

University of Toronto
Department of Geography

GGR 416 H1F – Environmental Impact Assessment
Course Outline Proposal
Fall 2015

Instructor: Jennifer Taylor
Contact: jenl.taylor@mail.utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Thursdays 2-4, Sid Smith 5038 or by appointment
Lectures: Tuesday 5-7
Location: Bancroft Building (BF), Room 315
Tutorial: Tuesday 7–8

Course Description: Environmental impact assessment (EIA) has emerged as a key component of environmental planning and management, coincident with growing awareness of the depth and scale of human impact on the biophysical world. As a planning tool, EIA aims to predict, evaluate and mitigate the impacts of a proposed project, program or policy prior to its undertaking in order to minimize or avoid adverse effects. This course is designed to provide students with theoretical and practical knowledge of EIA and its role in planning and environmental policy. Students will explore the current practices and functions of the federal and Ontario EIA processes and prevailing techniques for incorporating environmental considerations into planning and evaluating proposals for undertakings. Critical analysis of notable EIA case studies in Canada will be the focus of the major assignment and group presentations.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

- ⇒ Understand and be able to critically assess the role of EIA as a precautionary measure in environmental governance;
- ⇒ Define the aims and objectives of environmental assessments, as well as key terms and concepts;
- ⇒ Describe the steps and components of the environmental assessment process, particularly in Canada;
- ⇒ Apply EIA principles for best practices to case studies and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of specific environmental assessments;
- ⇒ Consolidate the necessary knowledge and skills to work toward a career or conduct further research on environmental assessment;
- ⇒ Develop an appreciation for EIA as a collaborative process through group work in tutorials;

Class Format & Approach: Classes will be a mix of lectures, guest speakers, practical exercises, in-class discussions and group presentations. Lectures will be used to provide an overview of key topics covered in class and to highlight important themes. Key topics will be elaborated on through in-class discussions and by regular attention to case studies. Assigned readings throughout the semester are critical for providing additional depth and breadth. Tutorials will be held every week except the first week of classes (September 14). Tutorials will be used to work on a participatory question and the group project. Commentaries and the group project provide an opportunity for integrating key topics and themes, as well as for linking them with the broader scholarly literature on environmental assessment.

Course Readings: All course readings will be posted on Blackboard. See attached reading and assignment schedule.

Course Requirements:

- a) **Readings and Commentaries:** Students are expected to do all the required readings listed in the reading schedule before each class meeting. Students will prepare three commentaries (250-500 words) worth 10% each on assigned readings as indicated in the schedule. Commentaries should consist of a short summary of the reading and an analytical response evaluating the arguments made. For weeks when commentaries are not due, students are expected to come to class with two questions about the readings to help spark class discussion. Further direction regarding commentaries will be handed out and posted on Blackboard the first week of class.
- b) **Report Proposal and Final Report:** The Final Report and Group Presentations will revolve a real Canadian-based EIA case study. Students will be divided into groups of 4 or 5 and each group will be assigned one case study. Members of the group will decide amongst themselves which aspects of the EIA they will report on and critique in their Final Report. Much of the tutorial will be used to collaborate with group members and make progress on the Final Report and Group Presentations. A 2-page proposal (double-spaced) outlining what aspect of your assigned EIA you will be analyzing will be submitted on October 27th, 2015 (Class 7). The Final Report will be 12-15 pages double-spaced (excluding title page, references, and any tables and figures) and will describe and critique one component of the EIA assigned to your group using the existing EIA report as the main source of information. Final Reports are due at the beginning of class on December 8, 2015 and must include a critical/analytical component as well as descriptive elements. More detail to follow.
- c) **Group Presentations:** The group presentation will be prepared by the team as a whole and should demonstrate the group's understanding of the EIA process relevant to their project and provide a concise but in-depth look at the strength and weakness of key components of the project's EIA. Presentations will run no longer than 20 minutes with each team member responsible for contributing roughly five minutes to the presentation. Five minutes will be reserved for questions from classmates. The group presentation mark of 20% will be divided into 10% for the individual contribution and 10% for the overall group effort. Students will include a paragraph (roughly 200 words) at the end of their final report summarizing their group work experience (positive and not-so-positive).

d) Participation: Students are expected to participate in all class discussions and tutorial exercises. Simply attending all lectures and tutorials does not merit a full participation mark. Attendance, thoughtful engagement in class discussion, relevant questions with regards to the course material, and active interest in guest lectures will all be evaluated.

Course Evaluation:

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| Participation (In-class & tutorial exercises) | 10% |
| Commentaries (3 x 10%) | 30% |
| Report proposal | 5% |
| Group presentation | 20% |
| Final Report | 35% |

Accessibility: The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.services@utoronto.ca or <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rulebook for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules.

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

a) In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.

- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work, having someone rewrite or add material to your work while “editing”.
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

b) On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else’s answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

c) Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor’s notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from me or other available campus resources like the College Writing Centres, the Academic Success Centre, or the U of T Writing Website.

Submitting Assignments, Late Assignments, Extensions: Please submit paper copies of commentaries, the report proposal and final report at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. Submission after the beginning of class will constitute 1 day late. A late penalty of 3% of the total value of the assignment per day will be deducted from the grade for late work (including weekend days and holidays). Late assignments may be submitted electronically via email. Assignments will no longer be accepted 7 days after the due date. Extensions will be granted in the case of illness or other emergencies with appropriate documentation. Please consult your college registrar should you be having ongoing difficulties during term – health related or otherwise –that prevent you from completing your course work satisfactorily.

Blackboard: All course readings and announcements will be posted on the course Blackboard site for which you have access through the University of Toronto Portal. Please check the site regularly for course announcements and updates.

Communicating with the Instructor:

If you have questions regarding assignments or other course-related issues, please check Blackboard first to see if the needed information has been posted before emailing the course instructor. All course-related emails should be sent to jenl.taylor@mail.utoronto.ca. I will endeavour to return emails within 24 hours. On weekends, they will be returned by Sunday night. If you haven't received a response within that timeframe, please resend the email.

READING & ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

| DATE | TOPICS | READING | NOTES |
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| <p>Class 1 September 15</p> | <p>Course overview Introduction to EIA Theory & Practice</p> | <p>Required: ⇒ Course syllabus</p> | <p>No Tutorial</p> |
| <p>Class 2 September 22</p> | <p>Environmental Assessment in Canada: Past & Present</p> | <p>Required: ⇒ Becklumb, P. & Williams, T. 2012. Canada's New Federal Environmental Assessment Process http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/LOP/ResearchPublications/2012-36-e.pdf ⇒ Gibson, R. 2012. In full retreat: the Canadian government's new environmental assessment law undoes decades of progress, <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i>, 30(3): 179-188.</p> <p>Suggested: ⇒ IAIA and IEA. 1999. Principles of Environmental Impact Assessment Best Practice, http://www.iaia.org/publicdocuments/special-publications/Principles%20of%20IA_web.pdf</p> | <p>Tutorial 1</p> |
| <p>Class 3 September 29</p> | <p>Overview of Ontario EA Process Working in EIA: Environmental consulting in Ontario</p> | <p>Required: ⇒ Savan, B.I. and Gore, C. 2015. Translating strong principles into effective practice: Environmental Assessment in Ontario, Canada, <i>Journal of Environmental Planning and Management</i> 58(3): 404-422. ⇒ Government of Ontario. "Preparing environmental assessments", http://www.ontario.ca/environment-and-energy/preparing-environmental-assessments</p> | <p>Tutorial 2 Guest Speaker: Julia Cushing Senior Environmental Planner, Aecom</p> |

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| | | <p>Suggested:</p> <p>⇒ Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. The High Costs of Not Doing a Full Environmental Assessment, http://ecoissues.ca/The_High_Costs_of_Not_doing_a_Full_Environmental_Assessment</p> <p>⇒ Environmental Commissioner of Ontario. 2009. Ramping Up Renewables: MOE's Renewable Energy Approvals, http://www.ecoissues.ca/index.php/Ramping_Up_Renewables:_MOE%E2%80%99s_Renewable_Energy_Approvals</p> | |
| <p>Class 4 October 6</p> | <p><u>The EA Process Part 1:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Screening - Scoping | <p>Required:</p> <p>⇒ Noble, B.F. 2015. <i>Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to Principles and Practice</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chap 5: Screening Procedures - Chap 6: Scoping and Environmental Baseline Assessment | <p>Tutorial 3</p> <p>Due: Commentary 1</p> |
| <p>Class 5 October 13</p> | <p><u>The EA Process Part 2:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying and predicting impacts - Determining impact significance | <p>Required:</p> <p>⇒ Tennøy, A, Kværner, J and Gjerstad KI. 2006. Uncertainty in environmental impact assessment predictions: the need for better communication and more transparency. <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i> 24(1): 45-56.</p> <p>⇒ Lawrence, DP. 2007. Impact significance determination – pushing the boundaries. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 27(8): 770-788.</p> | <p>Tutorial 4</p> |
| <p>Class 6 October 20</p> | <p><u>The EA Process Part 3:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managing project impacts - Cumulative Effects Assessment | <p>Required:</p> <p>⇒ Canter, L. & Ross, B. 2010. State of practice of cumulative effects assessment and management: the good, the bad, and the ugly. <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i>, 28(4): 261-268.</p> <p>⇒ Dickinson, S. 2010. Ambatovy project: mining in a challenging biodiversity</p> | <p>Tutorial 5</p> <p>Due: Commentary 2</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Vanessa Mass, Zoologist</p> |

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| | Working in EIA: Biodiversity Management | setting in Madagascar, Malagasy Nature, http://www.sifec.org/static/uploaded/Files/ressources/actes-des-colloques/paris/session-1-3/2_DICKINSON_TXT.pdf | Ambatovy, Madagascar |
| Class 7 October 27 | Public Participation Aboriginal Consultation | <p>Required:</p> <p>⇒ Salomons, GH., Hoberg, G. 2014. Setting boundaries of participation in environmental impact assessment, <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 45: 69-75.</p> <p>⇒ Booth, Annie L and Skelton, Norman W. 2011. Improving First Nations' participation in environmental assessment processes: recommendations from the field. <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i>, 29 (1): 49 – 58</p> <p>Suggested:</p> <p>⇒ Aboriginal Consultation in Federal EA, http://www.ceaa.gc.ca/default.asp?lang=en&n=ED06FC83-1</p> <p>⇒ Duty to Consult with Aboriginal Peoples in Ontario, http://www.ontario.ca/page/duty-consult-aboriginal-peoples-ontario</p> | <p>Tutorial 6</p> <p>Guest Speaker: TBA</p> <p>Due: Report Proposal</p> |
| Class 8 November 3 | Social Impact Assessment and Climate Change | <p>Required:</p> <p>⇒ Asselin, J and Parkins, JR. 2009. Comparative case study as social impact assessment: possibilities and limitations for anticipating social change in the Far North. <i>Social Indicators Research</i>, 94:483–497</p> <p>⇒ Byer, PH, Lalani, MJ, and Yeomans, JS. 2009. Addressing and communicating climate change and its uncertainties in project environmental impact assessments. <i>Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management</i> 11(1): 29-50.</p> | <p>Tutorial 7</p> <p>Due: Commentary 3</p> |
| Class 9 November 16 | EIA and Environmental Justice: A Closer Look at | Required: | Tutorial 8 |

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| | the Precautionary Principle | <p>⇒ Walker, G. 2010. Environmental justice, impact assessment and the politics of knowledge: The implications of assessing the social distribution of environmental outcomes, <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 30(5): 312-318</p> <p>⇒ Parts 1-4 of the Reasons for Judgment and Judgment of the Darlington New Nuclear Build – Judicial Review http://www.ecojustice.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2014fc463-Russel-FCT-decsn.pdf</p> | Guest Speaker: TBA |
| Class 10 November 23 | Group Presentations | None | Tutorial 9 |
| Class 11 November 30 | Group Presentations | None | Tutorial 10 |
| Class 12 December 8 | Course Wrap-up Discussion: Effectiveness of EA Planning without EA | <p>Required:</p> <p>⇒ Benson, JF. 2003. What is the Alternative? Impact assessment tools and sustainable planning. <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i> 21(4): 261-280.</p> <p>Suggested:</p> <p>⇒ Pope, J, Bond, Al, Morrison-Saunders, A., Retief, F. 2013. Advancing the theory and practice of impact assessment: Setting the research agenda. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i> 41: 1-9.</p> | Tutorial 11 Due: Final Report |