Rural Sociology 5580
Assessing the Human and Social Impacts of Change (29822)
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 any kind of change, planned or 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 actually 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: 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 (Canvas) 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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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Average</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93+</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>60-66</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>UNDER 60</td>
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There will be a total of 100 points. Ninety-three points earns an A. Grades will be determined by three major points-generating activities.

The first points-generating activity is twelve short attendance-based quizzes, each worth 2 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. Two attendance checks can be missed without it affecting your grade, as the maximum number of points you can earn is 20.

The attendance –based quizzes will be mostly a short question(s), to be answered near the beginning of 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 “horse-hockey” will be discounted by one or both 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. In the lingo of Animal Science, an equine derriere is the source of horse-hockey.
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 lectures. Each essay is worth 18 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 10th class session) and is due on February 23 (at the beginning of the 13th class session). Its focus will be on course content from the first 12 class sessions. Even though you will receive it two class sessions early, consider all the course content from the first six weeks or 12 class sessions.

The second essay question will be posted on February 23 (end of the 13th class session), and due on March 9 (beginning of the 18th class session). The shorter due date is the result of the Spring semester break week. I will consider your wishes, however, on moving the due date back to March 21, or 19th class session. Majority vote prevails!

The third and final essay question will be posted on March 9 (end of the 18th class session) and due on April 13 (at the beginning of the 26th 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 two hours 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 5-7 pages long (excluding cover page and references). This length is merely a guideline, and not to be taken literally, however, be reasonable about the length of your answer – not too short, not too long(-winded)

Formatting of your answers: (1) I expect 1 inch margins, 12 font, and double-spaced format; (2) I expect a tab-in on the first line of each paragraph, and would prefer that you use sub-titles to bring organization and clarity to your answer; (3) 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 the same number on every page of each answer – see #4); (4) 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 your name (this 4-digit should be placed in the upper right-hand corner); and (5) 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.

Dates for assignment of the essay questions and deadlines for submission may be adjusted, according to progress in this course.
The third points-generating activity is a case study exercise. It is worth 26 points. It poses the hypothetical example of a proposed project on the OSU campus. This project is the construction of the Wexner Worldwide Wonderland Emporium on the site of Mirror Lake. This exercise will ask you to develop a plan for a “baseline” study of the likely human and social impacts of this project. Economic costs and benefits can be considered as well as a type of human and social impact. You will select from one of two options for whom you will develop this baseline assessment – the university, who is obviously for it, or an opposition group. By explaining your selection, you have also revealed your point of view about the development, that is, your bias. All sciences have a biases, that is, suppositions about what is or will be.

Details about the case study will be presented to you during the sixth class session on January 26. The paper is due on May 1 by 5 PM. This is the same day on which the final exam for this course is scheduled, but there is NO final exam (only the three points-generating activities), hence, May 1 is a convenient deadline.
Course Schedule

Weeks 1 - 3 (January 10 – 26): Introduction to RS 5580//examples//“20 Social Science Concepts You Will Need”

Assigned readings:
2. Donnermeyer – undated, “20 social science concepts you will need for SIA” (read by 1/17, although I prefer by 1/12) (note—I will also lecture on these 20 concepts throughout the first three weeks of the semester)
3. *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: 01/19)
5. Rabel J. Burdge, no date, *A Social Impact Assessment of Montville Links: A Planned Residential and Recreation Community in Montville, Queensland, Australia* (read by: 01/26)


Assigned Readings (read by):
Course Schedule continued

3. Read the following short “cookbook” guides to data collection from the Community Tool Box – (a) Using Public Records and Archival Data (read by: 02/09); (b) Conducting Windshield and Walking Surveys (read by: 02/09); (c) Conducting Surveys (read by: 02/09); (d) Conducting Interviews (read by: 02/09); (e) Conducting Focus Groups (read by: 02/14); (f) Conducting SWOT Analysis (read by: 02/14); (g) Qualitative Methods to Assess Community Issues (read by: 02/14); (h) Implementing Photovoice in Your Community (read by: 02/14); and (i) Conducting Public Forums and Listening Sessions (read by: 02/14)


Weeks 7 - 9 (February 21 – March 9) – Case Studies

Assigned Readings (read by)


Course Schedule continued

Week 10 (March 13-17) – Spring Break

Week 11 (March 21 & March 23) – Special Topic: SIA and Indigenous Peoples


Week 12 (March 28 & March 30) – Special Topic: SIA and Gender

2. Leena Kotilainen, 2015 (February), Study on the Gendered Impacts of Ebola in Liberia (study commissioned by Finn Church Aid), Liberia: Finn Church Aid, West and Central Africa Regional Office. (read by: 03/28)

Week 13 (April 4 & April 6) – 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 04/04)
Course Schedule continued

Week 14 (April 11 & 13) – Special Topic: SIA and Critical Events


Week 15 (April 18 & 20) – All Things Reconsidered

No reading assignments – catch up and review