

San José State University
Environmental Studies Department

ENVS 185 - ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESMENT, Section 2, FALL 2019

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	David C. Ralston
Office Location:	Washington Square Hall 115
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Office Hours:	By appointment and before classes from 3:45pm - 4:30pm.
Class Days/Time:	Lecture: Wednesday 4:30 – 7:15 pm; Lab: 2 hours/week (independently)
Classroom:	Dudley Moorhead Hall 164
Prerequisites:	ENVS 001 and ENVS 124, or instructor consent

Course Description

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) laws are among the most powerful tools currently available to identify and influence the environmental effects of human activities. These laws are soundly praised and roundly criticized by city councils, developers, and environmental advocates alike, but most of the public is simply unaware of the power these laws can give the average citizen.

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.

Environmental Impact Assessments require careful study of information from multiple disciplines, it covers many environmental resources and includes understanding of physical environmental impacts from specific types of development. We will undertake an interdisciplinary approach examining the connections between cumulative pollution impacts, local climate /sustainability impacts, as well as human health and environmental equity impacts. Analyzing and producing environmental assessment documents requires significant group work, perseverance, creativity and a lot of work.

Required Texts and 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 <http://solano.com/processxml.asp?tid=Q29&StyleSheet=title.xsl>

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). (2017). *Statute and Guidelines*. Association of Environmental Professionals.
Provided Free via <https://www.califaep.org/policy/statute-and-guidelines>

*In addition, please go to this web page and download the FREE CEQA Updates/Addendums pdf's for this book. Also review Government resources online: California Natural Resources Agency <http://resources.ca.gov/ceqa/>

Course Learning Outcomes and Goals

This course will help you achieve these Departmental Learning Objectives, which are competencies we expect all our graduates to have upon completion:

Department LO1: Content Environmental Literacy: Students are able to write a logical analytical paper using good writing style and construction supported by appropriate research

Department LO3: 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

Department LO4A: Students are able to productively conduct group/team work to deliver professional quality presentations and reports.

Departmental LO4C: Build local environmental sustainability and democratic participation through community service

Class 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 air, water, traffic and wildlife among other areas. In addition to 3 hours in class, students are expected to spend 6 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 (2) 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. The lab requirement will consist of service-learning activities: fieldtrips, community workshops, government meetings, field work of data collection, and other related work to the project.
3. Originality and honesty: It is appropriate to cite others' work extensively, with attribution. ***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. Students are expected to actively participate in learning. Attend each class, as the lectures will contain material that is not in your book. In addition, part of your grade is based on in-class activities. ENVS 185 is a fast-paced course and lecture time cannot cover everything.
5. Late Assignment Policy: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the deadline date. Late assignments will be considered ONLY for legitimate circumstances and when arranged in advance. Assignments/deliverables may be required to be submitted via Turnitin.com.
6. Fieldtrips: We may have field trips during class time and/or attend workshops/meetings. If you need transportation, please let me know: We should try our best to carpool.
7. In-class writing assignments and participation: During lectures, I will ask questions about the course materials. These questions will help determine whether I have conveyed the information adequately in lecture, whether you are keeping up with and understanding reading assignments, and they will provide for direct feedback about what you are learning through your group's lab/service assignment. In addition, we will complete in-class writing analysis assignments to strengthen your EIA skills. Be aware that we will also complete group work in class. **NOTE: In-class assignments cannot be made up (10%).**
8. Safe Classroom: We are all learning together here. Questions and comments are welcome. Please use office hours for questions about grades. 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. Cell phones and laptops are not allowed during class time for personal use. Students must notify the instructor for in class accommodations. Please no eating during class, unless you can share with everyone. Adequate break times will be provided during every class.

Assignments and Grading Policy

Grading will be based on the following criteria (Total 100%):

◆ Service section: Meeting Plan (1%) Journals (1-3) (12%)	= 13%
◆ Notice of Exemption assignment	= 2%
◆ Draft Initial Study/neg Dec	= 20%
◆ Final IS/ND	= 10%
◆ EIR Section	= 30%
◆ Individual alternative (5pts)	
◆ Contract (Group) (5pts)	
◆ Individual draft (20 pts)	
◆ Final EIR Draft (Group)	=10%
◆ EIR Presentation	=5%
◆ In class writing assignments and participation (free-writes, questions from readings, etc.)	= 10%

Grading Scale

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

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be 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/>