Course Description:
This course introduces students to the process of environmental impact assessment and analysis and to implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA compliance is required for most federally sponsored projects such as timber harvests, resource management plans, energy development, public housing and transportation projects or almost anything that uses federal funding. Many states have similar environmental regulatory processes. Participants will acquire and analyze an environmental impact statement as well as become familiar with the preparation of environmental impact statements and their use in project evaluation and impact mitigation. This an upper division planning analysis class offered entirely on-line for undergraduate students at the University of Oregon or at other accredited universities with permission from those institutions.

Course Objectives:
• To provide a basic understanding of the EIA process as it is used for research, planning, project or program evaluation, monitoring, and regulatory enforcement.
• To introduce students to the legal, economic, administrative and technical process of preparing and/or evaluating environmental impact documents.
• To relate the uses of scientific research to practical situations in project planning and decision making.
• To provide experience and training in environmental planning and related professions.

Anticipated Outcomes:
Upon completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Critically review a Federal EIS or comparable document for completeness and adequacy.
2. Prepare portions of environmental documents through administrative and legal requirements and standards of professional practice.
3. Fully participate in interdisciplinary environmental report preparation teams.

4. Analyze proposed development project plans for possible environmental effects and prepare appropriate initial studies.

5. Utilize EIA documents for policy development, project planning or for legal or political action planning.

Getting Started
Regular U. of O. students may register through the normal process. Further instructions will be posted on the University Blackboard site. Non-admitted students should register through Academic Extension <http://de.uoregon.edu/courses/schedule.php>. Once registered the University Blackboard site will be open for student use.

Format:
The course is divided into fourteen Topics. Each Topic will incorporate a “lecture discussion” outline based on the list of topics below. The outlines will incorporate links to items discussed and to sources of further information about each Topic. The blackboard Discussion function allows for communication among all students and the instructor. Topic discussions will also incorporate the assigned readings, case studies and ways to maximize the above objectives and desired outcomes. Each Topic will offer five or so study questions which may be used to guide reading and discussion. One of the study questions (selected by the computer) will appear as a quiz question to be answered at the conclusion of the study of each Topic.

Evaluation:
Students are responsible for assigned reading, ten quizzes selected out of the fourteen topics, a midterm examination, a critique of an impact statement and a final examination. The midterm consists of short essay questions that ask you to define, explain, compare, list examples of, or analyze aspects of topics presented in class. For obvious reasons, the exams are “open book and open notes”. The exercise will be an analysis of a currently active EIS or equivalent document to be obtained by the student as soon as possible. You will critically analyze the document for completeness, accuracy and usefulness for decision making. The short essay type final exam will be comprehensive but will not revisit subject matter covered on the midterm. Graduate students will prepare and submit a short paper on a specific aspect or methodology for impact assessment such as soils, cultural resources or water quality. It is recommended that you discuss the short paper with your instructor before getting too far into it. It will be due at the end of the term and will be evaluated on a pass-fail basis.

Grading Policy:
All grading is relatively subjective and is based on the instructor's evaluation of your potential ability to participate on an environmental planning and research team and to manage an EIA project for a governmental agency.
**Grading:**

Ten quizzes 40%
Midterm exam 20%
Class Exercise 20%
Final Exam 20%

**Text:**


**Recommended (not required) reference texts:**


**Course Outline:**

**Topic 01. Introduction,**

Brief History of Environmental Impact Analysis,

EIA as research,

EIA as decision making process,

EIA in Global Affairs.

**Topic 02. Use of the EIA process the U.S.,**

History of NEPA and the EIA process

Legal basis for NEPA, Judicial review

Roles of the players in the environmental review process, Integrating NEPA with other environmental laws.

EIA process in the States

**Topic 03. Public agency administrative processes,**

NEPA and agency guidelines

Deciding if NEPA applies

The land development process as it relates to EIA

**Topic 04. Types of Environmental documents**

Environmental Assessments
Findings of No Significant Impact

Environmental Documents

Topic 05. Preparation, content, scope and review of an EIS in the U.S.
   Aids to impact identification and prediction
   Basic principles for evaluation of the EIA process
   Orientation to class projects

Topic 06. Special circumstances
   Project description
   Cumulative and growth Inducing effects
   Mitigation Plans and Monitoring,
   Responses to Comments/Findings/Follow-up,
   NEPA’s effectiveness and its future.

Midterm Exam

Topic 07. Geology, topography, soils
Topic 08. Hydrology, flooding, erosion/deposition, water quality, water supply
Topic 09. Biotics/ Habitats/Endangered Species, Wetlands and other special cases
Topic 10. Air quality, climate change, energy conservation
Topic 11. Cultural Resources/Archaeology, Historic Preservation
Topic 12. Social/Demographics, Community Services
Topic 13. Noise Impact Analysis
Topic 15, Traffic and Transport systems

Student Project Reports, Final Exam

About the Instructor:

Dr. Don Holtgrieve has taught environmental planning courses over a 30 year period and has been a consultant to several federal, state and local agencies. As such, he has managed the
preparation and processing of over 100 environmental impact related documents. He has also managed the environmental compliance components of several private sector development projects.

**About on-line planning courses in general and PPPM 408 in particular**

On-line upper division university courses present several advantages to students and a few drawbacks that are very important to consider.

Students say that they like on-line courses that are self paced so they can work on them on their own schedule. Another advantage is that they can be accessed anywhere the student may happen to be as long as they have internet access. An open book/open notes format is understood. (Which is the case in a workplace situation.) Feedback from the instructor is almost immediate and can be on an individual basis or on a full class communication (discussion) format.

However, students sometimes complain about not having a physical presence with the instructor or other class members and not quite having the informality of a joke or other humorous moment in class. Some day I hope to have video segments with short presentations.

This class, Environmental Impact Assessment, has a lot of content, most of which is legal, administrative, or scientific in nature. There are no lectures. Material is in outline format which can be built on over the term. The course is research based (reading from several sources) and asks the student to compile information and analysis into useful essays that are answers to the posted Study Questions. The subject matter is applied in nature rather than theoretical or conceptual. This means that organization and a serious time commitment to the course is necessary. That said, former students (over a 20 year time period) have told me that the course was a positive addition to their resume and helped them gain employment in the field of environmental planning. Employment by government agencies, consulting firms and non-profit organizations was, and remains, common.

More about work in the area of environmental assessment may be found on the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP) web site at: [http://www.naep.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=91299&orgId=naep](http://www.naep.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=91299&orgId=naep)

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