



Course Outline Environmental Impact Assessment

Course Description

This course is an opportunity to engage in the most widely used tool to promote sustainable development around the world: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). Students will be introduced to the policy and research context of EIA, and emerging developments in EIA theory and practice.

Through this course, students will have the opportunity to connect with the British Columbia Environmental Assessment Office, as well as practitioners working in EIA, through lectures and a term project. Lectures will explore major themes of EIA, particularly in a Canadian and BC context, including the decision context EA contributes to, issues that arise in consultations with stakeholders and rightsholders, scoping impacts to people and the environment, and planning and mitigation projected impacts. EIA in theory and practice is the intersection of applied ecology, anthropology, law, Indigenous studies, geography, and others you have been exposed to through your degree, and so this course will be an opportunity for engaged students to synthesize their degree thusfar.

Contact and Office Hours

If you have any questions, please ensure you check the course outline and Brightspace. You can reach through my email address. I will hold office hours each Monday from 2:30-4, or you can set up an appointment with me. My office is in the David Turpin Building DTB B224. The RA is Ridhee Gupta (ridheeg@uvic.ca).

Required Text and Readings

Required readings will be posted for students over the Brightspace page. All readings will be available through the UVic library and the Brightspace page.

Evaluation

One of my goals in this course is to introduce students to diverse pipelines for future work. If you get a job related to your degree, I predict the likelihood of at least 80% that you will be engaging with Environmental Assessment, and it will be outside of the university. I am much less interested in sorting out who passes and who fails, and see little value in testing your retention and memorization through tests and quizzes. However I do want to encourage reflection and synthetic ideas, so evaluation will take place through assignments and course participation (through the Brightspace and in class).

Class Discussion Participation: 20%
Short Assignments: 45% (15% each)
Term Project (Final Paper): 35%
 Annotated Bibliography: 10%
 Final Report: 25%

Tentative Schedule

Date	Topic	Topic	Reading	Assignment
4-Sep	What is EIA?	Course Intro		
8-Sep	What is EIA?	Sustainability and EIA	Robinson 2004	
11-Sep	What is EIA?	EIA in Canada	Hannah Ch 1	
15-Sep	What is EIA?	Types of Assessment	Hannah Ch. 2	
18-Sep	What is EIA?	Term Projects and the EAO		Discussion Homework 1
22-Sep	What is EIA?	Expidited EIA		
25-Sep	What is EIA?	Getting into EIA - early career perspectives	Hannah CH 14	
29-Sep	What is EIA?	Writing for EIA	CREW - structured writing	
2-Oct	Consultation and Values	Up the Ladder - What does engagement look like?	Hurlbert and Gupta 2015	Discussion Homework 2
6-Oct	Consultation and Values	Sustainability Assessment		
9-Oct	Consultation and Values	Guest lecture (Debby Chan) - Indigenous consensus and EA		
13-Oct	Consultation and Values	Thanksgiving - no classes		
16-Oct	Consultation and Values	Modern Engagement, Tech and EIA		Short Assignment 1
20-Oct	Consultation and Values	Guest lecture (Matt Murphy) - Indigenous-led Assessment	Jolly and Thompson Fawcett 2021; Hannah ch. 13	
23-Oct	Assessing Impacts	What is a significant adverse impact?	Murray et al 2018; Singh et al., 2020	
27-Oct	Assessing Impacts	Guest Lecture (Nathan Braun) - Cumulative impacts - everywhere and nowhere	Hannah Ch 3	Discussion Homework 3
30-Oct	Assessing Impacts	Guest Lecture (Jackie Lerner) - Impacts to what? GBA Plus and EIA	Hannah ch 4 and 5 and 11	Mid-term Project
3-Nov	Assessing Impacts	Net-zero development? Sustainability Assessment and Positive effects	Hannah ch 7; Fusco et al 2022	
6-Nov	Assessing Impacts	Guest lecture (Gillian Gregory) - Historic and persistent impacts - dealing with "residual effects"		
10-Nov	Assessing Impacts	Reading break - no classes		Short Assignment 2
13-Nov	Mitigations and Compliance	Mitigations and the Mitigation Hierarchy - the main contribution of EIA	Jacob et al, 2016	
17-Nov	Mitigations and Compliance	Guest Lecture (Tara and Ruby) - Do Mitigations Work?	Singh et al., 2020	
20-Nov	Mitigations and Compliance	Regenerative development? EIA for a green/blue economy	Fusco et al 2022	
24-Nov	Mitigations and Compliance	Guest lecture (Chris Parks) - How do we enforce conditions?		Short Assignment 3
27-Nov	The Future of EIA	EIA and sustainable development redux		
1-Dec	The Future of EIA	Hand in final assignments		Hand in Final Project

***The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course are subject to change.**

Beyond the Classroom

This course is intended to help prepare you for a career in environmental studies. As such, my intention is to make sure you are exposed to the real world of EIA as much as I can. This will partly take the form of having guest lectures from people actively working in Environmental Impact Assessment, but also include assignments that have you engage with projects and processes that are undergoing Environmental Impact Assessment.

The term project will be based on real questions that the BC Environmental Assessment Office (BCEAO) has regarding how to better operate in, regulate, and understand EA as a process for sustainable development. You will be engaging in a simulation of a consultant-client relationship in this course, and you will be providing advice that the BCEAO may act on in real life. Given this, you will not be producing standard academic papers but will be expected to write policy-focused Briefing Notes. These Briefs should be structured to answer the question asked, provide evidence and arguments towards the advice given, and (very importantly) outline areas of uncertainty. You will be graded on your ability to clearly and directly engage the question asked, and critically assess the evidence and uncertainties behind your advice.

Finally, you should use the opportunity to connect with people engaged in this course, including guest lectures and partnering organizations. You never know who is hiring...

But all this only works in an environment of professionalism and reciprocity. I expect students to be punctual, respectful, and attentive.

What is the policy on generative AI?

Generative AI is a tool, and one you are likely going to be using and/or exposed to in your professional lives. The last International Association for Impact Assessment meeting was themed "AI in IA", so AI will be a part of EIA in the future as well.

For this course the use of generative AI is allowed for completing assignments as well as classroom activities. Please note that the use of generative AI is not required and you can opt not to use it. All course work is designed to be completed without the use of AI. If however, you opt to use generative AI you must provide proper citation of the tools you use and describe how you used it (for your assignments).

Although this course allows the use of AI, take care that this course will ask for specialist knowledge and references that AI tools may not be adequately attuned to answer themselves. Generative AI is generally good with general knowledge. It will be up to you to ensure proper use of this tool. You should be aware of the following and be prepared to mitigate these potential issues:

- Generative AI does not fact check
- Generative AI may provide bias and inaccurate answers
- Generative AI hallucinates and may provide false or/and made up information
- Generative AI does not critically analyze content

What are important dates?

Important dates for the 2025-2026 Academic Year are found [here](#). Especially important are:

- Last day for adding courses: September 19nd
- Last day for dropping courses without penalty of failure: October 31th

Where do I find info about the School of Environmental Studies?

- Environmental Studies website: <https://www.uvic.ca/socialsciences/environmental/index.php>

- Environmental Studies Director: ses@uvic.ca
- Environmental Studies Undergraduate Advising: esoffice@uvic.ca

What is the policy on late assignments?

In simulating a consultant-client relationship, due dates are firm. Late assignments will not be accepted and graded. Only under exceptional circumstances involving illness, emergencies, and other extraordinary circumstances will late assignments be accepted, and only if approved in advance of the deadline. All assignments will have at minimum 2 weeks notice to complete.

What is the policy on attendance?

I will be taking attendance in the first week. This class has a waitlist and I want to ensure those who want to take part can. A student who fails to attend this course within the first 7 calendar days from the start of the term will be dropped. Students who submit less than 2/3 of assignments will be awarded a grade of "N". The Undergraduate Academic Calendar definition of an "N" grade is: "Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental." Like an "F", an "N" is a failing grade and factors into the student's GPA as a "0". I will be using Echo360 Video capture in class as a supplement for students when they cannot attend, but this is not a substitute for in-person attendance, and some guest lectures may request they not be filmed.

What is the policy on plagiarism and academic honesty?

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

The responsibility of the institution: Instructors and academic units have the responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. By doing so, the institution recognizes students for their hard work and assures them that other students do not have an unfair advantage through cheating on essays, exams, and projects.

The responsibility of the student: Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, take advantage of the following resources: <https://www.uvic.ca/students/academics/academic-integrity/index.php> or <https://libguides.uvic.ca/AvoidingPlagiarism>. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension.

All students have the responsibility to be aware of the university's policies on [academic integrity](#), including policies on cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor, multiple submission, and aiding others to cheat. If you have any questions or doubts, please talk to me. For other resources on writing see the [Centre for Academic Communication](#).

How is the course made accessible to all students?

Students have different learning styles and needs, and they are welcome in this course. If you have a documented disability or a health consideration that may require specific accommodations, please let me know and contact the [Centre for Accessible Learning](#) as soon as possible. Please do not feel ashamed if you need accommodations – I have found that people who think and learn differently often have very important contributions to give.

Be aware that sessions in this course may be recorded to allow students who are not able to attend to watch later. The recording will be posted in Brightspace. Students who have privacy concerns can contact me and will have the option to limit their personal information shared in the recording. If you have other questions or concerns regarding class recording and privacy please contact privacyinfo@uvic.ca.

How is the university committed to safety and the prevention of and appropriate response to sexualized violence?

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members. We should all take sexualized violence extremely seriously, and UVic has a number of supports in place for anyone impacted by it. Please learn more about how the university defines sexualized violence and its overall approach by visiting <https://www.uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/index.php>. If you or someone you know has been impacted by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR).

Whether or not you have been directly impacted, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out:

Where: Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR; Sedgewick C119

Phone: 250.721.8021

Email: eqhr01@uvic.ca

Web: <https://www.uvic.ca/sexualizedviolence/index.php>

How can you give feedback on the course?

There are formal and informal ways to provide feedback on the course. Informally, you can always message me or speak with me personally. Formally, towards the end of term you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience. The survey is important for providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future.

Self-care

We are still living in a pandemic, which carries a lot of physical, emotional, and mental health consequences. University degrees themselves are stressful, and I would encourage you to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester to help cope with stress. UVic also has a number of supports you can use.

Counselling Services - *Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.* <https://www.uvic.ca/students/health-wellness/counselling/index.php>

Health Services - *University Health Services (UHS) provides a full service primary health clinic for students, and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.*

<https://www.uvic.ca/student-wellness/index.php>

Centre for Accessible Learning - *The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations*

<https://www.uvic.ca/accessible-learning/index.php>. *The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.*

Elders' Voices - *The Office of Indigenous Academic and Community Engagement (IACE) has the privilege of assembling a group of Elders from local communities to guide students, staff, faculty and administration in Indigenous ways of knowing and being.*

<https://www.uvic.ca/iace/elders/elders-voices/index.php>

Equity

UVic is committed to upholding the values of equity, diversity, inclusion and human rights in our living, learning and work environments. We know that diversity underpins excellence, and that we all share responsibility for creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive community. In pursuit of our values, we seek members who will work respectfully and constructively with differences and across levels of power.

The School of Environmental Studies at UVic recognizes that the discipline of environmental studies has historically been overwhelmingly white, resulting in what Dorceta Taylor calls the “[Green Insiders Club](#).” This white colonial dominance has significantly weakened the discipline and the broader environmental movement to which it contributes. We are committed to undoing and unlearning these colonial practices by re-shaping our collective and individual decision-making using a decolonial and racial justice lens to amplify, work with, and learn from traditionally marginalized perspectives and experience.

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) as soon as possible. CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

Territorial Acknowledgement

The subject matter of this course – Environmental Impact Assessment – is facing a major refocusing as it relates to Indigenous communities. It is only fitting and a minimal act to acknowledge the Indigenous territory to learn this content

We acknowledge and respect the Ləkʷəŋən (Songhees and Xʷsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Ləkʷəŋən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.