

Department of Geography and Planning
Faculty of Arts and Science
University of Toronto

GGR 416
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Instructor: Esther Lambert
Office: Sidney Smith Hall (SSH) 5008
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm, or by appointment
Email: e.lambert@mail.utoronto.ca
Lectures: Mondays 5-7pm
Tutorials: Mondays (on selected days - see schedule), 7-8pm
Location: WW 119
Course Website: Quercus (accessible via <https://q.utoronto.ca>)¹

COURSE OUTLINE

A growing awareness of the complex and extensive impacts of human actions on the social and biophysical realms has emerged in conjunction with an increased expectation for the use of environmental impact assessment (EIA) as an integral aspect of the planning process. This course explores the theory and practice of EIA as an environmental protection planning tool, including its origins, purpose and processes in the Canadian context, looking specifically at Ontario. Other alternative forms of impact assessment will also be explored. As a planning tool, EIA seeks to predict and assess the potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed *projects, policies, programs or plans* prior to their undertaking and to provide guidance towards mitigating measures geared towards minimize adverse outcomes. Applying a broad understanding of environment, we will focus on the following components of EIA: principles, legal and institutional frameworks, stages in the process and specific analytical techniques. Students will be encouraged and expected to critically examine EIA decision-making processes by considering its current criticisms to include inadequacies in its consideration for climate change and cumulative effects, long-term monitoring and meaningful public engagement and Indigenous communities' rights and autonomy. This course is designed to provide students with knowledge of EIA theory and practice, and, to nurture critical thought on ways to improve decision-making processes through the application of sustainability principles.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- To gain an understanding of the history and development of EIA in Ontario and Canada
- To foster knowledge of current challenges and opportunities in the application of environmental assessment in the Canadian context
- To describe and explain the steps of the environmental assessment process, particularly in Canada

¹ Please consult the course website regularly for course readings, lecture slides, announcements

- To enhance analytical skills by critically examining environmental assessment thought and practice
- To develop collaborative working and presentation skills
- To engage readings and other course resources, in order to participate effectively in research or professional practice courses in the area of environmental assessment

READINGS

There is no textbook for this course. All course readings listed in the *Reading and Assignment Schedule* will be posted on Quercus. Students are expected to have engaged the readings before the class meets and come prepared to participate in discussions and ask questions.

CLASS FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

- One 2-hour weekly lecture session. This will include a combination of instructor and guest lectures, in-class discussions, and group presentations. This period will provide an overview of key topics and discussion of course themes. Lectures are not a replacement for readings but are a useful complement to enrich, clarify and illustrate themes from readings.
- Four tutorials over the semester. These are a mandatory participation requirement. This is where students will work on their presentations scheduled for the last two weeks of class.
- Group presentations (last two weeks of semester)

EVALUATION

COURSE REQUIREMENT	DUE DATE	WEIGHT
Participation (In-class & tutorial exercises)	N/A	10%
Commentaries (2 x 10%)	Sept 30 & Nov 18 (hard copies at the start of class)	20%
Midterm	Oct 21 (In class time)	20%
Report Proposal	Nov 11 (hard copies at the start of class)	5%
Group Presentation (10% for the individual contribution and 5% for the overall group effort)	Dec 2 & 5 (In class)	15%
Final Report	Dec 5 (Electronic submission by midnight)	30%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Reading Commentaries:**

Students will prepare two 750-word commentaries on the course readings' main points and findings. These are analytic responses (not summaries) that evaluate arguments and identify connections between the readings. (More details to come).

2. **Midterm:**

The midterm will be held during Class 6 (October 21) and will be based on course readings and lectures (including guest lectures) from Weeks 1-5. (More details to come).

3. **Group Project:**

In groups of 3 or 4, you will evaluate a real Canadian EIA case study. Each group member will be responsible for analyzing an aspect of the case study. Group members will divide the main components of the EA into: 1) Biophysical effects, 2) Socio-economic effects, 3) Cumulative effects, 4) Follow-up and monitoring and, 5) Consultation. (More details to come).

- *As a group you will:*

- Use tutorial time to meet
- Prepare a group presentation on the EA process for your case study and the strengths and weaknesses of the EA report. Each group will be given a maximum of 20 minutes total, excluding a brief question period after). (More details to come)

- *As an individual you will:*

- Write a report proposal (2 pages double spaced, details to come)
- Write a final report (10-15 pages double spaced, details to come)

4. **Participation:**

Participation is based on not only your physical presence at lectures and tutorials, but also participation in class discussions, asking relevant questions about course material, and active attention to guest lectures.

GUIDELINES

Sufficient preparation and engagement are important in shaping your learning experience. Ensure that you respect the instructor and fellow students by being on time and respecting the opinions and views shared. Come with your ideas, thoughts and experiences and be prepared to join and create your own learning space.

Working Groups

This is where you will have an opportunity to interact more closely with your peers and practice and develop *presentation, collaboration, teamwork, and networking* skills. In these groups of 3-4 students, you will work on class discussion questions and on your group presentations (on tutorial days). You may also choose to use these groups to share notes and prepare for the midterm.

Accessibility

There is a sincere commitment to accessibility in this course and at the University of Toronto. It is important to ensure that students of diverse learning styles and needs are supported. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please let me know as soon as possible. For more information on services and resources contact Tanya Lewis, Director of Academic Success and Accessibility Services, (416) 978-6268; tanya.lewis@utoronto.ca

Writing Support

For writing support, contact one of the following college writing centres:

- [Innis College Writing Centre](#), Innis College Rooms 315 and 321.
- [New College Writing Centre](#), Wilson Hall, Rooms 2045 and 2047.
- [St. Michael's Writing Centre](#), Kelly Library Learning Commons.
- [Trinity College Writing Centre](#), Larkin Building, Room 302.
- [University College Writing Centre](#), Laidlaw Library, Rooms 214, 216, and 218.
- [Victoria College Writing Centre](#), Northrop Frye Hall 103, Room A and Room B.
- [Woodsworth College Academic Writing Centre](#), Woodsworth Room 214.

These writing centres welcome students from all University of Toronto campuses and regardless of college affiliation, taking courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science on the St. George campus. To make an appointment, go to <http://writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science/>.

For additional writing resources visit:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>. (Advice on Academic Writing)

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. (English Language Learning program - ELL)

Geography Math Help Centre

Another resource for this course is the department's Math Help Centre. Geography TAs will be available to help refresh and explain math concepts and techniques that may come up in your Geography courses. This includes working with formulas, graphing data, completing calculations, and so forth. It does not matter how basic your questions are! No appointment is required, just drop by. There will also be table space available in the room, allowing students to get math help as they work through assignments. Details on location and TA times will be posted here: <http://geography.utoronto.ca/undergraduate/math-help/>

Late Penalty

There is a late penalty of 5% for each day late (including weekend days). Late assignments must be placed in the Geography Department drop box outside the main office (SS5047). In cases of online submissions, consult with the instructor. Extensions will be granted only in cases of illness or other emergencies, with appropriate documentation. This may include health reasons, if a University of Toronto Verification of Student Illness or Injury form is provided or other personal reasons, with documentation provided from a College Registrar or Accessibility Services.

Turnitin.com

Online submissions will be automatically submitted to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In submitting your assignment, you give permission for its inclusion as a source document in the Turnitin.com reference database, where

it will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. For more information about this, visit <https://qstudents.utoronto.ca/how-to-get-turnitin-to-work-for-you/>.

If you have concerns about the course's use of Turnitin, contact me at least a week before the final paper is due, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Academic Integrity

Members of the University of Toronto community are expected to maintain academic integrity by remaining committed to honesty, fairness and respect, and building trust and a sense of responsibility. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will not be tolerated. For details on how to avoid this, see: "How not to plagiarize" at <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>.

According to the University's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, it is an offence for a student to:

1. "represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e., to commit plagiarism."
2. "submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."
3. "submit for credit any academic work containing a purported statement of fact or reference to a source which has been concocted."

Policy On Use Of Electronic Devices And Classroom Etiquette

Please respect your classmates and the instructor by turning off all communication devices, including cell phones and smart watches. If using your laptops for note-taking, do so in a manner that does not distract those around you. Seek out permission if you would like to audio record. Taking photos and video recordings are not allowed.

Provostial guidelines on the Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology, available at <https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/planning-policy/information-communication-technology-appropriate-use/>, state that:

"The unauthorised use of any form of device to audiotape, photograph, video-record or otherwise reproduce lectures, course notes or teaching materials provided by instructors is covered by the Canadian Copyright Act and is prohibited. Students must obtain prior written consent to such recording. In the case of private use by students with disabilities, the instructor's consent must not be unreasonably withheld."

READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
Class 1 Sept 9	Course overview and introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course syllabus 	
Class 2 Sept 16	EIA in Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government of Canada. 2017. Environmental and regulatory reviews: Discussion paper. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/themes/environment/conservation/environmental-reviews/share-your-views/proposed-approach/discussion-paper-june-2017-eng.pdf Morgan, R. 2012. Environmental impact assessment: the state of the art, <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i>, 30(1): 5-14. 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. 	
Class 3 Sept 23	EIA in Ontario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lindgren, R. and Dunn, B. 2010. Environmental assessment in Ontario: Rhetoric vs. Reality, <i>Journal of Environmental Law and Practice</i>, 21: 279-303. 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. 	<u>Tutorial 1</u> Guest Speaker: Richard Lindgren, Canadian Environmental Law Association
Class 4 Sept 30	EA Process: Screening, Scoping, and Impact Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noble, B.F. 2015. Screening Procedures, in <i>Introduction to environmental impact assessment: A guide to principles and practice</i>. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press, Canada. Pgs. 72-92 Ehrlich A and Ross W. 2015. The significance spectrum and EIA significance determinations. <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i>, 33(2): 87-97. 	COMMENTARY 1 DUE Monday Sept 30
Class 5 Oct 7	Indigenous Peoples' Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Udofia, A., Noble, B., & Poelzer, G. 2017. Meaningful and efficient? Enduring 	<u>Tutorial 2</u>

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
	Indigenous Autonomy	challenges to Aboriginal participation in environmental assessment. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i> , 65, 164-174. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papillon, M., & Rodon, T. (2017). Proponent-Indigenous agreements and the implementation of the right to free, prior, and informed consent in Canada. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 62, 216-224. 	Guest Speaker: TBD
OCTOBER 14 THANKSGIVING BREAK NO CLASS OR TUTORIALS			
Class 6 Oct 21	MIDTERM		
Class 7 Oct 28	EA Process: Follow Up, Monitoring & Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noble and Birk. 2011. Comfort monitoring? Environmental assessment follow-up under community-industry negotiated environmental agreements, <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 31(1): 17-24. • Deacon, L., & Baxter, J. (2013). No opportunity to say no: a case study of procedural environmental injustice in Canada. <i>Journal of Environmental Planning and Management</i>, 56(5), 607-623. 	Guest Speaker: TBD
NOVEMBER 4 READING WEEK NO CLASS OR TUTORIALS			
Class 8 Nov 11	Strategic Environmental Assessment, Cumulative Impacts, and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noble, B., & Nwanekezie, K. 2017. Conceptualizing strategic environmental assessment: Principles, approaches and research directions. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 62, 165-173. • Sinclair, A. J., Doelle, M., & Duinker, P. N. (2017). Looking up, down, and sideways: Reconceiving cumulative effects assessment as a mindset. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 62, 183-194. • Ohsawa, T., Duinker, P. 2014. Climate Change Mitigation in Canadian Environmental Impact Assessments, <i>Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal</i>, 32 (3): 222-233 	<u>Tutorial 3</u> REPORT PROPOSAL DUE Monday Nov 11
Class 9 Nov 18	EIA in the Global South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biehl, J., Köppel, J., Rodorff, V., Pérez M. E. H, Zimmermann, A., Geißler, G., Rehhausen, A. 2019. Implementing Strategic Environmental Assessment in Countries of the Global South—An Analysis Within the Peruvian Context, <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 77: 23-39 	<u>Tutorial 4</u> COMMENTARY 2 DUE Monday Nov 18 Guest Speaker: TBA

Fall 2019
Environmental Impact Assessment

Date	Topic	Readings	Notes
Class 10 Nov 25	Alternatives in EIA Next Generation EIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northey, R. 2016. Fading role of alternatives in federal environmental assessment. <i>Journal of Environmental Law and Practice</i>, 29, 41-64. • Sinclair, A.J., Doelle, M., Gibson, R.B. 2018. Implementing next generation assessment: A case example of a global challenge. <i>Environmental Impact Assessment Review</i>, 72 (complete): 166-76. 	
Class 11 Dec 2	Group Presentations		
Class 12 Dec 5	Group Presentations		FINAL REPORT DUE Thursday December 5

**The proposed schedule of lectures may be subject to change*