



SYLLABUS

ENR 5210

US Environmental Impact Assessment (3 credit hours)
The Ohio State University
Autumn Semester 2019

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Instructor: Dr. Stacey Fineran

Email address: fineran.2@osu.edu

Office: 322A Kottman Hall

Office hours: By appointment

Office phone: 614-292-2265

Teaching Assistant (TA)

TA: Luanne Hendricks

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Office: 61 Parker Food Science Building

Office hours: By appointment

Office phone: 614-517-9280

Prerequisites

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

Differential Expectations for Undergraduate and Graduate students

As a 5000-level course, ENR 5210 serves both undergraduate and graduate students. Graduate students are expected to produce content and delivery of content, particularly for the semester project case study research, that shows an exceptional understanding of the material. If it aligns with the graduate student's interests and graduate study goals, the instructor will discuss with them opportunities to perform more in-depth research for the semester project case study topic, if requested.

Course description

This course provides students with a broad understanding of the fundamental concepts of US Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), including the laws, regulations, guidelines, and

judicial interpretations that shape EIA's implementation in the United States. Students are equipped with the terms and concepts of EIA so they may effectively participate in the EIA process, e.g., as practitioners or as informed citizens. The course provides in-depth coverage of the EIA documents and process used by selected federal and state agencies to provide quality information to decision-makers through project alternatives designed to avoid, minimize, and mitigate for negative impacts to the environment. Connections are made to other environmental laws (e.g., Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, etc.) that underpin the performance of EIA for various impact types. Students are exposed to how impact analysis relates to selected fundamental concepts of the natural and social sciences, demonstrating the inherent interdisciplinarity of EIA. Case studies of national (US) significance will be presented, followed by student analysis, discussion, and critique, 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 Environmental Impact Assessment, particularly as it is performed in the United States.
- Apply EIA concepts to how federal and state agencies manage the environment and natural resources to address environmental problems.
- Recognize and articulate how the natural and social sciences connect to the world of environmental law and policy in real world settings.
- Understand how citizen litigation shapes implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other major environmental laws related to federal and state agency actions subject to EIA.
- Understand how natural sciences, social sciences, and environmental law and policy streams can converge to create positive change to achieve sustainable development.
- Have a fundamental understanding of the various impact types associated with the practice and performance of EIA and how they inform construction of alternatives presented to decision-makers as part of the EIA process.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Textbooks

Required:

Birkland, Thomas A. *An Introduction to the Policy Process: Theories, Concepts, and Models of Public Policy Making*. 4th ed., M.E Sharpe, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-0765646620; ISBN-10: 0765646625. eBook available through the Ohio State University Libraries. If you would like to purchase your own physical copy, the current estimated cost is \$20 to rent or \$40 to buy.

Six journal articles: Selected articles (shown below) are used to illustrate key concepts of the EIA process and show important paradigm shifts over NEPA's 40 plus years of development. Available on Carmen or via the OSU Library.

- Caldwell, Lynton K. "Perspective: An Interview with Lynton Caldwell on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)." *Environmental Practice*, vol. 5, no. 4, 2003, pp. 281-286.
- Mas, Diane M.L. "A Comparison of Three Key Elements of National and Select State Environmental Policy Acts." *Environmental Practice*, vol. 5, no. 4, 2003, pp. 349-362.
- O'Brien, Connor. "I wish they could all be California Environmental Quality Acts: rethinking NEPA in light of climate change." *Boston College Environmental Affairs Law Review*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2009, pp. 239-271.
- Smythe, Robert and Caroline Isber. "NEPA in the Agencies: A Critique of Current Practices." *Environmental Practice*, vol. 5, no. 4, 2003. pp. 290-297.
- Steinemann, Anne. "Improving alternatives for environmental impact assessment." *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2001, pp. 3-21.
- Mulvihill, Peter R. and S. Harris Ali. "Disaster incubation, cumulative impacts and the urban/ex-urban/rural dynamic." *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2007, pp. 343-358.

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/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** <http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice>
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

BASELINE TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR THE COURSE

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

TECHNOLOGY SKILLS NECESSARY FOR THIS SPECIFIC COURSE

- Building a slide presentation with possible audio narration

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone

RECOMMENDED SOFTWARE

- [Microsoft Office 365](#): All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus through Microsoft's Student Advantage program. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found <https://ocio.osu.edu/kb04733>.

GRADING AND FACULTY RESPONSE

How your grade is calculated: Assignments are weighted by category.

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
Exams 1 & 2	20%
Journal Articles: Activities and Discussions	15%
'Semester Project' Case Study Journals	20%
'Semester Project' USEPA Rating and Final Reflection	10%
'Impact Type' Case Study Analyses	15%
Final Exam	20%
Total	100%

*Please refer to Carmen for due dates of assignments.

Student Semester Project & Associated Assignments:

At the beginning of the semester, students are given information on a variety semester project case study topics that relate US EIA to the real world problems US federal (and state) agencies manage involving compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other related federal and state laws. Students are assigned to a semester project case study topic based on their response to a survey inquiring about their interests and learning and career goals. Throughout the semester, students will complete a journal (i.e., a template is provided) to help them understand how EIA is performed by professionals. Near the end of the semester, students will create a slide presentation that essentially summarizes the results of their journal assignments and provides a 'USEPA rating' critique of their case study. A template will also be provided for the slide presentation. To wrap-up the semester, students will read a fellow student's slide presentation that covers a different case study topic and provide a final reflection on the semester project case study work.

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 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 calendar days**.
- **E-mail:** I will reply to e-mails within **48 hours on school days**.

PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

Student participation requirements

Attendance is required.

We will take in-class attendance during the course.

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

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Academic integrity policy

POLICIES FOR THIS ONLINE COURSE

- **Exams:** You must take all exams yourself, without any external help or communication.
- **Document-based activities, analyses, and discussions:** Document-based activities, analyses, and discussions should be your own original work.
- **Semester project and associated assignments:** Your semester project case study work and associated assignments should be your own original work.

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](#))
- *Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity* ([Ten Suggestions](#))
- *Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity* (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.

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

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.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requesting accommodations

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week Number	Date of Week	Topics
1	Aug 20	Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Part 1
2	Aug 26	National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): Part 2; Judicial Interpretation of NEPA
3	Sept 2	CEQ Regulations; EIA Phases of Development
4	Sept 9	State Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA's); State Environmental Policy Acts (SEPA) Model
5	Sept 16	Institutions, Actors, and Environmental Policy; Federal Agencies
6	Sept 23	EIA Documents; The Role of the USEPA Agenda Setting, Power, and Interests
7	Sept 30	EIA Process & Planning; The 10-step Model
8	Oct 7	Exam 1; Autumn Session Break
9	Oct 14	The 10-step Model: A Closer Look; Description of Affected Environment (DAE); Alternatives; Environmental Consequences: Impact Analysis
10	Oct 21	Cumulative Effects
11	Oct 28	Air Impacts; Noise Impacts

Week Number	Date of Week	Topics
12	Nov 4	Surface Water Impacts; Soil Impacts; Groundwater Impacts
13	Nov 11	Biological Impacts; Visual Impacts; Social Impact Assessment
14	Nov 18	Environmental Justice; Cultural Impacts
15	Nov 25	Exam 2; Thanksgiving Holiday Break
16	Dec 2	Disaster Impact Analysis
Final Exam Week	Dec 6	Final Exam: Friday, December 06, 2019: 8:00am-9:45am