

Environmental Impact Assessment

Spring 2023: PPPM 408/508, CRN#34987/35006

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Office: Hendricks Hall (by appointment only)

Office Hours: Any time by e-mail or by phone or Zoom appointment.

Class time: This is a self-paced online course, but due dates for assignments and exams are posted in the Canvas course Calendar.

Course Website: The course website is located on the University of Oregon's Canvas system. The class syllabus, announcements and other materials are posted on the Canvas site. Please check the course website frequently for announcements and updates. In addition, make sure that the University registrar has your correct U of O email address. Only the university email address will be used to communicate with you.

Course Description: This course introduces students to the process of environmental impact assessment and analysis and the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act ([NEPA](#)) compliance is required for most U.S. 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 and other countries 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 and graduate planning analysis class offered entirely on-line for students at the University of Oregon or at other accredited universities with permission. [Here](#) is what professional environmental planners do.

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 environmental enforcement.
- To introduce students to the legal, economic, administrative and technical process of preparing and/or evaluating environmental impact related 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 such as architecture, political science, landscape architecture, and resources management.

Learning 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. Communicate a review (above) of findings through written and verbal communication with interested parties.
3. Prepare portions of environmental documents through administrative and legal requirements and standards of professional practice.
4. Fully participate in interdisciplinary environmental report preparation teams.
5. Analyze proposed development project plans for possible environmental effects and prepare appropriate initial studies.
6. 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 Canvas site. Non-admitted students should register through the Community Education Program <http://cep.uoregon.edu/>. Once registered the University Canvas site will be open for student use.

I enjoy talking with students about our course material! Are you confused or excited about something? Wondering how what we're learning relates to current events, career choices, or other classes you can take at UO? Please be in touch to let me know how you are doing in the course. If you are having trouble with some aspect of it, I would like to strategize with you. I believe that every student can succeed in this course, and I care about your success.

How we can communicate: If your question (or comment) is:

- *a practical, yes/no* one about an assignment, reading, or other component of our class, please post your question on the Discussion thread which I respond to daily, and where your peers can also pose questions and share answers.
- *about a technical challenge* with Canvas or another technology, please contact the UO Services Portal.
- *about course content or activities, or about something personal, time sensitive, or something else* that doesn't feel like it fits above, please reach out to me by email or telephone. I do not have office hours on campus. I try to respond to questions within one business day.

Guidelines for using canvas discussion:

- Use subject lines that clearly communicate the content of your post
- Write concisely and be aware that humor or sarcasm doesn't always translate in writing.
- Be supportive and considerate when replying to others' posts. This means avoiding use of jargon or inappropriate language, and it means disagreeing with respect and providing clear rationale or evidence to support your different view.
- Keep focused on the topic and reference readings and other class materials to support your points (as applicable).
- Always use correct spelling and grammar and proofread your submissions.
- Contribute and interact when you can be helpful to others. (There is no "curve" so you are not competing with others.)

Course 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 Canvas Discussion function allows for communication between all students and the instructor.

Zoom meetings can be arranged if needed.

Topic discussions will also incorporate the assigned readings, case studies, text chapters and other ways to maximize the above objectives and desired outcomes. Each Topic will offer several ideas for possible quiz questions. They are 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 your study of each Topic. The quiz questions may also appear as mid-term exam or final exam questions although they may be slightly reworded.

Instructor's approach to learning course content:

This environmental planning course is one of two that are offered completely online and are also not required in the PPPM programs. While most planning courses focus on the *process* of planning and decision-making among several participants, this course is *research* based. It is focused on the *content or subject matter* of the environmental resources that need management and how they are managed in "real world" situations among government agencies, private companies and non-profit organizations. Some of our participants are already at work in the profession around the US and in other countries. Within the time limits the university allows, your instructor will serve as your on-call guide to individualized learning program with your own environmental focus and at your own (reasonable) pace.

Evaluation: Students are responsible for assigned reading, ten quizzes selected out of the fourteen topics, a midterm examination, an in-depth critique of an impact statement and a final examination. The midterm and final exams consist of 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 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or equivalent document to be obtained by the student (you) 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 taking (PPPM 508) will prepare and submit a short research paper on a specific aspect or methodology for impact assessment such as soils, cultural resources, energy development or water quality management. 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 on the last day of classes and will be evaluated on a pass-fail basis.

Students who miss the midterm exam (see Canvas course calendar) will receive a grade of zero for that exam unless there is a legitimate reason for missing the midterm exam (e.g. serious illness or family emergency). If the midterm exam is missed for a legitimate reason, an alternative exam with different questions may be arranged for the last week of classes.

Students must take the final exam to receive a grade in the course. The date and time for the final exam will not be changed to accommodate scheduling conflicts. Final exams will not be given early under any circumstances. A make-up final exam with different questions will be scheduled for students who miss the regularly scheduled final exam due to serious illness or family emergency.

This is a writing intensive course. The PPPM Department's *Writing Assessment Criteria* will be used to evaluate and score assignments, quizzes and exams. It may be viewed and downloaded from the course Canvas site. If you struggle with writing, you are strongly encouraged to use the services of the Writing Lab: The Writing [Lab](#) in Prince Lucien Campbell Hall begins week two of the term and closes on the Wednesday of finals week. Free tutors are available. Graduate student tutors are available on a drop-in basis or by appointment.

The course assignment must be turned in on time or earlier. Late assignments will receive only partial credit. In accordance with university regulations, an incomplete will only be given when "the quality of work is satisfactory, but a minor yet essential requirement of the course has not been completed for reasons acceptable to the instructor."

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 (computer selected) quizzes 10 points each (The computer picks the highest 10 out of 14 quizzes available)

Midterm exam 50 points

Class Assignment 100 points

Final Exam 50 points

100% = A+, 90 - 99% = A, 80 - 89% = B, 70 - 79% = C, 60 - 69% = D.

Note: Quiz, Exam, and Assignment due dates are on the Canvas course calendar.

Text:

Holtgrieve, Don and Robert Sanford, *Environmental Impact Analysis in the United States*. 2023. Taylor & Francis Publishing. ISBN: 97803674739. The text may be purchased from the Duckstore. Also, textbook chapters are electronically included in each of the 14 Topics' pages.

Recommended (not required) reference text pages are in many of the course modules.

The required text and the recommended reference books are in the reserved materials section of the Design Library. The University on-line research [system](#) is a very helpful learning tool.

Course Outline: (see course calendar for dates)

Topic 01. Introduction and overview, Brief History of Environmental Impact Analysis, EIA as research, EIA as decision making process, and EIA in business and global Affairs.

Topic 02. Text Chapter 1. Use of the EIA procedures and processes in 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. Text Chapter 2. Public agency project development processes, NEPA and agency guidelines. Deciding if NEPA applies. The land development process as it relates to EIA.

Topic 04. Text Chapter 3. 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 05. Text Chapter 4. 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.

Also skim **Text Chapters 16 and 17** to see where we are going...

Midterm Exam

Topic 06. Text Chapter 5 Geology, topography, soils.

Topic 07. Text Chapter 6. Hydrology, flooding, erosion/deposition, water quality, water, supply.

Topic 08. Text Chapter 7. Biotics/ Habitats/Endangered Species, Wetlands and other special cases.

Topic 09. Text Chapter 8. Air quality, climate change, global warming, energy conservation.

Topic 10. Text Chapter 9. Cultural Resources/Archaeology, Historic Preservation.

Topic 11a Text Chapter 13 Social/Demographics, Community Services, environmental justice

Topic 11b Text Chapter 10 Energy conservation.

Only one quiz required for Topic 11a OR Topic 11b

Topic 12a Text Chapter 11 Noise Impact Analysis.

Topic 12b Text Chapter 12 Aesthetics, Visual Impact Analysis.

[Only one quiz required for Topic 12a OR Topic 12b]

Topic 13 Text Chapter 14 Infrastructure , fiscal impacts, community services

Topic 14 Text chapter 15, Traffic and Transport systems.

Assignment due, Final Exam Chapters 16 and 17.

(Note: Exam and assignment dates are on the course calendar and at the bottom of this syllabus)

Course Assignment Deadlines: Assignments in this course are always due at midnight of the dates posted. The deadlines are firm. Your lowest four assignment scores will be dropped by the computer. That is to say you will be evaluated with your highest ten quizzes. That said, note that the midterm and final exam questions are drawn from the same question pool'

Accessible Education: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoac@uoregon.edu.

Plagiarism: All students at all times will submit one's own work. Copying content from other students or internet sources and submitting it as your own work is grounds for failing the class. Students should properly acknowledge and document all major sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas). If there is any question about whether use of another's intellectual property constitutes academic

misconduct, it is the student's obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at: <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>

Academic Misconduct: The University Student Conduct Code (available on the [Student Conduct Code and Procedures webpage](#)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at the Libraries' [Citation and Plagiarism page](#).

Inclusion Statement: The School of Architecture and Allied Arts is committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. If you feel excluded or threatened, on-line or on campus, please contact your instructor and/or department head. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their website at <http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html> or by phoning 541-346-2037.

[University Health Services](#) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. If you need general resources on coping with stress or want to talk with another student who has been in the same place as you, visit the Duck Nest (located in the EMU on the ground floor) and get help from one of the specially trained Peer Wellness Advocates.

University Counseling Services (UCS) has a team of dedicated staff members to support you with your concerns, many of whom can provide identity-based support. All clinical services are free and confidential. Find out more at counseling.uoregon.edu or by calling 541-346-3227 (anytime UCS is closed, the After-Hours Support and Crisis Line is available by calling this same number).

About on-line planning courses in general and PPPM 408/508 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 usually is the case in a workplace situation). Feedback from the instructor is almost immediate and can be on an individual basis or in 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. There are a few lecture videos and Power-points. This class, Environmental Impact Assessment, contains a lot of content, most of which is legal, administrative, or scientific in nature. Material is in outline format which can be built on over the term. The course is **research based** (reading from several sources) and asks you to compile information and analysis into useful essays that are answers to the posted Study Questions. The **study questions** are worded as if they were presented in an environmental management work environment. The subject

matter is mostly 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: <https://naep.memberclicks.net/login#/reset-password/a888016e-762b-4bbe-aeba-7d452e862601>

About the instructor: Don Holtgrieve earned his PhD degree from the University of Oregon in 1973. He taught geography, environmental studies, and environmental planning at California State University campuses in Hayward and Chico California before moving back to Eugene. He also created two environmental planning consulting firms and supervised the preparation of environmental impact reports, resource management plans, and various other community planning documents for federal, state, and local agencies. He planned environmentally sensitive land development projects and created three wildlife preserves for non-profit watershed groups. is also co-authored your textbook and is currently involved with volunteer service for the local Mc Kenzie River Trust.

