

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES
FEMINIST RESEARCH SPEAKERS SERIES WINTER 2018 PRESENTS

PETROFEMINISM, DEEP ENERGY LITERACY, AND OTHER FEMINIST FUTURES

a lecture by **Dr. Sheena Wilson**

Friday, January 19, 2018; 15:00 - 16:30

Senate Chamber
(3-26 Arts and Convocation Hall)

ABSTRACT

This talk will define and explain the relationships between the concepts of petrofeminism and deep energy literacy. Deep energy literacy demands meaningful reflection on how energy sources and systems are not only technological and infrastructural but also social. It requires an accounting of how oil-powered patriarchal colonial capitalism and the climate change that it has triggered have produced and continue to enforce extreme inequities built on histories of systemic violence that disadvantage the majority of the global population living on the margins of modern life, not to mention a whole host of species endangered on a warming and increasingly toxic planet. New energy sources will create new material conditions for the forms and habits of social life out of which new politics, new economies, and new ways of being and doing will arise. Likewise, new energy systems will enable new ways of being and doing feminism—ways that exceed the petrofeminism(s) enabled by oil and fossil fuels, as a powerful source of energy. This paper will argue for feminist energy transition, with its political potential to resist and redress the ongoing inequities of the age of oil and fossil-fuelled power.

BIOGRAPHY

Sheena Wilson is Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, and co-founder & director of the international Petrocultures Research Group. Her research interests involve an interdisciplinary and intersectional approach to studying how the extractivist world-view that has contributed to climate change through the exploitation of land and resources, likewise allows for the exploitation of gendered, classed and racialized bodies, and the erasure of knowledge held by those bodies. Given that mobilizing against climate change can be overwhelming, she argues for a focus on power shift—literally in terms of energy transition, and figuratively in terms of social justice—as a means to anchor feminist and decolonial political movements striving for climate justice. A commitment to feminism and decolonization as method and praxis, as well as object of study, informs her current research projects: 1) the first is a SSHRC-funded project called *Feminist Energy Futures: Power Shift and Environmental Social Justice* (SSHRC); the other two are CFREF-funded Energy Humanities projects she leads as part of the larger Future Energy Systems project at the U of A, called 2) *Speculative Energy Futures* and 3) *iDoc*. Publication highlights include *Petrocultures: Oil, Politics, Cultures* with Adam Carlson and Imre Szeman (MQUP, 2017); "Gendering Oil: Tracing Western Petrosexual Relations" (2014); and *Sighting Oil* with Andrew Pendakis (2012). She is also the editor-in-chief of *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* (2011-2018). Her monograph in process is called *Deep Energy Literacy: Toward Feminist Energy Futures*.



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