

Environmental Science and Management 429/529: Environmental Impact Assessment

Spring Quarter 2023 | Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:50 p.m. | Peter Stott Center (PSC) Room 122

Instructor: Rachel Brown | tewbrown@pdx.edu | (801) 696-4550

Student Hours: Mon. 4–5 p.m., or by appointment; SRTC 218A; Zoom link: Zoom link:

<https://pdx.zoom.us/j/3980799389>

Overview

This course will introduce and discuss in detail the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), its implementation and implications. NEPA is intended to ensure that balanced decision making occurs regarding the environment. Almost a thousand environmental impacts assessments are prepared annually. This course will explore the need for environmental impact assessments, the different types of assessments, and the regulatory and technical requirements of preparing an assessment.

Readings

Recommended: NEPA and Environmental Planning, by Charles H. Eccleston, 1st Edition (2008).

Course Requirements

This is a joint graduate and undergraduate class. Course requirements will differ depending on whether you are enrolled in the course at the 400- or 500-level.

ESM 429 (Undergraduate)

Assignments	There will be weekly assignments due every Sunday (submitted via Canvas)
Quizzes	There will be weekly quizzes based from the readings and lectures due every Sunday (submitted via Canvas).
Term Paper and Presentation	Undergraduate students will work in groups of two or three other students to prepare a group project. The group project will be to write a term paper (4-6 pages) analyzing a DEIS of their choosing. Students will give a 15-20 minute PowerPoint presentation on the subject of their paper and their major conclusions of the class.
Exams	There will be two exams, mid-term and final. Both exams will be available via Canvas.
Participation	You will be evaluated on your participation in class activities, small group activities, and your contributions to class discussions.

ESM 529 (Graduate)

Assignments	There will be weekly assignments due every Sunday (submitted via Canvas)
Quizzes	There will be weekly quizzes based from the readings and lectures due every Sunday (submitted via Canvas).
Term Paper and Presentation	Graduate students will work in groups of two or three other students to prepare a group project. The group project will be to write a term paper (6-10 pages) analyzing a DEIS of their choosing. Students will give a 15-20 minute PowerPoint presentation on the subject of their paper and their major conclusions of the class.
Exams	There will be two exams, midterm and final based upon the readings, lecture, and quizzes. Both exams will be available via Canvas.
Participation	Graduate students will also be evaluated on their participation in class.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

ESM 429 (Undergraduate)		ESM 529 (Graduate)	
Midterm Exam	25%	Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	20%	Final Exam	20%
Group Quizzes	15%	Presentation	15%
Term Paper/Presentation	25%	Term Paper/Presentation	25%
Participation	15%	Participation	15%

Course Outline

Week	Date	Topic	Homework (due today)
1	Apr. 3	Course Overview Student Introductions Chapter 1: Overview NEPA	Read Chapter 1, pages 1-18
		Apr. 5	Exemptions and Categorical Exclusions
2	Apr. 10	When is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Required?	Read Chapter 6, pages 145-163
	Apr. 12	Preparing and Environmental Assessment	Read Chapter 7, pages 167-185
3	Apr. 17	Preparing Environmental Impact Statements	Read Chapter 8, pages 189-226
	Apr. 19	Assessment of Impacts (Earth Resources, Hydrology, Biology, Air Quality, Archaeology)	
4	Apr. 24	Assessment of Impacts (Energy, Noise, Aesthetics, Environmental Justice, Traffic)	
	Apr. 26	Planning and Mitigation	Chapter 10, pages 261-276
5	May 1	Midterm Review	
	May 3	Midterm Exam (No Class)	

6	Enforcing NEPA	May 8	International Environmental Impacts	Chapter 12, pages 299-307
		May 10	NEPA and climate change	
7	NEPA Integrating Other Laws	May 15	NEPA and Integrating Other Laws and/or Permits	Chapter 4, pages 83-125
		May 17	Public Scoping; No Class Assignment: Watch (or attend) a public scoping meeting for a NEPA project	Prepare a 1-2 page summary of the project, date, location, and findings
8	Public Scoping and Review Process	May 22	Public Scoping (NEPA Public Comment Process) Assignment: Review a comment letter from the projects listed or Public Comment Examples	Chapter 9, pages 231-257 Assignment: Prepare a 1-2 page summary of a public comment letter, include project summary, issue, and conclusion (if final)
		May 24	Review for Final	
9	Review Final Exam	May 29	No Class — Memorial Day	
		May 31	Final Exam (No Class)	
10	Term Project Presentations	Jun. 5	Final Term Project Presentations Last Names A-M	
		Jun. 7	Final Term Project Presentations Last Names N-Z	
Finals Week			Final Exam: Available Monday, June 12, and close on Saturday, June 17 Term Papers: Due Wednesday, June 7th	

CAMPUS POLICIES

Classroom Requirements for All Students and Faculty Due to COVID-19

The University has established rules and policies to make the return to the classroom as safe as possible. It is required for everyone to follow all the Return to Campus rules and policies. To participate in this class, PSU requires all students to comply with the following.

Vaccination: Be vaccinated against COVID-19 and complete the COVID-19 vaccination attestation form (available at <https://www.pdx.edu/covid-19-response/vaccinations>). Those students with medical or nonmedical exemptions or who will not be on campus at all must complete the process described on the “COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Request Form” to establish those exemptions.

Health check, illness, exposure, or positive test for COVID-19:

- Complete [the required self-check for COVID-19 symptoms](#) before coming to campus each day.
- If you are feeling sick or have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to campus. Call the Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC) to discuss your symptoms and situation at 503-725-2800. They will advise you on testing, quarantine, and when you can return to campus.
- If you test positive for COVID, [report your result to SHAC](#) and do not come to campus. SHAC will advise you on quarantine, notification of close contacts, and when you can return to campus.
- Please notify the instructor (Rachel), should you need to miss a class period for any of these reasons so that we can discuss strategies to support your learning during this time.

- If the instructor becomes ill or needs to quarantine during the term, either she or the department chair will notify you via PSU email about her absence and how course instruction will continue.

Failure to comply with any of these rules: The University has given the instructor of this course the authority to require your compliance with these policies. If you do not comply with these requirements, she may ask you to leave the classroom, or she may need to cancel the class session entirely. In addition, failure to comply with these requirements may result in a referral to the Office of the Dean of Student Life to consider charges under PSU's Code of Conduct. A student found to have violated a university rule (or rules) through the due process of student conduct might face disciplinary and educational sanctions (or consequences). For a complete list of sanctions, see Section 14 of the Student Code of Conduct & Responsibility (<https://www.pdx.edu/dean-student-life/psu-code-student-conduct-and-responsibility>)

Guidance may change: Please note that the University rules, policies, and guidance may change at any time at the direction of the CDC, State, or County requirements. Please review the University's main COVID-19 Response webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/covid-19-response>) and look for emails from the University on these topics.

Late work

All assignments and quizzes on Sundays. After 7 days past the due date there will be a 5% penalty. Please contact your instructor as early as possible if you are struggling or you have an emergency and need an extension. The modules are unlocked and available to work ahead (as needed).

Access and Inclusion for Students with Disabilities

PSU values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to fostering mutual respect and full participation for all students. My goal is to create a learning environment that is equitable, useable, inclusive, and welcoming. If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me; I am open to your feedback.

The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations at drc@pdx.edu (<https://www.pdx.edu/drc>).

If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and discuss your accommodations. For information about emergency preparedness, please go to the Fire and Life Safety webpage (<https://www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety>) for information.

Academic Integrity

In the American college and university system, scholars and students use the ideas of their peers and predecessors to build new knowledge and understandings; in interdisciplinary fields such as environmental science and management, collaboration is an essential part of problem-solving, and one we emphasize in ESM courses. Institutions that depend on the free and open exchange of ideas and information also depend on a culture of academic integrity. Consequently (and as you have probably noticed) there are strong formal and informal sanctions against academic misconduct in this university and in this department. I expect that all work that you submit in this class will represent an original synthesis of your own ideas and the ideas of others. That means that

information generated by others and used in your work must be clearly attributed to its original source, and either paraphrased in your own words or placed in quotation marks.

If you are uncertain about whether conduct constitutes a violation or not, please ask questions. If you can't ask questions early, ask them late, and err on the side of transparency. For help identifying plagiarism and learning how to avoid it, this online guide is a good starting place: <http://guides.library.ucla.edu/bruin-success/citing>.

Canvas

All materials and grading will be available in Canvas for this course. Please download and learn how to use Canvas including communication tools (e.g. Proctorio, Canvas inbox, Microsoft Teams, etc.) prior to assignment deadlines. If you have technology-related problems please contact the OIT help desk (503) 725-HELP or help@pdx.edu. Proctorio works best using Chrome.

Title IX Reporting Obligations

Please be aware that federal, state, and PSU policies require faculty members to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. (PSU faculty are also required to file a report under other circumstances, e.g., if we become aware of child abuse.) If you are experiencing or have experienced any form of sexual harassment or violence and would like to get support and learn about your options without triggering a report or an investigation, the PSU Women's Resource Center hosts advocates who can maintain confidentiality, and their services are available to students of all genders. To book an appoint with a confidential advocate, go to psuwrc.youcanbook.me or call (503) 725-5672. You may also wish to seek help from the Center for Student Health and Counseling (SHAC), where counselors are not subject to the same reporting requirements as your instructors.

Students' Right to Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. §1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Under FERPA, students have the right to inspect and review their education records maintained by the school. Generally, schools must have written permission from the student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to certain parties or under the specific conditions. Schools may also disclose, without consent, "directory" information such as a student's name, address, and telephone number, unless the student has requested that the school not disclose directory information about them. These sites provide additional information:

<https://www.pdx.edu/registration/student-records-privacy-policy>

http://www.pdx.edu/sites/www.pdx.edu.education/files/gse_handbook_student_privacy.pdf

CAMPUS RESOURCES

There are numerous resources available on campus to help you feel comfortable at PSU and succeed academically, including (but not limited to) services for students with disabilities; tutoring; career advising; multicultural centers; centers for womxn, LGBTQI, and transfer and returning students; and resources for students experiencing food insecurity, students with children, and veterans— just to name a few. You can set up an appointment to chat with a writing consultant while you both look at a draft paper you're writing (the Writing Center), or talk to a lawyer about problems that may arise with your landlord, to get help with immigration

challenges, traffic accidents and citations, or to change the way your name or gender is recorded by the government (Student Legal Services)— and all of those services are free to registered students.

While many of these programs have changed the way they operate since the onset of Covid-19, they are still available and staffed with people who are eager to help you thrive. A list of these resources with links and descriptions will be posted in Canvas; the instructor can also help connect you with support that aligns with your needs, so send Rachel an email if you don't know where to start. And speaking of Covid-19,

- You can find frequently-updated information on pandemic-related closures, openings, policies, and procedures here: <https://www.pdx.edu/coronavirus-response>
- Guidance on what to do if you feel sick, as well as resources to help you maintain your physical and mental health in Covid times, here: <https://www.pdx.edu/health-counseling/covid-19-resources>

Grading Criteria and Evaluation

This course is to be completed in 10 weeks. You are strongly advised to prioritize this class; expect to spend approximately 12 hours a week on coursework including class time, assignments, readings, quizzes, and term reports.

Your final grade in the course is based on the percentage of points you earn out of the total number possible. To access information regarding how assignments are evaluated, please review the assignment details and the grading rubric. Grading follows the standard PSU grading scale below. Visit the [grading standards](#) for Academic Policies & Standards.

Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	Undergraduate	Graduate
A	4.00	Excellent	Excellent
A-	3.67		
B+	3.33		
B	3.00	Good	Satisfactory
B-	2.67		
C+	2.33		
C	2.00	Satisfactory	Below Standard
C-	1.67		
D+	1.33		
D	1.00	Inferior	Fail
D-	0.67		Fail

F	0.00	Fail	Fail
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