

*Environmental Impact Assessment
Environmental Studies 185*

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Structure of the Course

- ✓ Lecture/Discussion/Fieldtrips
- ✓ lectures and syllabus posted on ENV5 website
- ✓ Buy a 3-ring binder for class notes!!
- ✓ Service Activity - 2 hours/week
 - Public meetings
 - Work with Environmental Resource Center and other nonprofits

Introductions

- ✓ name and what draws you to the class?
- ✓ What do you know about EIA?
- ✓ What's your goal for the semester?

What is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)?

Environmental Impact Assessment: "the process of identifying, estimating and evaluating the environmental consequences of current and proposed actions..."

*Environmental Impacts Assessment
Goals*

- ✓ To help decisionmakers assess projects

- ✓ To help the public assess decisionmakers
- ✓ To protect the environment

The beginnings of EIA

- ✓ 1969 NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act)
- ✓ signed by president... !
- ✓ 1970 CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act)
- ✓ signed by governor... !
- ✓ 1972 Clean Water Act, 1973 Endangered species act
- ✓ Dovetailed with and strengthened CEQA
- ✓ Today: 19 US States, 40+ countries have EIA laws

What's an EIA?

California

- ✓ Initial Study
- ✓ Negative Declaration
- ✓ Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

USA - Federal

- ✓ Environmental Assessment
- ✓ Finding of no significant impact (FONSI)
- ✓ Environmental Impact Statement

Other Countries use other names

*Environmental Impact Assessment:
International Contexts*

Definitions:

What's a Decisionmaker?

Any decision-making *governmental agency*

- ✓ City Council
- ✓ County Supervisors
- ✓ State Legislature
- ✓ State Universities
- ✓ Regional Water Boards
- ✓ California Department of Fish and Game
- ✓ Coastal Commission
- ✓ etc.

What's a Decision?

"Discretionary Action"

- ✓ Public Agency *decides whether to do something* (e.g. sell land, build a bridge)
- ✓ Public Agency *decides whether to allow a private agency to do something* (e.g. bend a zoning code rule, build a set of trails)

Assignments

For next week:

- ✓ Meeting Plan
- ✓ Notice of Exemption

Ongoing

- ✓ Journal- meetings

- ✓ List other projects built in the vicinity
- ✓ How did building this project affect the physical environment?
- ✓ Consider each category listed in Checklist
- ✓ Include positive and negative effects
- ✓ How might some of the environmental effects of these projects been controlled?
- ✓ Did these controls work?

Questions:

What was the muddiest part of today's class?

What one question about EIA would you like to be answered?

What was the most interesting part of today's class?

Environmental Impact Exercise

Walk out to the new city hall -- discuss:

- ✓ What agency do you think made the decision to build this project?