

Petro-education: Selling a Texas Land Grant University in Qatar

Friday
April 25th



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This talk examines the role of educational institutions in maintaining the geopolitical structures, inequalities, and class interests of a fossil-fueled world. Drawing on a multi-year ethnography, I trace the global power relations of energy at Texas A&M University, a land-grant university home to a world-renowned petroleum engineering department. I call these relations “petro-education,” the flexible mechanisms in universities that reproduce the economic power of the fossil fuel industry. In 2003, Texas A&M established an engineering branch campus in Doha, the capital city of Qatar. At the time, university regents, journalists, and the public raised the question: Why set up an extension of a public land-grant university in the very region deemed the front of the War on Terror? Focusing on how this project was sold to audiences in the lead-up to the 2003 US occupation of Iraq, I argue that petro-education was both realized and instrumentalized in this process. University leadership re-envisioned the mission of a Texas land-grant university 8,000 miles away from its campus as a new frontier geography for U.S. empire.

exas A&M University was truly honored by the presence of His Highness, The Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani and Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned at the Engineering Building Celebration. Over 1200 guests, including many dignitaries, showed their support for TAMUQ and Qatar Foundation at the event.



Friday, April 25th 3:30- 4:30 pm, Smith Hall 304