

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>

. 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

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)	