



THE UNIVERSITY  
of EDINBURGH



PENN PROGRAM IN  
ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES

## **Call for Participation: Working Group on Intersecting Energy Cultures**

**Deadline for Expressions of Interest:** 15 August, 2022

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We are delighted to announce the launch of a new interdisciplinary working group focused on intersecting energy cultures. In this first phase of the project, we are calling for expressions of interest from researchers with aligned interests to join the working group. Together, we aim to collectively develop new modes of enquiry for carrying out participatory, community-based and arts-driven research into the intersecting impacts of energy production. Successful applicants will be invited to workshop their research ideas at a two-day event at the University of Pennsylvania on November 17 - 18, 2022, and participate in the wider activities of the working group.

Members of the working group will have the opportunity to:

- Contribute to the collective development of original, arts-driven methodologies working towards just transitions in community spaces
- Workshop your own research project and exchange feedback with group members
- Receive funding to compensate community partners for their involvement in your chosen program of research
- Be named on collective funding applications to further working group activities
- Be involved as a contributor in project outputs and publications
- Be part of a vibrant, international, and interdisciplinary community of researchers

### **Project Aims:**

Our primary aim is to bring together researchers working directly with community-based partners to develop a picture of the varied and uneven impacts that stem from the international workings of energy industries. Our emphasis on intersecting energy cultures means that we seek to explore the impacts of industries including (but not limited to) petroleum, nuclear, gas, and coal as well as renewable energy forms. By thinking about the ways that these energy forms intersect, this working group will specifically attend to how communities are all too frequently caught in the middle of multiple and historically overlapping forms of energy production, which amplify existing social and economic vulnerabilities that include, inter alia, gender, race, and class. We contend that this expansive focus on the overlapping histories and futures of energy production is necessary in order to understand the ways that new energy regimes often, quite literally, build upon existing energy infrastructures and legal frameworks.

In developing this project through the experimental rubric of the environmental humanities, we seek to explore the ways that arts-driven and humanistic methods of inquiry might enable us to carry out meaningful community-based, participatory research around historic, contemporary and

future relations with sites of energy production. We believe that the arts and humanities offer valuable methods of engagement for participatory work and possible avenues for the co-production of knowledge with communities. We therefore prioritize the participation of researchers that are keen to develop new ways of integrating humanistic and arts-based research paradigms into energy research.

### **November 2022 Workshop:**

Working group members will be invited to attend a hybrid workshop at the University of Pennsylvania, along with selected members of our International Advisory Board. Participants will be invited to share plans for research projects that explore the community-based impacts of various energy forms, bringing into dialogue perspectives on nuclear, petroleum, gas and coal industries, as well as renewable energy sources. We will also host a number of sessions based on theoretical and methodological development, which will directly inform the development and future activities of the working group. We will frame these sessions around specific research questions, which may include:

- 1) How do we define and understand the concept of community across diverse cultural contexts?
- 2) What methodological frameworks best enable us to examine the experiences of communities living in proximity to sites of energy production, across geographic and cultural borders?
- 3) How can the environmental humanities —and particularly arts-driven methods— support environmental justice advocacy in sites of energy (post-)production?
- 4) How can the outcomes of community-based arts-driven engagements inform decision-making in the more formal policy arena?

While the event will be hybrid, we hope to be able to offer a limited number of travel bursaries to facilitate in-person participation.

### **Working Group Activities:**

Following the inaugural event in November 2022, the activities of the working group will continue throughout 2023-24 with a series of virtual workshops, where members will share in-progress research reports. We will also facilitate themed workshops on specific topics including ethics for community-based research and on writing effective policy briefs. The project will conclude with a symposium at the University of Edinburgh in May 2024. We envisage the working group as functioning firstly as a project development space, for researchers to workshop ideas, while collaboratively developing participatory methodologies for just transitions. In addition, we have secured funding from the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy, which will allow working group members to financially compensate community-based research partners for their involvement. We are also in the process of applying for further funding to support the additional research activities of working group members.

The project will result in a series of outputs that will be fully open access and will include: a website with downloadable resources; an edited, academic volume; a short, project film; a series of podcast episodes; and a suite of policy briefs. Working group members will be asked to submit

a chapter detailing their case study for publication in an edited volume, and to produce a policy brief for circulation at local/regional levels.

**Project Timeline:**

**15th August 2022:** Deadline for Expressions of Interest

**1st September:** Successful members/teams to be notified of success

**17-18th November 2022:** Two-day, hybrid workshop at the University of Pennsylvania for working group members.

**January 2023-March 2024:** In-person, arts-driven programs will be carried out and documented by all working group members/teams. Six virtual meetings will take place for members to share in-progress research reports and we will host separate developmental workshops on ethics and policy.

**May 2024:** Concluding 3-day conference hosted at the University of Edinburgh

**Guidance for Participants**

If you are interested in being involved in this initiative, please submit an expression of interest along with a CV. You are welcome to apply to participate as an individual or as part of a small team (max 3 members).

Expressions of interest should include the following:

1. Details of the community-based energy project that you would seek to develop as a working group member. We also invite you to include details of any relevant experience that you have developing participatory or community-based arts and/or environmental initiatives (max. 800 words)
2. A statement on how you would benefit from engaging in the activities of the working group (max. 300 words)
3. A letter from the community organization with whom you plan to work stating their interest in this project
4. A recent CV for all researchers

Possible areas for planned research projects to explore include (but are not limited to):

- How have specific community groups been impacted by overlapping energy regimes, whether historic or contemporary?
- How have local landscapes, waterscapes and environments been transformed as a consequence of energy production?
- To what extent have specific processes of energy production intensified existing forms of ecological, social, or economic vulnerability?
- How are increasing investments into renewable energy complicating or otherwise reshaping historic relations to sites of energy production?
- What forms of community (whether human or more-than-human) have been disrupted or brought together as a consequence of modes of energy production?
- What are community concerns around existing sites of energy production?

- What do community hopes or visions for the future look like?

Please email expressions of interest to Dr Rebecca Macklin ([r.macklin@ed.ac.uk](mailto:r.macklin@ed.ac.uk)) and Professor Bethany Wiggin ([bwiggin@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:bwiggin@sas.upenn.edu)) by August 15th 2022. Feel free to also email us using the above details with any questions you might have. We look forward to hearing from you!