UNSW Course Outline

GEOS3911 Environmental Impact Assessment - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : GEOS3911
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 : Undergraduate
Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

Handbook Class Timetable

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is an important part of environmental decision making throughout the world. This course provides students with an understanding of the Commonwealth and NSW legislative framework for EIA; guidelines for EIA; ecologically

sustainable development; impact evaluation in terms of environmental and socio-economic criteria; procedures, techniques and issues in EIA; future directions. Case studies of environmental impact statements (EIS) from the physical and human environment are used throughout the course. The course is valuable for students interested in environmental management.

Course Aims

The overall objective of the course is to develop skills in EIA underpinned by an understanding of legislation, policies, frameworks and methods for assessing impacts and risk, and the social and economic implications of development.

Relationship to Other Courses

NA

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CLO1 : Identify the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment in the NSW and national contexts and justify its significance in relation to appropriate legislative frameworks.
CLO2 : Identify the governing laws and their components relevant to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or alternative development approval documents.
CLO3 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessments.
CLO4 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statements and the state and federal Environmental Impact Assessment process.
CLO5 : Conduct an Environment Impact Assessment and prepare an environmental impact statements by applying relevant environmental management approaches.
CLO6 : Identify and apply the professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists, consultants, and decision makers within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CLO1 : Identify the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment in the NSW and national contexts and justify its significance in relation to appropriate legislative frameworks.	• Class Test A • Environmental Impact Statement Summary • Class Test B
CLO2 : Identify the governing laws and their components relevant to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or alternative development approval documents.	• Environmental Management Plan • Class Test A • Environmental Impact Statement Summary • Class Test B
CLO3 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessments.	• Environmental Management Plan • Class Test A • Environmental Impact Statement Summary • Class Test B
CLO4 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statements and the state and federal Environmental Impact Assessment process.	• Environmental Management Plan • Class Test A • Environmental Impact Statement Summary • Class Test B
CLO5 : Conduct an Environment Impact Assessment and prepare an environmental impact statements by applying relevant environmental management approaches.	• Environmental Management Plan • Environmental Impact Statement Summary
CLO6 : Identify and apply the professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists, consultants, and decision makers within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment.	• Class Test B

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 A Assessment Format: Individual	15%	Start Date: Week 4 Tutorial Due Date: Week 4: 04 March - 10 March Post Date: 12/03/2024 11:30 PM
Environmental Impact Statement Summary Assessment Format: Individual	35%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 29/03/2024 11:59 PM Post Date: 08/04/2024 11:30 PM
Class Test B Assessment Format: Individual	15%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: Week 9: 08 April - 14 April Post Date: 29/04/2024 11:00 PM
Environmental Management Plan Assessment Format: Individual	35%	Start Date: Not Applicable Due Date: 19/04/2024 11:59 PM Post Date: 29/04/2024 09:30 PM

Assessment Details

Class Test A

Assessment Overview

You will complete a short class test consisting of approximately 15 questions which are a mix of short answer and multiple choice questions. You will define terms or explain concepts with examples, and be asked to share opinions.

The test is conducted in Week 4 with feedback provided 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 : Identify the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment in the NSW and national contexts and justify its significance in relation to appropriate legislative frameworks.
- CLO2 : Identify the governing laws and their components relevant to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or alternative development approval documents.
- CLO3 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessments.
- CLO4 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statements and the state and federal Environmental Impact Assessment process.

Detailed Assessment Description

You will be tested on your knowledge of the course content from Week 1 to 4.

Assessment Length

50 minutes

Submission notes

No materials allowed

Assessment information

The class test is run in the tutorial room and is supervised. Please bring your laptop to class.
This is a closed book test.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Environmental Impact Statement Summary

Assessment Overview

The purpose of this assignment is to gain experience in writing a summary EIS and understanding the steps taken in the NSW decision making process. You will be assessed on your ability to write concise and accurate descriptions of your case study, predict the likely environmental impacts, and present the information in a mock EIS Summary.

The task will require the submission of a 2500 word report which is due in Week 7.

Feedback will be given in Moodle and in class within two weeks of submission. The feedback for the EIS Summary will help you to improve the quality of your final assignment (Environmental Management Plan).

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment in the NSW and national contexts and justify its significance in relation to appropriate legislative frameworks.
- CLO2 : Identify the governing laws and their components relevant to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or alternative development approval documents.
- CLO3 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessments.
- CLO4 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statements and the state and federal Environmental Impact Assessment process.
- CLO5 : Conduct an Environment Impact Assessment and prepare an environmental impact statements by applying relevant environmental management approaches.

Detailed Assessment Description

This assessment is based on producing a professional quality Summary EIS. The document you produce is intended for a general audience, so please use non-technical language. Please see online examples of a summary EIS.

Assessment Length

2500 words

Submission notes

Please submit via Turnitin

Assessment information

Please make a start on this assignment early and ask for help well before the submission date.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

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

Class Test B

Assessment Overview

You will complete a class test comprising a mix of multiple choice and short answers. The focus of this class test is on the policies, legislation and EIA methods you were taught in class. There will be approximately 10 questions. You might be asked to give justified opinion-based answers to some questions to explore your critical thinking ability.

The test is conducted in Week 9 with class feedback provided online in Week 10.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment in the NSW and national contexts and justify its significance in relation to appropriate legislative frameworks.
- CLO2 : Identify the governing laws and their components relevant to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or alternative development approval documents.
- CLO3 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessments.
- CLO4 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statements and the state and federal Environmental Impact Assessment process.
- CLO6 : Identify and apply the professional responsibilities placed upon environmental scientists, consultants, and decision makers within the context of Environmental Impact Assessment.

Detailed Assessment Description

This class test differs from the first test in Week 4 in terms of focus. In this test you will be tested on policies, legislation and EIA methods that were taught from Week 5 onwards.

Assessment Length

45 minutes

Submission notes

Bring laptop to class; no materials.

Assessment information

This test is run in the tutorial class for Week 9. Please bring your laptop. CLOSED BOOK TEST

Assignment submission Turnitin type

Not Applicable

Environmental Management Plan

Assessment Overview

This assignment is designed to give you the opportunity to prepare an environmental management plan based on the impacts you predicted in your EIS Summary. Accordingly, you will use the same case study in this assessment. You will gain experience in researching relevant material, synthesising information, critical thinking and report-writing. You will be assessed on your ability to gather, synthesise and present relevant material at a professional standard.

The task will require the submission of a 2500 word report which is due in Week 10.

Feedback will be provided online within two weeks of submission, and you will be able to see your tutor or lecturer to discuss feedback.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO2 : Identify the governing laws and their components relevant to an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), or alternative development approval documents.
- CLO3 : Apply ecologically sustainable development principles to Environmental Impact Assessments.
- CLO4 : Critically analyse Environmental Impact Statements and the state and federal Environmental Impact Assessment process.
- CLO5 : Conduct an Environment Impact Assessment and prepare an environmental impact statements by applying relevant environmental management approaches.

Detailed Assessment Description

This assignment is your second report-style assessment for this course. It is based on a real-world activity but cut down in size. Please aim for a professional report that could be used in a job interview to demonstrate your professionalism.

Assessment Length

2500

Submission notes

Please check for plagiarism before submitting

Assessment information

NIL

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	• ASSESSMENT 3 - Class Test 2 (15) - online but in the tutorial room. Be on time please and bring your laptop. • 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 NO TUTORIAL CLASS - NO EXAM Either :) Best of luck for the future!
	Assessment	ASSESSMENT FOUR - Environmental Management Plan SUBMISSION MIDNIGHT FRIDAY OF WEEK 10 (35%)

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	No
Tutor	Grace Nye-Butler		Level 4, BioSciences Building	0401658583	By appointment	No	Yes

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