call me “Prof. Parthasarathy” in all communications.
 SCIENCE LITERACY PROGRAM	As part of the Science Literacy Program (SLP) , we will pay special attention to the ways in which science connects to societal issues and “big ideas.” SLP courses include General Education courses for non-science majors and courses for science majors taught by teams of faculty, graduate fellows, and undergraduate scholars, who will include opportunities during class time for you to engage with topics through a variety of activities. For more information about the program see scilit.uoregon.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND MATERIALS

TOPICS AND AIMS

Modern civilization uses vast amounts of energy. What do we use it for? Is our present rate of energy consumption sustainable? What are its consequences for the environment? How can we intelligently make decisions about energy issues?

We'll explore these questions *quantitatively*, investigating the science behind energy use and putting “real numbers” into our characterization of it. Why? It's easy to have good intentions about energy and the environment, but without quantitative analysis, good intentions alone can't guide important decisions and can often do real harm.

Who are you? Being in this course, it's likely that you care about issues regarding energy and the environment. Being university students, it's likely that you'll be the decision-makers of the future – businesspeople, policy makers, or at least voters – who will be faced with complex choices having to do with energy and society. The course is designed for **non-science majors**, and we'll develop the ability to make deep insights with simple math.

We'll examine a variety of topics:

1. Energy: What is it?
2. Energy, Heat, and Thermodynamics
3. Transportation
4. Fossil Fuels and their Environmental Impacts
5. Renewable energy sources (a very brief look*)
6. The Science of Climate, and Climate Change

* We'll only take a brief look at renewable energy (wind, solar, etc.), because it is important enough to warrant its own course, Physics 162. Many students who take 161 also take 162.

Other goals: We will develop our abilities to think critically and quantitatively about scientific issues. Science, contrary to what you may have been mis-taught in the past, is not about “learning facts” but rather about learning how to investigate and draw logical conclusions. We'll practice this!

LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Students completing the course will have enhanced their abilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how physical principles influence energy use. • Assess and interpret graphs and quantitative data. • Understand the process by which science generates knowledge.
TEXTBOOK	<p>There is no required textbook for the course. The lectures plus supplemental readings will be sufficient. (See also “Reading Quizzes.”)</p> <p>Possibly useful:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Energy, Environment, and Climate</i> by Richard Wolfson – a very good book on these topics. A copy is on reserve at the Science Library. • We'll use parts of <i>Sustainable Energy – Without the Hot Air</i> by David MacKay, a remarkable book that quantifies a lot of energy-related issues. It's available free online, at http://www.withouthotair.com/.
CANVAS	<p>We will be using Canvas in this course to distribute course materials, and also for online assignments. URL: https://canvas.uoregon.edu/</p>

ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

READING QUIZZES	Reading assignments will precede many classes and will often have required “reading quizzes” associated with them. These will be answered in-class, usually via scantron forms.
QUIZZES	There will several short quizzes. (They won’t be surprises; you’ll get advance notice of at least one class.) We’ll use these to assess understanding of key points without the heavy weight of an exam. Each student’s lowest quiz score will be dropped from the overall total. There won’t be any make-up quizzes; if you miss one, this will be the quiz dropped from your overall grade calculation.
HOMEWORK	<p>There will be homework assignments approximately every week. Feel free to discuss the questions with others, but of course, <i>the work you submit should be your own</i>. Assignments will mainly be submitted online, via Canvas. Solutions will be posted – study these. <u>No late homework will be accepted.</u> Some assignments will involve finding and analyzing data. You should be able to navigate the internet and make graphs (e.g. with Excel).</p> <p><i>Homework grading:</i></p> <p>(1) Each student’s lowest score will be dropped from the overall total.</p> <p>(2) We will not comment in detail on your homework when grading it. It is especially important to study the problem set solutions.</p>
POST-CLASS NOTES	Briefly reviewing what one learned from a class session helps cement one’s understanding. Within 24 hours of the end of each class, submit a short (about 100 words) summary of what the key points of that day’s class were. You can also describe things that were unclear or that need further explanation. These will be submitted on-line, via Canvas. The notes will be graded on content (i.e. that they capture something important about the day’s lessons) and clarity. We’ll give examples of good and bad notes.
EXAMS	There will be one midterm exam, tentatively scheduled for October 23, and a final exam on 8:00am Monday, December 3. Exams will have a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions.
GRADING	<p>The various grade components and their weights for the final grade are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Quizzes: 17%</i> • <i>Reading Quizzes: 16%</i> • <i>Homework Assignments: 16%</i> • <i>Post-class summaries: 11%</i> • <i>Midterm Exam: 19%</i> • <i>Final Exam: 21%</i> <p>Overall Grade: A=88-100%; B=76-87.9%; C=64-75.9%; D=52-63.9%; F<52%.</p>

ABSENCES	<p>I realize that it is unavoidable that people will have to miss a few classes (e.g. due to illness). Therefore I will rescale the grades of the post-class notes such that 90% becomes 100%. (In other words, I will divide each student's percentage by 0.9, with a ceiling of 100%. If your original score were 75%, the rescaled score would be 83%.) I will not allow "makeup" quizzes, etc. – the point of this policy is to avoid the messes created by these sorts of ad-hoc arrangements.</p> <p>Exams. Students with a serious and well-documented reason for missing an exam should contact Prof. Parthasarathy.</p>
<p>LAPTOPS IN CLASS</p> <p><u>The use of laptop computers in class is not allowed.</u> Why? Several studies, plus past experience, show that students using laptops in class spend a lot of time on non-class-related activities (Facebook, games, ...) and that these distractions negatively impact both learning and grades. This alone isn't a reason to ban laptops – you're responsible for your own performance. <i>In addition</i>, however, studies have shown that non-class-related laptop use distracts and impacts the learning of <i>other students nearby</i>. (E.g. Fried, C. B. <i>Computers & Education</i> 50, 906-914 (2008).) Plus, <i>students</i> have complained to me about the environment created by their classmates' laptop use. (Taking notes by hand, by the way, is more effective in cementing concepts in your mind.)</p> <p>In summary, laptops are not allowed in class. The only exceptions will be for people with documented medical needs; please see me if this is the case.</p>	
HOW TO DO WELL IN THE COURSE	<p>Plan ahead and start early! This applies to everything in the course – homework, reading assignments, and general studying. It will be crucial to keep up with the course and not fall behind; later topics build on earlier ones. For a 4 credit course, the University's expectation is that you'll spend about 10 hours per week outside of class on coursework.¹</p> <p>Make use of resources. If you have questions about lectures, assignments, readings, or other matters, come to Prof. Parthasarathy's or the GTFs' office hours with questions! Also, we encourage communication by phone or email, though we may often reply that it's more effective to chat in person, at office hours.</p> <p>The University's Tutoring and Learning Center (TLC) provides drop-in math and writing support in addition to tutoring, study skills support, workshops, and more. It is located in the 4th Floor of the Knight Library ; for more information, see http://tlc.uoregon.edu/ .</p> <p><i>Also: Sleep! Many studies show that sleeping helps memory and understanding.</i></p>
NECESSARY CAVEATS	<p>Students are expected to abide by university policies on academic honesty, avoiding plagiarism, fabrication, cheating, and academic misconduct. The Student Conduct Code (http://conduct.uoregon.edu/) provides definitions of these terms</p>

¹ <https://blogs.uoregon.edu/uocc/files/2016/10/Credit-Hour-and-Student-Workload-Policies-2af13yr.pdf>

	<p>and explanations of the university policy on the subject. The UO Library also provides a guide to avoiding plagiarism (http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/). You are responsible for understanding these regulations and abiding by them. Students should be particularly careful to avoid plagiarism in out-of-class assignments, as well as projects and exams. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with severely, as it is disrespectful to your fellow students and your instructor, as well as being against both university regulations and state laws.</p>
<p>POLICY ON MISSED DEADLINES, SIGNIFICANT ABSENCES & INCOMPLETES</p>	<p>Only the following unforeseen and uncontrollable emergency situations are acceptable excuses for missed deadlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented serious illness/injury; • Documented death in the <i>immediate</i> family. <p>All of the following are unacceptable – note that they include “personal” as well as “technological” excuses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special occasions (e.g. weddings, birthdays, anniversaries etc.). • Work and school conflicts: “I had to work extra hours,” “I have a huge midterm tomorrow in another class...” • Couldn’t get to campus (alarm didn’t ring; missed the bus; etc.). • Being generally “busy” or having “a lot going on right now...” • Forgot or “mixed up” the assignment or due date. • No access to computer or printer; assignment completed on computer is “missing,” was accidentally erased, or is inaccessible.
<p>STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES</p>	<p>All of us at the University of Oregon are working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.</p>