

Transforming the United States Electricity System: The Dynamic Evolution of Policies, Regulations and Technologies

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In this class we will explore how the North American electricity system is changing. We will examine how shifts in energy resources, new technology, environmental issues and the evolving political context are shaping how the electric grid is planned and operates. We will examine the interface between technological systems and social systems and try to better understand the role technology has played in both creating and mediating environmental impacts. By its very nature, the study of the electricity system is interdisciplinary and multi-scalar. Lectures and discussions will focus on methods from engineering, political science, sociology and economics. This short course will cover the technologies, regulations and institutions shaping electricity generation, use and impacts in the United States within the context of global energy trends.