UNSW Course Outline

GEOS9011 Environmental Impact Assessment - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : GEOS9011
Year : 2024
Term : Term 1
Teaching Period : T1
Is a multi-term course? : No
Faculty : Faculty of Science
Academic Unit : School of Biological, Earth and Environmental Sciences
Delivery Mode : Multimodal
Delivery Format : Standard
Delivery Location : Kensington
Campus : Sydney
Study Level : Postgraduate
Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

Handbook Class Timetable

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Examines environmental planning legislation and decision-making processes in Australia with special reference to NSW; the content and structure of Environmental Impact Statements and the stages in the granting of development consent; approaches to EIA with reference to the

assessment of impacts on the natural, social and economic environments. Includes case studies exemplifying procedures, techniques, methods and issues, and looks at trends in EIA in Australia and selected other countries.Note: Due to revisions of Geography at UNSW, all courses previously offered as GEOH9011 have been given an equivalent course code GEOS9011 from semester 1, 2007.

Course Aims

The overall objective of the course is to develop skills in EIA underpinned by an understanding of legislation, policy, frameworks for assessing impacts and risk, and the social and economic implications of development. The course will also introduce students to new or emerging approaches to assessing environmental impacts.

1.

Relationship to Other Courses

This course is run in conjunction with GEOS3911. However, the assessment schedule differs and postgraduate students attend a separate tutorial time.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Justify the need for Environmental Impact Assessments
CLO2 : Demonstrate and understanding of what triggers an Environmental Impact Assessment in NSW and Australia
CLO3 : Describe which laws and their components are appropriate
CLO4 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessment
CLO5 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statement reports and the Environmental Impact Assessment system
CLO6 : Perform the basic components of other related environmental management approaches (e.g. environmental management systems, risk assessments, social impact assessments, statement of environmental effects)
CLO7 : Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists and decision makers

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Justify the need for Environmental Impact Assessments	• Class test • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP
CLO2 : Demonstrate and understanding of what triggers an Environmental Impact Assessment in NSW and Australia	• Class test • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP
CLO3 : Describe which laws and their components are appropriate	• Group presentations • Class test • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP
CLO4 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessment	• Group presentations • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP
CLO5 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statement reports and the Environmental Impact Assessment system	• Group presentations • Class test • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP
CLO6 : Perform the basic components of other related environmental management approaches (e.g. environmental management systems, risk assessments, social impact assessments, statement of environmental effects)	• Group presentations • Class test • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP
CLO7 : Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists and decision makers	• Group presentations • Class test • PG EIS Introduction • PG EMP

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System | Blackboard Collaborate | Vimeo (Jes will provide links and passwords)

Learning and Teaching in this course

Please note that we have not set a text for this course.

The following texts are in the high use collection at the UNSW library:

Harvey, N. & Clarke, B. (2012) Environmental Impact Assessment in Practice. Oxford University Press, South Melbourne.

Thomas, I, (2009). Environmental Impact Assessment in Australia. 5th Edn. Federation Press, Annandale.

This one is located in the Law Library:

Whitehouse, J. (2012). Development and Planning Law in NSW. CCH North Ryde.

Additional Course Information

NA

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
Class test	10%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Week 4: 04 March - 10 March Post Date: 18/03/2024 10:30 PM
PG EIS Introduction	30%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 29/03/2024 11:59 PM Post Date: 03/04/2024 10:30 PM
Group presentations	20%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Week 10: 15 April - 21 April Post Date: 22/04/2024 10:00 PM
PG EMP	40%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 19/04/2024 11:59 PM Post Date: 29/04/2024 11:30 PM

Assessment Details

Class test

Assessment Overview

Students will be asked to give short answers to approximately 15 questions based on the lecture material and advised reading/study. The questions are related to defining terms or explaining concepts.

Feedback: Marks will be returned at the beginning of the next tutorial, plus comments on short answers and class discussion with class tutors. The tests will not be returned.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Justify the need for Environmental Impact Assessments
- CLO2 : Demonstrate and understanding of what triggers an Environmental Impact Assessment in NSW and Australia
- CLO3 : Describe which laws and their components are appropriate

- CLO5 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statement reports and the Environmental Impact Assessment system
- CLO6 : Perform the basic components of other related environmental management approaches (e.g. environmental management systems, risk assessments, social impact assessments, statement of environmental effects)
- CLO7 : Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists and decision makers

Detailed Assessment Description

This class test is held in the tutorial time. Please bring a laptop with you to class. The test is CLOSED BOOK.

Assessment Length

50 minutes

Submission notes

NA

Assessment information

Please attend class on time. This is a supervised online test. Please bring your laptop.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

PG EIS Introduction

Assessment Overview

The purpose of this assignment is to gain experience in EIA report writing. Students will be assessed on their ability to write concise and accurate descriptions of their case studies, identify likely environmental impacts and critically evaluate relevant references.

Feedback: Students first submit a draft of their assignment (this is not summative). Tutors return these to students with constructive feedback to help students improve their writing for the final version. Feedback on the final assessment will be provided via feedback sheets from tutors.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Justify the need for Environmental Impact Assessments
- CLO2 : Demonstrate and understanding of what triggers an Environmental Impact Assessment in NSW and Australia
- CLO3 : Describe which laws and their components are appropriate
- CLO4 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessment

- CLO5 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statement reports and the Environmental Impact Assessment system
- CLO6 : Perform the basic components of other related environmental management approaches (e.g. environmental management systems, risk assessments, social impact assessments, statement of environmental effects)
- CLO7 : Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists and decision makers

Detailed Assessment Description

Please note that this assignment has been renamed "EIS Summary" to better reflect what is expected. You will write a very concise EIS Summary based on the case study. You can utilise ideas from any earlier reports produced by the proponent but must show originality and there must be no plagiarism.

Assessment Length

3500

Submission notes

Please ensure you submit the correct file. Check before your submit.

Assessment information

Aim to produce a professional looking EIS Summary. There are many examples on line that can help you with formatting decisions. Your target audience is from professionals, government staff to every day lay people who might want to give consideration to the development.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Group presentations

Assessment Overview

Throughout the semester there are two group presentations. Students will be assessed upon their participation, teamwork, communication and presentation skills

Stakeholder forum - The purpose of the stakeholder forums is to develop skills in articulating a viewpoint and contributing to cooperatively developing an argument in a group context.

Feedback: Tutors will provide feedback and comments to groups via Moodle after class.

International perspectives of EIA - The purpose of this assignment is for students to understand an international EIA system and critically evaluate similarities and differences between systems

and the implications for ecologically sustainable development.

Feedback: Feedback from peers and tutors is collated and emailed to students after the presentations.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO3 : Describe which laws and their components are appropriate
- CLO4 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessment
- CLO5 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statement reports and the Environmental Impact Assessment system
- CLO6 : Perform the basic components of other related environmental management approaches (e.g. environmental management systems, risk assessments, social impact assessments, statement of environmental effects)
- CLO7 : Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists and decision makers

Detailed Assessment Description

This presentation is an individual task (not group as suggested above). You will give a 3-minute presentation comparing the EIA process between Australia and another country, or with approval from Jes, just focus on describing the EIA process of a country of your choice.

Assessment Length

3 minutes plus a powerpoint presentation

Submission notes

Submit the powerpoint presentation via the link on Moodle

Assessment information

Please do not leave preparation for this presentation until the last few weeks. It is worth 20% and speaking for 3 minutes is more challenging that students often realise.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

PG EMP

Assessment Overview

This assignment is designed to give students the opportunity to prepare an environmental management plan for an EIA report on their case study. Students will gain experience in researching relevant material, synthesising information, critical thinking and report-

writing. Students will be assessed upon their ability to gather and synthesise relevant material.

Feedback sheets with comments will be available to collect from the academic staff after the term.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Justify the need for Environmental Impact Assessments
- CLO2 : Demonstrate and understanding of what triggers an Environmental Impact Assessment in NSW and Australia
- CLO3 : Describe which laws and their components are appropriate
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- CLO5 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statement reports and the Environmental Impact Assessment system
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- CLO7 : Demonstrate an understanding of the ethical and professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists and decision makers

Detailed Assessment Description

Postgraduate students are expected to produce a professional standard report. Assume you are producing this report, albeit in a truncated form, for an employer.

Assessment Length

3500

Submission notes

Please submit the correct file the first time! Check before you submit.

Assessment information

Please manage your time during T1 to submit this by the deadline. If you have genuine reasons for an extension, please go through the Special Considerations process. This year you have the option of a short extension without documentation, which is 3 days for this course.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

General Assessment Information

Please use the Harvard or APA referencing system (Harvard is preferred in Science). For the two reports, you may apply for a short extension (3 days) without documentation. **You can apply by**

accessing the Short Extension Student Portal on the Special Consideration login page. There are NO Short Extensions for the class tests; please use the usual Special Consideration process if you cannot make it to the class tests.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

You must attain 50% or more to pass this course.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 12 February - 18 February	Lecture	Lecture 1 - Introduction to the course followed by Lecture 2, an overview of the evolution of EIA NO TUTORIAL IN WEEK 1
Week 2 : 19 February - 25 February	Lecture	Lecture 3 - Finding and interpreting legislation in NSW - delivered by Lauren Sims Lecture 4 - Operations of the EP&A Act (1979) and its instruments - delivered by Lauren Sims
	Tutorial	Tutorial on Matrices and other tools used in EIA - run by Grace and Jes
Week 3 : 26 February - 3 March	Lecture	Lecture 5 - Requirements of EIS, REF & SEE assessments by Lauren Sims Lecture 6 - NSW Biodiversity Conservation legislation by Lauren Sims
	Tutorial	Assessing an EIS and report writing skill building by Grace
Week 4 : 4 March - 10 March	Lecture	Lecture 7 - Preparing an EIS by Jes Lecture 8 - Predicting, evaluating & managing impacts by Jes
	Tutorial	• ASSESSMENT 1 - SUPERVISED ONLINE CLASS TEST (15%) in your tutorial room - please bring your laptop • Report writing Part B - Jes
Week 5 : 11 March - 17 March	Lecture	Lecture 9 - Frameworks for impact assessment 1 by Jes Lecture 10 - Frameworks for impact assessment 2 by Jes NO TUTORIAL THIS WEEK - WORK ON YOUR ASSESSMENT 2; Contact Jes or Grace for assistance, if needed.
Week 6 : 18 March - 24 March	Other	FLEXI WEEK - NO CLASSES
Week 7 : 25 March - 31 March	Lecture	Lecture 11 - Social impact assessment 1 by Jes Lecture 12 - Social impact assessment 2 by Jes NO TUTORIAL THIS WEEK - Use this time to work on your assessments and to prepare for the stakeholder forum/workshop
	Assessment	ASSESSMENT 2 - EIA SUMMARY DUE MIDNIGHT ON Friday of Week 7; submit via Turnitin on Moodle.
Week 8 : 1 April - 7 April	Lecture	Lecture 13 - Federal legislation EPBC Act by Lauren Sims Lecture 14 - LEC & EPBC Case studies by Lauren Sims
	Workshop	STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP/FORUM. This tutorial is run as a mock workshop. The activity is in the usual tutorial room.
Week 9 : 8 April - 14 April	Lecture	Lecture 15 - Professional Ethics in EIA by Jes Lecture 16 - Risk assessment in EIA by Jes
	Tutorial	Postgraduates DO NOT have a second class test. • ETHICS TUTORIAL by Jes and Grace
Week 10 : 15 April - 21 April	Lecture	Lecture 17 - Biodiversity offsetting by Grace Lecture 18 - Career Advice by Jes
	Assessment	ASSESSMENT FOUR - Environmental Management Plan SUBMISSION MIDNIGHT FRIDAY OF WEEK 10 (40%)
	Presentation	Individual Presentation (20%) held in the tutorial class on Week 10

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

General Schedule Information

Please note that Tutorials do not run every week. Tutorial classes are face-to-face and are in Week 2,3,4,8, and 9. Use the free weeks to prepare for the reports, interact with peers for the stakeholder forum and to polish your assessments for submission. Please don't waste the free weeks; they were granted to make your workload more manageable.

All lectures are pre-recorded and will be loaded early each week, or in batches before their due date. Please note that Lauren Sims is a Barrister and there might be times when her lectures are a day or so late. Her lectures will be posted to Jes Sammut's Vimeo account; you will be provided a link and password in Moodle. Jes' lectures will mostly be on Blackboard Collaborate. You will receive a notification when lectures are available.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

There are no prescribed resources for this course. We encourage students to use their research skills to find published scientific resources (see recommended resources for agency-based information).

Recommended Resources

We strongly recommend you browse the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure website: https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/department-of-planning-housing-and-infrastructure

..... and it's sister department, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water website: https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/dcceew

Also, explore the resources provided by the Environmental Defenders Office. https://www.edo.org.au

Additional Costs

Not applicable

Course Evaluation and Development

We collect student feedback three ways:

1) MyExperience surveys

2) In class discussion on the course

3) Invited feedback at various points during the course (see course announcements for feedback requests)

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Professor Jes Sammut		Room 5513, Level 5 of BioSciences Building.	0403154863	By appointment	No	Yes
Tutor	Grace Nye-Butler		Level 4, BioSciences Building	0401658583	By appointment	No	No

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

Upon your enrolment at UNSW, you share responsibility with us for maintaining a safe, harmonious and tolerant University environment.

You are required to:

- Comply with the University's conditions of enrolment.
- Act responsibly, ethically, safely and with integrity.
- Observe standards of equity and respect in dealing with every member of the UNSW community.
- Engage in lawful behaviour.
- Use and care for University resources in a responsible and appropriate manner.
- Maintain the University's reputation and good standing.

For more information, visit the UNSW Student Code of Conduct Website.

Academic Honesty and Plagarism

Referencing is a way of acknowledging the sources of information that you use to research your

assignments. You need to provide a reference whenever you draw on someone else's words, ideas or research. Not referencing other people's work can constitute plagiarism.
Further information about referencing styles can be located at https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing

Academic integrity is fundamental to success at university. Academic integrity can be defined as a commitment to six fundamental values in academic pursuits: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. At UNSW, this means that your work must be your own, and others' ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. If you don't follow these rules, plagiarism may be detected in your work.
Further information about academic integrity, plagiarism and the use of AI in assessments can be located at:

- The Current Students site,
- The ELISE training site, and
- The Use of AI for assessments site.

The Student Conduct and Integrity Unit provides further resources to assist you to understand your conduct obligations as a student: https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Penalty for Late Submissions

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Any variations to the above will be explicitly stated in the Course Outline for a given course or assessment task.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request extensions as early as possible before the deadline.

Special Consideration

If circumstances prevent you from attending/completing an assessment task, you must officially apply for special consideration, usually within 3 days of the sitting date/due date. You can apply

by logging onto myUNSW and following the link in the My Student Profile Tab. Medical documentation or other documentation explaining your absence must be submitted with your application. Once your application has been assessed, you will be contacted via your student email address to be advised of the official outcome and any actions that need to be taken from there. For more information about special consideration, please visit: https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration

Important note: UNSW has a "fit to sit/submit" rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

Faculty-specific Information

Additional support for students

- The Current Students Gateway
- Student Support
- Academic Skills and Support
- Student Wellbeing, Health and Safety
- Equitable Learning Services
- UNSW IT Service Centre
- Science EDI Student Initiatives, Offerings and Guidelines