

**San José State University**  
**Environmental Studies Department**  
**ENVS 185, Environmental Impact Assessment, Section 01, Fall 2019**

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor:	Shannon George
Office Location:	WSQ 118A
Telephone:	408-228-2001
Email:	<a href="mailto:Shannon.george@sjsu.edu">Shannon.george@sjsu.edu</a>
Office Hours:	Tuesday 7:15 – 8:15 PM
Class Days/Time:	Tuesday 4:30 – 7:15 PM
Classroom:	DMH 164
Prerequisites:	ENVS 001 and ENVS 124, or instructor consent

**Course Description**

Current environmental impact reports subjected to critical review; determination of alternative procedures and mitigating opportunities; extensive field analysis and practice.

**Course Goals**

**Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)** laws are among the most powerful tools currently available to identify and influence the environmental effects of human activities.

This course will teach you the basis for understanding, using and analyzing the **California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)**, one of the first and most influential environmental impact laws on the books. We will also become familiar with the federal impact assessment law, **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)**, and we will survey the state of **international** environmental impact assessment.

Through a combination of lecture, field and project work, we will learn to conduct introductory assessments of the impacts of real projects on our air, water, traffic and wildlife.

In addition, this course incorporates community service. In the activity portion of the course, we will link the project work we do with the needs of the local community.

Impact assessment requires careful study of information from multiple disciplines, and it covers many environmental resources. Analyzing and producing environmental assessment documents requires significant group work, perseverance, creativity and a lot of work.

**Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Department LO 1 - Content Environmental Literacy:** Students are able to write a logical analytical paper using good writing style and construction supported by appropriate research
2. **Department LO 3 - Content Environmental Literacy:** Students will develop proficiency in the interdisciplinary sustainability principles that are the foundation of environmental studies; they will know the key environmental challenges facing the planet, know relevant interdisciplinary information about these challenges, and be able to develop/identify feasible solutions
3. **Department LO 4A-** Students are able to productively conduct group/team work to deliver professional quality presentations and reports
4. **Department LO 4C -** Build local environmental sustainability and democratic participation through community service

### Required Texts/Readings

Bass, R.E., K. Bogdan, and T. Rivasplata. (2012). *CEQA Deskbook, Third edition*. Solano Press Books, Point Arena, CA.

{B, B & R} Can be ordered on-line <https://solano.com/products/ceqa-deskbook>\*

*\*In addition, please go to this web page and download the FREE CEQA Updates/Addendums pdfs for 2013, 2015, 2016, and 2018 for this book.*

Government resources online: **California Natural Resources Agency** <http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/>

### Course Requirements and Assignments

1. **3-unit lecture:** Through a combination of lecture, field and project work, we will learn to conduct introductory assessments of the impacts of real projects on our environmental resources. In addition to three hours in class, students are expected to spend six hours of time outside of class completing assignments for this 3-unit section of the course.
2. **1-unit Community and Service Activity:** ENVS 185 requires an additional two hours per week outside of class time related to service activity to complete the credit for the course. In the activity portion of the course, we will link the project work we do with the needs of the local community.
3. **Originality and honesty:** It is appropriate to cite others' work extensively, with attribution, or to fill in a form template provided by your instructor. *It is never appropriate to use other authors' language or ideas, from the web or from written documents, as though they were your own. If you have any questions about appropriate citation, please talk to me personally or write me a note.* Misuse of written material can result in course failure.
4. **Readings:** Please expect to attend all lecture/discussions and complete all readings *before* the class period. Completing the assigned readings will significantly improve your understanding of CEQA and other environmental laws. ENVS 185 is a fast-paced course and lecture time cannot cover everything.
5. **Group work:** Group points add up to 10 percent of your final grade. Group work is hard and requires excellent follow through. Please try to know your limits and *do not overcommit*.
6. **Field Trips:** One mandatory field trip will meet off-campus at a time agreed upon by the class.



## Determination of Grades

The course grade will be determined based on a total of 100 percent. Accumulated points that fall within the grade scale below determine your semester grade.

A+	97-100%	A	92-96%	A-	89-91%
B+	86-88%	B	81-85%	B-	79-80%
C+	76-78%	C	72-76%	C-	69-71%
D+	67-68%	D	64-66%	D-	60-64%
F	<60%				

## Classroom Protocol

We are all learning together here. Students are expected to be professionals and be punctual to class lectures. Questions and comments about lectures or class materials are welcome anytime. Please use office hours for questions about grades or personal concerns. In addition, mutual respect and cooperation are fundamental. Inappropriate behavior or disrespect towards other students and the instructor will not be tolerated and expulsion from the class can occur after the first warning.

## University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

## Environmental Impact Assessment 185, Fall 2019, Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change. Notice will be provided via electronic messaging no less than five calendar days prior to the next scheduled class. Reading assignments will be provided in class.*

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
1	8.27.19	<p>Topics: Introductions, overview of EIA, agencies, and oversight.</p> <p>Assignment: Meeting Plan, Notice of Exemption (CEQA)</p>
2	9.3.19 <i>Last day to drop course without entry on permanent record.</i>	<p>Topics: Introduction to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Categorical Exemptions.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Meeting Plan, blank notice of CEQA exemption.</p> <p>Outside Activity: Start Public Meeting Journal</p>
3	9.10.19	<p>Topics: Continue discussion of exemptions, introduction to Initial Studies.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Public notices of CEQA exemptions</p> <p>Outside Activity: Public Meeting</p>
4	9.17.19	<p>Topics: Baseline, individual/cumulative impacts, thresholds of significance, resource areas of land use/planning, population/housing, public services, and recreation.</p> <p>Assignment: Initial Study</p> <p>Outside Activity: Public Meeting</p>
5	9.24.19	<p>Field Trip</p> <p>Outside Activity: Public Meeting</p>
6	10.1.19	<p>Topics: Mitigated Negative Declarations (MND), Mitigation and Monitoring Plans, resource areas of biological resources, agricultural and forestry, mandatory findings.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Meeting Journal (5 meetings)</p> <p>Assignment: Service Learning Activity</p> <p>Outside Activity: Public Meeting</p>
7	10.8.19	<p>Topics: Public comments/public review, Environmental Impact Reports (EIR), resource areas of aesthetics, cultural resources, tribal cultural resources.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Draft Initial Study, Service Learning Site</p> <p>Assignment: Peer comments, MND</p> <p>Outside Activity: Identify service learning site</p>

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
8	10.15.19	<p>Topics: Resource areas of hydrology and water quality, utilities and service systems.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Peer Comment Letters</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
9	10.22.19	<p>Topics: Resources areas geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, wildfire, in-class presentations.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Final IS/MND, in-class presentations</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
10	10.29.19	<p>Topics: Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), integrating with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), resource area environmental justice.</p> <p>Assignment: Group EIR</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
11	11.5.19 <i>Election Day</i>	<p>Topics: Tiering, resource areas of transportation, noise.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Service journal (8 hours)</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
12	11.12.19	<p>Topics: Resource areas of energy, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions.</p> <p>Assignment Due: Individual alternatives contract (group)</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
13	11.19.19	<p>Topics: Group work – litigating CEQA and NEPA</p> <p>Assignment Due: Full individual section</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
14	11.26.19	<p>Topics: Critique of CEQA and NEPA, international EIA</p> <p>Assignment Due: Comment letters</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
15	12.3.19	<p>Topics: Group work – agency decision-making</p> <p>Assignment Due: Service journal (8 hours), revised EIR contract</p> <p>Outside Activity: Service Learning (2 hours)</p>
Final Exam	12.17.19	Group Final EIR section, Presentations