Environmental Impact Assessment - Fall 2017
GEOG 4004A

Instructor: Joshua Gladstone
Contact information: joshua.gladstone@carleton.ca
Location: Southam Hall 406
Class schedule: Wednesdays, 8:35 – 11:25 am
Office hours: By appointment
TA information: Stuart MacDonald

I. Course description

This introductory course explores the nature and role of environmental impact assessment as an evolving tool for environmental governance Canada. Its purpose is to impart basic concepts, practical skills, and current techniques while providing space to explore emerging issues in the field. To do this successfully the lectures and assignments will draw heavily on historical and contemporary Canadian case studies. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1) understand and explain EIA concepts, techniques, and procedures
2) describe EIA in historical and theoretical perspective
3) apply EIA concepts, techniques, and procedures to a range of cases
4) analyze and evaluate EIA practices and procedures in different jurisdictions and social contexts
5) demonstrate the value and limitations of environmental assessment in relation to a concrete case

II. Preclusions

N/A

III. Prerequisites

Fourth-year Honours standing in Geography or Environmental Studies or Environmental Science, or permission of the Department. Note: GEOG 3022 or ENST 3306 is recommended.

IV. Texts


The course text is available on reserve at the Carleton University Library or for purchase at:

Haven Books
43 Seneca St.,
Ottawa, ON, K1S 4X2
IV. Course calendar

Class 1 (September 6): Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment

Class 2 (September 13): Aims and Objectives of EA

Chapter 1: Aims and objectives of environmental impact assessment


Class 3 (September 20): Overview of Environmental Assessment in Canada

***In-class reading response***

***Group presentations assigned***

EA Chapter 2: An Overview of Environmental Impact Assessment in Canada


Class 4 (September 27): Screening

***In-class exercise (not evaluated): Screening procedures under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act 2012***

Chapter 4: Screening procedures
Class 5 (October 4): Scoping

Chapter 5: Scoping procedures


Class 6 (October 11): Identifying, predicting, and evaluating impacts

***Group presentation contracts due*** (Note the change to the original deadline of October 4th)

Chapter 6: Predicting environmental impacts
Chapter 7: Managing project impacts
Chapter 8: Determining impact significance

Class 7 (October 18): Monitoring Impacts and Public Participation

***Midterm exam***

Chapter 9: Follow-up and monitoring
Chapter 10: Public participation in EIA


READING WEEK

Class 8 (November 1): Cumulative Effects Assessment

Chapter 11: Cumulative environmental effects assessment


Class 9 (November 8): Socio-Economic Impacts


Class 10 (November 15): EA and Indigenous Peoples


Class 11 (November 22): ***Group Presentations***

Class 12 (November 29): *** Group Presentations ***

Class 13 (December 6): Review

V. Evaluation

In-class reading response (15%)

Students will have between 30 and 60 minutes to write responses to questions based on the readings for that week. This is a “closed book” exercise; students will not have access to readings or notes.

Group presentation contracts (5%)
Each student is required to contribute to the group contract for the final presentation. The group contract is a document that contains a preliminary bibliography of the sources each student plans to use to support her or his contribution to the group presentation (see below), as well as the division of labour decided on by the group. A template will be provided by the instructor.

Midterm exam (25%)

Students will demonstrate comprehension of key concepts, techniques, and procedures in this multiple choice and short answer exam.

Group Presentation (25%)

The purpose of this assignment is for students to apply their knowledge of EIA concepts, techniques and procedures to describe, analyze, and evaluate a recent project-level environmental impact assessment in Canada. To do this, students will work together in groups to prepare a 45 minute presentation in which they will:

1) analyze how EIA concepts, techniques, and procedures have been employed in the case of an environmental impact assessment in a Canadian jurisdiction; and
2) demonstrate the value and limitations of these concepts, techniques, and procedures in relation to the specific case.

On September 20th, students will form groups and select from among a number of real environmental impact assessment cases provided by the instructor. Over the next two weeks, groups will work to complete a group contract that includes a division of labour and a preliminary bibliography for submission on October 4th. Groups will give their 45 minute presentations during class on November 22nd and 29th. Presentation time should be evenly distributed among group members.

The group presentation is worth 25% of the course grade. Marks will be awarded as follows:
- Attendance at meeting with instructor/TA (2 marks)
- Student participation in class on November 22nd and 29th (3 marks)
- Individual contribution to presentation (20 marks)

Final exam (30%)

This open book take-home examination will be assigned on the last day of class and must be deposited on CuLearn no later than 9:00 a.m. on December 22nd. Students are expected to work independently on this exam drawing on lectures, assignments, and course materials.

VI. Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the
community will thrive. Students are reminded of the seriousness with which Carleton University treats academic dishonesty of any form, particularly plagiarism. Students should be familiar with the University’s Academic Integrity Policy (http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity/), and should not hesitate to speak with the Instructor if you have any questions. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the regulations concerning academic integrity and to ensure that your course work conforms to the principles of academic integrity.

VII. Laptops and Cellphones

Laptop and cellphone policies are designed to encourage a productive, engaging, and positive learning environment for all students. I understand that some students prefer to type notes rather than write notes using a pen and paper. Responsible use of laptops is permitted, although students are encouraged to put laptops away during class discussions and to take notes using pen and paper. Students using their laptops to check email, Facebook, or other non-course related activities will be asked to leave their laptops at home. The use of cell phones is not permitted in class. If you are expecting an urgent call, please ensure the ringer is off and please step outside.

VIII. Lateness and Missed Class Policy

A great deal of course activity takes place in class and attendance is crucial. Students who miss class without medical documentation will not be permitted to write make-up tests or deliver make-up presentations. Late assignments will be deducted 10% per day, including weekends and holidays. The final assignment must be deposited on CuLearn by 9am on December 22nd. Email and hard copy submissions will NOT be accepted. In the case of late submission, emailed versions will be accepted on weekends and holidays as proof of submission, and paper versions must be provided to the instructor on the next business day. Students assume all risk for lost or missing materials. Please be sure to keep a back-up electronic copy of your assignments.

IX. Extenuating Circumstances

Reasonable accommodations will be made for students with extenuating circumstances (i.e. out of your control). Any requests for deadline extensions must be made to the Instructor at least 5 business days prior to the deadline. In case of missed deadlines due to unforeseen circumstance, an official medical note (or other applicable formal documentation) must be provided within 5 days of the missed deadline in order to negotiate new deadlines. Missed presentations must be accompanied by the same documentation, using the same protocol outlined above, and will result in the re-scheduling of the presentation, or alternative arrangement, depending on the scheduled timing. With the proper documentation these accommodations will be considered, but will not be guaranteed. If no documentation is provided, the resulting grade of a missed assignment or presentation will be zero.

X. Academic Accommodations

Carleton University is committed to promoting academic accessibility for all individuals. Please feel welcome to bring any issues related to disability, religious, pregnancy, or other accommodation to my attention. For students with disabilities, contact the Paul Menton Centre
(613-520-6608, http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/accommodations/) to obtain the necessary letters of accommodations. For religious observances or pregnancy, consult with equity services (http://www2.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/), or an equity advisor (613-520-5622), to obtain the necessary letters of accommodation.

There are a variety of ways to get help if you are having difficulties with any of the course material, or managing to meet the requirements of a number of courses at once. The Instructor is here to facilitate your learning, so take advantage of your opportunities for interaction and ask for help when needed. You are especially encouraged to attend designated office hours. There are also a number of support services and resources on campus at your disposal, including: The Student Academic Success Centre (www.carleton.ca/sasc) to help you in achieving academic success in various aspects of your university program; The Writing Tutorial Service (www.carleton.ca/wts) to help you improve your writing skills; and The MacOdrum Library (www.library.carleton.ca) which offers library, research, learning, and IT support.

XI. Intellectual Property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

XII. Email and Office Hours

I am pleased to make myself available to answer questions about the course or course material during office hours. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, except on weekends when my response time may be longer.