COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Instructor: Dr. Stacey Fineran

Email address: fineran.2@osu.edu

Phone number: 614-292-2265

Office hours: By appointment; Zoom meetings or phone appointments available upon request

Prerequisites

Junior, senior, graduate level standing, or permission of instructor.

Course description

Fundamental concepts of international environmental assessment (EA), including the legal and institutional frameworks, practice and performance, and social and cultural contexts that shape EIA's implementation worldwide.

This course provides students with a broad understanding of Environmental Assessment (EA) and related processes as they are currently practiced by various world actors, such as nation states (countries), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), bilateral aid agencies, Export Credit Agencies (ECAs), the United Nations System, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). EA law archetypes (e.g., US model; EU model; MDB safeguard policies) are examined, including their relative strengths and weaknesses to achieve sustainability. Variations of the
EA process and related practices, e.g., Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA); Post-Conflict Assessment; Nature-based Solutions (NbS), Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA); Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR); and Vulnerability and Impact Assessment (VIA), that have developed since EA’s inception nearly 50 years ago are also studied.

The dynamics of the complex international system that drive our globalized economy’s impact on the environment is examined using a ‘systems thinking’ lens. Students will learn the ‘systems thinking’ conceptual model to identify patterns of systems behaviors that lead to poor environmental outcomes. Students will be introduced to conceptual tools to effectively analyze existing practices and envision change in system structures to achieve sustainability. Students research a case study of international significance throughout the semester (i.e., semester project) to better connect course concepts to real world problems and solutions.

Course concepts are delivered and made more interactive using lecture, student presentations, and discussions to enhance the student’s understanding and provide an opportunity for student participation and engagement.

This course uses Ohio State’s Carmen system (https://carmen.osu.edu/).

**Course learning outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should successfully be able to:

- Correctly use the terms and concepts of International Environmental Assessment (EA) and related practices.
- Identify and describe the role of the various types of World Actors influential within the international system of development and sustainability initiatives.
- Connect EA concepts to how countries and international organizations manage and make decisions that impact the environment.
- Recognize and articulate how the natural and social sciences relate to environmental law and policy practices involved in international EA and related practices.
- Understand how people’s (e.g., citizens’; ‘watchdog’ organizations’) engagement and empowerment with information can affect other World Actors’ actions, including through the rule of law.
- Understand the ‘systems thinking’ conceptual model and how it can be applied to understand the complex system dynamics of international development projects and sustainability initiatives, to identify system ‘traps,’ and envision change to achieve sustainability.
Differential Expectations for Undergraduate and Graduate students
As a 5000-level course, ENR 5211 serves both undergraduate and graduate students. Differential expectations for graduate students may include additional systems thinking assignments related to their semester project work (see 'How your grade is calculated below). The instructor would enjoy discussing with each graduate student opportunities to perform more in-depth research, or create additional products, for the semester project case study topic, to determine if this aligns with the graduate student’s interests and graduate study goals. More generally, graduate students are expected to produce content and delivery of content for the semester project case study that shows an exceptional understanding of the material. The point structure for the graduate students will be the same at the category level of assignments as for the undergraduates.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Textbooks

Required:


Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at https://ocio.osu.edu/help and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

Self-Service and Chat support: https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/help_splash.do

- Phone: 614-688-HELP (4357)
- Email: ServiceDesk@osu.edu
- TDD: 614-688-8743
- Accessibility Help Line: 614-292-5000
# GRADING AND FACULTY RESPONSE

## How your grade is calculated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(9) Newsfeed Discussions: discussions covering current events that relate to selected lecture topics (e.g., countries; events, etc.).</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Thinking-In-Systems (TIS) Quizzes: cover the ‘systems thinking’ conceptual model material.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) CIA World Factbook Quizzes: to provide students with the fundamentals facts about the country or region of the world we will study during the week.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Concept Quizzes and Activities: to assess the student’s understanding of the in-depth coverage of environmental problems and EA-related concepts and processes, as they are presented in the weekly lecture; topics are chosen to represent environmental issues and EIA-related practices occurring in different regions of the world.</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Semester Project – plus associated assignments, including:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Topic selection; Journaling (3); Impact Gap Canvas; Causal Loop Diagram or Stock-and-Flow Diagram; and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Presentation and Final Reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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*Please refer to Carmen for due dates of assignments.

## Late Assignment Policy

To receive full credit for assignments, work should be turned-in on time and in condition to be evaluated. Work with excessive deficiencies will be returned for resubmission and will be treated as if they are late. Late assignments may incur a deduction of 10% of the total point value for each 24-hour period (or portion) that they are late (including weekends).
Make-up Work

Make-up for missed work might not be scheduled in the case of an unexcused absence (and in some cases, might not be rescheduled for logistical reasons). For those excused missed assignments that are not easily made-up (e.g., in-class activities associated with the project work), an alternative written report assignment may be assigned.

There are three situations that constitute an “excused absence” from class. They are: 1) students who participate in a documented University sanctioned event, 2) students who have a documented death in the family, and 3) students who have received documented medical attention for an illness. Students who will be participating in University sanctioned events should provide the instructor with a copy of the scheduled events and those classes that will be missed. This documentation should be on University letterhead, signed by the coach/supervisor, and given to the instructor within the first two weeks of the semester.

Grading scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-
77–79.9: C+
73–76.9: C
70 –72.9: C-
67 –69.9: D+
60 –66.9: D
Below 60: E

Faculty feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability and intended grading response time throughout the course. (Remember that you can call 614-688-HELP at any time if you have a technical problem.)

- **Grading and feedback:** For large assignments, you can generally expect feedback within 7 to 10 calendar days.

- **E-mail:** I will try to reply to e-mails within 24 hours on school days (often much sooner), but please follow-up with me, if you do not hear back from me in a timely
manner. I sometimes get busy handling ‘immediate’ needs, but all of your needs are important to me, so reminders are very much appreciated.

**Discussion board**

I will try to check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**, but again, don’t hesitate to reach out to me if I don’t respond to something in a timely manner that you would like to hear back from me about as soon as possible.

**PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE**

**Student attendance and participation**

Attendance and participation are required. See above for what typically constitutes an excused absence. Please speak with the instructor if you are experiencing difficulties with attendance or participation for the course.

Because we are now operating using **virtual instruction**, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone’s expected participation:

- **Logging in: AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK**
  
  Be sure you are logging in to the course in Carmen each week, including weeks with holidays or weeks with minimal online course activity. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) If you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me *as soon as possible*.

- **Participating in discussion forums:**
  
  As participation, each week you can expect to post multiple times as part of our substantive class discussion on the week’s topics.

**Discussion and communication guidelines**

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine for non-academic topics.
• **Tone and civility:** Let’s maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably. Remember that sarcasm doesn’t always come across online.

• **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. (For the textbook or other course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.)

• **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion.

**UNIVERSITY & COURSE POLICIES**

**Academic integrity policy**

**SOME POLICIES FOR THIS COURSE**

• **Quizzes and activities:** You must complete the quizzes and activities yourself, without any external help or communication, unless otherwise directed by your instructor.

• **Written assignments:** Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow either MLA or APA style, your choice, to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. Just choose a style and use it correctly and consistently. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in--but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

• **Reusing past work:** In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you’ve explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.

• **Falsifying research or results:** All research you will conduct in this course is intended to be a learning experience; you should never feel tempted to make your results or your library research look more successful than it was.

**OHIO STATE’S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY**

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University’s *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University’s *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute “Academic Misconduct.”
The Ohio State University’s *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

**If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.** If COAM determines that you have violated the University’s *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages ([COAM Home](COAM Home))
- *Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity* ([Ten Suggestions](Ten Suggestions))
- *Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity* ([www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.htm](www.northwestern.edu/uacc/8cards.htm))

**Copyright Disclaimer**

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

**OTHER UNIVERSITY & COURSE POLICIES**

**TRIGGER WARNING**

Some contents of this course may involve media that may be triggering to some students due to descriptions of and/or scenes depicting acts of violence, acts of war, or sexual violence and its aftermath. If needed, please take care of yourself while watching/reading this material (leaving classroom to take a water/bathroom break, debriefing with a friend, contacting a
Sexual Violence Support Coordinator at 614-292-1111, or Counseling and Consultation Services at 614-292-5766, and contacting the instructor if needed). Expectations are that we all will be respectful of our classmates while consuming this media and that we will create a safe space for each other. Failure to show respect to each other may result in dismissal from the class.

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the quarter are encouraged to contact the College of Pharmacy Office of Student Services in room 150 Parks Hall (614-292-5001) OR OSU Counseling and Consultation Services (614-292-5766) for assistance, support and advocacy. This service is free and confidential.

STATEMENT ON TITLE IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

If you would like to request academic accommodations based on the impact of a disability qualified under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, contact your instructor privately as soon as possible to discuss your specific needs. Discussions are confidential.

In addition to contacting the instructor, please contact the Student Life Disability Services at 614-292-3307 or ods@osu.edu to register for services and/or to coordinate any accommodations you might need in your courses at The Ohio State University.

Go to http://ods.osu.edu for more information.
ACCESSIBILITY OF COURSE TECHNOLOGY

This course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor. (https://carmen.osu.edu/).

COURSE SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO REVISIONS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 6</td>
<td>Introduction to EIA, Sustainability and Biodiversity Conservation Targets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>EIA in the USA; Thinking in Systems: The Systems Lens (Introduction) &amp; The Basics (Chapter 1)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 20</td>
<td>World Actors &amp; the Post World War II System; Thinking In Systems: A Brief Visit to the Systems Zoo (Chapter 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jan 27</td>
<td>Bilateral Aid Agencies &amp; USAID in Afghanistan; Thinking In Systems: Why Systems Work So Well (Chapter 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 3</td>
<td>UNEP, Afghanistan, &amp; Eco-DRR; Thinking In Systems: Why Systems Surprise Us (Chapter 4)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 10</td>
<td>The European Union, The EIA and SEA Directives; Thinking in Systems: Systems Traps &amp; Opportunities (Chapter 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>Semester Project Work Week; Thinking In Systems: Leverage Points (Chapters 6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>CITs, Ukraine, and the EBRD; Thinking In Systems: Living in Systems (Chapter 7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Semester Project Work Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9 – 13: SPRING BREAK - Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16 – 20: SPRING BREAK - Week 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Mar 23</td>
<td>Sudan, the Nile and Vulnerability and Impact Assessment (VIA).</td>
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<td>11 Mar 30</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Virunga, and Post-conflict assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 Apr 6</td>
<td>Semester Project Work Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 Apr 13</td>
<td>Haiti, Disasters, and Eco-DRR</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Apr 20</td>
<td>Last week of classes: Apr 20-Apr 24: Semester Project Work Week</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exams Week</td>
<td>Apr 27-May 1 (M-F)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Final Exam in this course.</td>
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*Please refer to Carmen for specific assignments and due dates.*