

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
SOL PRICE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY
FALL 2013 SYLLABUS

PPD 621: Environmental Impacts

Mondays 6:00-9:20 pm

I. INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Robert K. Manford

Phone Number: (213) 379-1381

Email Addresses: abeiku@aol.com or manford@usc.edu

II. PURPOSE

Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) is a policy and management tool for both planning and decision-making. EIA assists policy makers, planners and the general public in identifying, predicting and evaluating the environmental impacts and consequences of development projects, plans, and policies. The outcome of an EIA study helps to decide whether a given project should be undertaken and what form it should take.

This course will focus on EIA as a planning tool, how it is conducted, and how it is applied in planning and decision-making for development planning projects. The course will provide students an insight into the EIA process, methods, assessment techniques, applications and emerging trends. It will provide both a broad overview of EIA as it is used worldwide, and a focus on EIA as used in the US with particular emphasis on California, which has one of the most stringent EIA requirements (i.e., California Environmental Quality Act, or “CEQA”). The course will be divided into two parts. The first part will entail an overview of the EIA process and the steps involved in the preparation and use of EIA documents, as well as the Planner’s role in the EIA process. This part will also include the nuts and bolts of environmental impact analyses with emphasis on specific topical areas, based on students’ interests. Roberts (1991) has described the EIA process as being similar to swimming... “One can learn about the theory of buoyancy, discuss the various strokes, but eventually you have to jump into the water”.

The second part of the course will be more practical, and will include applications of the EIA process/product to specific cases. The second part will also provide students the opportunity to work hands-on on real-world projects as planners and/or policy makers preparing and/or utilizing EIA documents, or techniques.

III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the course are to provide students with the following knowledge:

- (a) Overview, background and history of EIA and environmental regulations
- (b) An understanding of the art and science of EIA as both a process and a product
- (c) Knowledge of types of EIA documents in the US (EIR, EIS, EA, FONSI, MND, ESA, etc), their use, and institutional and regulatory framework (CEQA, NEPA, EIA regulations, etc) under which they are required.
- (d) Methodologies, assessment techniques and emerging trends in environmental protection and preparation of EIA documents
- (e) Applications and uses of EIA in the planning process
- (f) Preparing and reviewing EIA documents under CEQA and NEPA
- (g) Process of translating and communicating contents of EIA documents to decision-makers and the public.
- (h) Critical thinking, comprehension and appreciation of environmental concepts and factors in Planning practice.

IV. TEXTS AND READINGS

Required

1. “CEQA Deskbook - A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Comply with the California Environmental Quality Act”, Ron Bass, Ken Bogdan and Terry Rivasplata (Solano Press, 2012).
2. A Practical Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act”, The Planning Center (2009). [(714) 966-9220]

Recommended Textbooks and Supplemental Readings

Supplemental Readings will be provided by the Professor in-class, or will be made available electronically. Some may also be available online.

3. 2013 CEQA Statutes and Guidelines:
http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/docs/CEQA_Handbook_2012_wo_covers.pdf
4. California Environmental Resources Evaluation System:
http://www.ceres.ca.gov/CERES_Webs.html
5. L.A. CEQA Thresholds Guide: Your Resource For Preparing CEQA Analysis in Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, May 1998.
6. Environmental Land Use Planning and Management. 2nd Edition John Randolph (2012)

V. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

The format of the course is lecture-discussion. The lectures will complement the readings and will be interwoven with questions from the instructor and from the students and general discussion on issues. The course will also utilize a number of collaborative techniques, including small group discussions of current environmental affairs, in class writings/exercises and case-studies/analyses, in addition to guest speakers. Students are expected to complete any assigned readings/text prior to each class session and are encouraged to participate in class discussions. In the second part of the course, which is more practical, students will work independently or in groups on a chosen project or case, analyzing environmental impacts pursuant to CEQA, NEPA or other regulations, under the supervision and direction of the instructor.

The grade for the course will be based on: class participation and attendance (10%); an assigned midterm paper (35%); oral presentation of final paper (25%); and final paper (30%). Given the practical and hands-on nature of the class, attendance is very important and so frequent absences can significantly impact your overall grade performance in the course.

VI. MINIMUM COLLEGE FACILITIES

Furnished classroom with computer connection and facilities for power-point presentations.

VII. WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

Week- Date	Lecture/Discussion Topic	Readings
Week 1: August 26, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Introduction • Environmental Planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Syllabus • Randolph Chapter 2
Week 2: September 2, 2013	LABOR DAY	HOLIDAY
Week 3: September 9, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIA history, background and purpose • Legal Basis for EIA • Introduction to NEPA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Handout • CEQA Deskbook Chapter 1
Week 4: September 16, 2013	The EIA Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEQA Process • Initial Study Preparation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Practical Guide to CEQA • CEQA Deskbook Chapters 2 & 3
Week 5: September 23, 2013	The EIA Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative Declarations and Mitigated NDs • EIR Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEQA Deskbook Chapters 4 & 5 • 2013 CEQA Statutes and Guidelines
Week 6: September 30, 2013	EIA Process: Document Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIR Requirements & Contents • Post-Decision Requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEQA Deskbook Chapters 6 & 7 • CEQA Deskbook Chapter 8

Week- Date	Lecture/Discussion Topic	Readings
Week 7: October 7, 2013	EIA Process and Applications: Topical Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Methodologies • Environmental Justice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Handouts • CEQA Deskbook Chapter 9
Week 8: October 14, 2013	EIA Process and Applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Methodologies • Judicial Review Hand Out Midterm Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Handouts • CEQA Deskbook Chapter 10
Week 9: October 21, 2013	Midterm Paper Due. EIA Applications and Trends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case Study • Recap of First Half 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental Handouts • 2013 CEQA Guidelines and Statutes
Week 10: October 28, 2013	EIA Applications and Trends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air Quality and Noise Impacts Analyses • Students to start working on Group/Individual projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Lecturer • Identification/Discussion of Projects

Week- Date	Lecture/Discussion Topic	Readings
Week 11: November 4, 2013	EIA Applications and Trends: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic Impact Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guest Lecturer
Week 12: November 11, 2013	Case Studies Group/Individual Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental Handouts
Week 13: November 18, 2013	Case Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Efficiency Group/Individual Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental Handouts
Week 14: November 25, 2013	Group/Individual Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental Handout
Week 15: December 2, 2013	Group/Individual Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplemental Handout
Week 16: December 9, 2013	Oral Presentation of Final Project to Panel	Oral Presentation of EIA Project to Panel
Week 17: December 16, 2013	FINAL PAPER/PROJECT DUE	No class
Week 18: December 23, 2013	Final Grade Available	No Class

VIII. INSTRUCTOR ACCESS

My office hours will be either before or after class by appointment. However, if you need to contact me to discuss course material, attendance or other matters, please call (213) 379-1381. Alternatively, I can be reached via Manford@usc.edu, or Abeiku@aol.com.