Rural Sociology 5580
Social Impact Assessment (30077)
(aka -- Assessing Human and Social Impacts of Change)
Tuesday and Thursday, 11:10 AM – 12:30 PM
Kottman Hall 333C

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Mission Statement: The human and social dimensions of change are everywhere to be seen, heard and experienced, from the way disasters/critical incidents affect peoples and communities to debates about the “good” vs. “bad” effects of planned change and development (especially those related to the environment and natural resources).

RS 5580 introduces students to consideration of the social and human impacts of change on groups and communities, with special reference to those associated with resource development and alterations to the natural environment. Students will learn how to identify and measure potential human and social impacts, and consider case studies of impact assessments conducted in various countries and cultures from around the world. My goal is to help you learn enough that you can apply what you have learned to real-life situations, and through acquisition of SIA/social science principles and skills, to enhance your chances of finding a job whose responsibilities include the human/social assessment of projects, policies, plans, and programs.

Course Objectives: There are four primary objectives which serve to divide RS 5580 into four distinctive parts. These are: (1) to acquire/re-acquire and understand fundamental social science concepts about society, culture and community, without which it is impossible to conduct an impact assessment on the social and human dimensions of environmental and natural resource change, both planned and unplanned; (2) fundamental principles and procedures underlying a social/human impact assessment, with examples/case studies; (3) the principles and procedures of collecting data/evidence necessary to conduct an social/human impact assessment; and (4) dimensions of agency, that is, for whom is the SIA being conducted and how will the findings of an SIA be used? All four objectives are attainable if you pay close attention to the assigned readings, many of which are case studies/examples combining two or more of these four objectives, namely, sociological concepts, SIA principles, methods/data collection, and agency.

Course Style: I will endeavor to make RS 5580 a balanced combination of lecture and class discussion. Class discussion, however, requires that everyone has read the assigned readings IN ADVANCE of the class session.
**Assigned readings:** There is no textbook for this course. All assigned readings and supplemental materials will be posted on the RS 5580 Carmen page. Each assigned reading indicates the date by which it should be read. It is important to keep up with the readings. I expect you to print out each reading and bring each one to class for discussion/Q&A, or to have downloaded each one onto your laptop. Attendance checks will be based on assigned readings and related discussion.

**Cautionary note:** This is the third time I have taught this course. Based on the real-time pace with which we cover various topics, and your reactions and recommendations about the assigned readings, I will continuously consider adjustments which may include new readings or the deletion of readings currently on the syllabus. I will announce any changes in class or via e-mail, but I also advise you to keep up with the assignments and continuously check the Carmen page. Hence, the *Course Schedule* (see below) is an idealized statement which is subject to change.

**Grading:** I use the standard OSU scheme.

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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There will be a total of 100 points. Ninety-three points earns an A. Grades will be determined by two major points-generating activities, plus a third one that rewards strong attendance and reading everthing in advance.

The *first* points-generating activity is *eleven* short attendance-based quizzes, each worth 3 points. *The over-all purpose of the attendance checks is to reward you for reading assignments before the class session where they are reviewed/discussed.* One attendance check can be missed without it affecting your grade, as the maximum number of points you can earn is 30.

The attendance-based quizzes will be mostly a short question(s), to be answered in class, related to the assigned readings (see below) for that day, and will require brief, but thoughtful answers. Blow-off answers and answers chock full of “bullfeathers” and “horse-hockey” will be discounted by one, two, or all three points. You must be in class at the time I administer these attendance checks, and you cannot show up near the end of the class because someone sent you a text message indicating you need to get your “derriere” to class ASAP.
The second points-generating activity is a series of three short essays that will ask you to both synthesize/summarize and provide your perspective/opinion to issues associated with the readings and course lecture. Each essay is worth 22 points, with submission deadlines spread throughout the semester.

The first essay question (barring unforeseen circumstances) will be posted on the Carmen page for this course on February 9 (end of the 9th class session) and is due on February 23 (at the beginning of the 13th class session).

The second essay question will be posted on February 23 (end of the 13th class session), and due on March 10 (beginning of the 18th class session).

The third and final essay question will be posted on March 10 (end of the 18th class session) and due on April 21 (at the beginning of the 28th and final class session).

All essays must be submitted by hard copy, that is, handed to me in class. I will not accept late submissions by email. One point will be discounted for every hour an exam is late, and that includes time during a class session since the essays are to be handed in at the beginning of the class session. Why so overbearing and punctilious, you may ask? The answer is simple – impact assessment statements/reports have deadlines set by the agency, government or corporation that is funding the assessment. We will mimic the real world in this class.

I expect your answers to be about 5-10 pages long (excluding cover page and references). This length is merely a guideline, and not to be taken literally, however.

Formatting of your answers: (1) I expect 1 inch margins, 12 font, and double-spaced format; (2) I expect a cover page (no page number – this is an extra page) with your name and a four digit number of your choice (you may use a different number for each answer, so long as you use the same number on every page of each answer – see #3); (3) I expect you to begin the next page (real page 1) by typing in the question (in full) to be answered at the top. Then begin your answer. Each page of your essay answer should include the same four digits and never (ever) your name in the upper right-hand corner; (4) Do not staple your paper, use only a paper clip.

If you follow these procedures, I will be able to grade the quality of each essay more impartially. Please do not reveal who you are in your answers. And, please follow these procedures precisely, as violating them will affect how I grade your essay answers.

The third points-generating activity is as follows: The final four points are assigned to everyone who is able to show up and answer well (a score of 3) at least 7 of the attendance checks.
Course Schedule

Weeks 1 - 3 (January 12 – 28): Introduction to RS 5580//examples//“20 Social Science Concepts You Will Need”

Assigned readings:

3. Rabel J. Burdge, no date, A Social Impact Assessment of Montville Links: A Planned Residential and Recreation Community in Montville, Queensland, Australia (read by: 01/21)
4. Understanding and Describing a Community (from the Community Tool Box, “…a service of the Work Group for Community Health and Development at the University of Kansas”) (read by: 01/26)

Weeks 4 - 6 (February 2 – 18): The Fundamentals of Social Impact Assessment//Types of Social and Human Impacts//Impact Order, Impact Significance, Cumulative Effects and Other Essential SIA Concepts//4 Approaches to SIA

Assigned Readings (read by):

1. Donnermeyer – undated, “20 social science concepts you will need for SIA” (read throughout 02/02 – 02/18)
Course Schedule continued

4. Read the following short “cookbook” guides to data collection from the Community Tool Box – (a) Using Public Records and Archival Data (read by: 02/11); (b) Conducting Windshield and Walking Surveys (read by: 02/11); (c) Conducting Surveys (read by: 02/11); (d) Conducting Interviews (read by: 02/16); (e) Conducting Focus Groups (read by: 02/16); (f) Conducting SWOT Analysis (read by: 02/16); (g) Qualitative Methods to Assess Community Issues (read by: 02/18); (h) Implementing Photovoice in Your Community (read by: 02/18); and (i) Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions (read by: 02/18)

Weeks 7 - 9 (February 23 – March 10) – Case Studies

Assigned Readings (read by)


Course Schedule continued

Week 10 (March 14-18) – Spring Break

Week 11 (March 22 & March 24) – Special Topic: SIA and Indigenous Peoples


Week 12 (March 29 & March 31) – Special Topic: SIA and Gender


Week 13 (April 5 & April 7) – Special Topic: SIA and CIA (Crime Impact Assessment)

1. Kerry Carrington, Alison McIntosh and John Scott, 2010, “Globalization, frontier masculinities and violence,” in British Journal of Criminology, volume 50, pages 393-413 (read by 04/05)


Week 14 (April 12 & 14) – Special Topic: SIA and Critical Events


Week 15 (April 19 & 21) – All Things Reconsidered

No reading assignments – catch up and review