

Faculty of Management Course Syllabus
ENVI 5001.01/MGMT 4705.03 (Online)
Environmental Assessment
Fall 2020

Course Overview

Description

The course examines professional practice of impact assessment (IA, also known as environmental assessment), in Canada from scientific, procedural, and political dimensions. Through a mix of lecture content, reading, discussion, reflection, and research, students will learn the procedures and processes of IA as well as its political controversies. Students will have the opportunity to meet a suite of active IA practitioners and engage in case studies of current projects undergoing IA. By the end of the course, students will be equipped with the necessary skills to critically evaluate and participate in IA processes.

Course Prerequisites

Enrollment in a Master's program. Upper-year undergraduate students may request admission from the instructor.

Instructor

Dr. Alana Westwood (pronouns: she/her)

Instructor profile: Posted on the course website and www.alanawestwood.com

Email: a.westwood@dal.ca (Enrolled students should email from inside Brightspace to avoid messages being caught by junk mail. I will respond to emails once per weekday)

Office hours: Held weekly. Make an appointment:

<http://calendly.com/alanawestwood/eaofficehours/>

Discussion forum: Students may ask questions (including anonymously) in the course FAQ on Brightspace

Phone: Available by request

TA (Course development)

Erin Dann

Email: erin.dann@dal.ca

You may contact Erin with questions or suggestions about course content and resources. The TA is *not* serving a marking function in this course.

Course Delivery

The majority of course content is delivered asynchronously on Brightspace (dal.brightspace.com) through a mixture of recorded lectures, readings, podcasts, discussion forum posts, videos, and other materials. Weekly synchronous discussions will take place each Monday from 1435-1605 ADT from September 8 to December 8 using Microsoft Teams. Discussions will be composed of question and answer sessions with guest speakers, facilitated discussion on required reading material, and opportunities to discuss assignments and course expectations with the instructor. Group work is optional but encouraged. Students may coordinate group work as they wish, but a messaging channel and virtual meeting room will be provided for each group in Teams.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

The student will be able to:

- Become familiar with legislation and policy processes for IA in Canada
- Learn the parties involved in IA and their roles, responsibilities, actions, and attitudes
- The approaches and techniques used to apply IA and the kinds of development activities in which they are applied
- Analyze relevance of IA to students' personal and professional lives, including guidance on how to conduct and participate in IA processes
- To evaluate processes, documents, and data completed during the course of an IA
- Make oral presentations and write technical papers related to IA

Course Materials

Required Resources

All required reading (inclusive of text, video, and audio materials) will be provided through Brightspace. Readings may be provided as little as one week prior to the next scheduled synchronous discussion so as to address current affairs.

Students must have access to the university library as well as a computer or a functional tablet for word processing, and consistent access to the internet.



Brightspace is our classroom space! This is where you'll find the class announcements, weekly modules, video lectures, course readings, dropbox for submitting assignments, and discussion boards for questions and assigned reflections.



Teams is our conferencing platform. Synchronous discussions will happen on Teams, and groups may be designated a channel they can use to organize themselves and conduct meetings. All enrolled students will receive a link to the Teams course space.

Learn more about digital tools available to students [at this link](#). If you require support for the course or university technologies you can contact Information Technology Services (ITS) at 1-800-869-3931 or support@dal.ca

Optional Resources

It is strongly recommended that students have access to a webcam and microphone, as well as sufficient internet or cellular bandwidth to engage in synchronous video discussions.

Students who wish to underpin the course material with foundational texts will find the following resources helpful. I particularly recommend them to those considering careers in impact assessment.

Hanna, K. 2009. Environmental Impact Assessment. Oxford University Press, Toronto.

MacKinnon, A., Duinker, P.N., Walker, T.R. 2018. The Application of Science in Environmental Impact Assessment. Routledge.

Noble, B. 2014. Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to Principles and Practice. Oxford University Press, Toronto.

Course Assessment

Assignment	Grade Proportion – Graduate Students	Grade Proportion – Undergraduate Students	Due date
1. Project & actors process diagram	10	15	October 4
2. Case study: Briefing note	15	20	October 25
3. Case study: Public comment submission (individual or group)	20	35	December 6
4. Research report: Registry data extraction and analysis (individual or group)	40	Not applicable	December 6
5. Participation: Weekly reflections & discussion attendance	15	30	Ongoing
Bonus assignment: Facilitating discussion session	+2	+2	As agreed with instructor

All assignments are due at 10:00 PM Atlantic Daylight Time unless stated otherwise on the assignment instructions. All assignments are accompanied by a detailed instruction sheet, verbal instructions, and a marking rubric on Brightspace. Short summaries of the assignments are as follows:

Assignment 1. Project status diagram

For this assignment, each student will select an ongoing or completed project undergoing an IA from any jurisdiction. They will create two computer-generated or hand-drawn infographics: a) a process diagram showing where the project is situated along the IA timeline, including all relevant important dates and stages in the IA process, and b) a network diagram identifying and describing potential actors involved in the IA process for the project. Marks will not be allocated for artistry, but for inclusion of all relevant content, logical flow and understandability of the diagram, and accuracy.

Assignment 2. Case study: Briefing note

Students will develop a two-page briefing note according to a provided format examining the Case Study from the lens of any course topics (e.g. noise impacts, gender-based impacts, impacts on species at risk, Indigenous consultation, etc.). Students will be assigned as to whether they are preparing the policy brief from the perspective of government, Indigenous organizations, scientific consultants, industry, non-governmental organizations, or citizen's groups. Students may also choose to prepare the brief for a real organization of their choice with whom they have an existing relationship. After grading, students will have instructor support to submit the brief to an organization if they so choose.

Assignment 3. Case study: Public comment submission

This assignment may be completed individually or in groups of up to 4 students. Students will create a short report using a provided format voicing concerns with, or support for, the Case Study project by the relevant regulator. The report will argue in support of or against the project from the lens of one Valued Component or procedural aspect of IA per group member. For example, an individual might write a public comment report arguing that the proposed mitigation for shipping traffic is insufficient, because increased shipping traffic will still have unacceptably high noise levels. A group of three might write a public comment report arguing that the Case Study project should be approved because it will bring substantial economic benefit, included extensive consultation of Indigenous peoples, and is not expected to harm species at risk. The public comment reports should critically reflect on the chosen Valued Comment or procedural aspects and compare them to best practices and other IA examples. For groups, a peer and self-evaluation component will be included to ensure fairness during grading. After grading, students will have the support and guidance of the instructor to submit their report to the public comment process if they so choose.

Assignment 4. Research report: Registry data extraction and analysis

This assignment may be completed individually or in groups of up to 4 students. Groups may be composed of the same or different members than for Assignment 3. Students conduct original research on trends related to IA scoping, data collection, valued components, and/or decision-making. Students will extract and analyse data from federal, provincial, and/or territorial IA registries and produce a report detailing the relevant background information and their findings. Students will become familiar with navigating IA registries and extracting data, as well as reading Environmental Impact Statements.

A list of candidate research questions will be provided in the assignment instructions, some of which will be undertaken with partner organizations. Students may also propose their own research question, which must be approved by the instructor. Examples of well-scoped research questions may include, “How do projects in the oil sands region of Alberta assessed under federal IA legislation since 2006 monitor the cumulative impacts of linear development on mammals?”, “How similar or different are the methods used to predict noise impacts across provincial wind turbine projects in the Maritimes?”, “Has the number of assessed projects, and the proportion of approved projects changed across project categories between two major legislative changes in federal IA since 2006?”.

Students should begin thinking about potential research questions while reviewing course material. Anytime before the mid-point of the course, students will sign up for predefined research question or add their own pre-approved research question. Two students cannot address the same topic independently. Expectations of report length and depth of research will be based on group size. An individual will be expected to complete a ~3000 word report, a pair a ~5000 word report, and groups of 3 or greater will be expected to produce reports ~7000 words in length. For groups, a peer and self-evaluation component will be included to ensure fairness during grading.

Students will be given synchronous discussion time to evaluate research question suitability and scope with the instructor. Students working with a partner organization will be expected to coordinate with the provided liaison and stay in regular contact with their research partner to set expectations and evaluate outcomes. If students are interested in developing the assignment into a published report or a peer-reviewed publication, they should book office hours with the instructor to discuss expectations and procedure.

Assignment 5. Participation: Weekly reflections and discussion attendance

Each week, students will be asked to respond to a prompt in the Brightspace discussion forum relating to that week's readings. Students will provide brief reflections or questions to inform the subsequent week's synchronous discussions, and use the 'upvote' feature to support other students' contributions that they find valuable. To gain full marks, students must complete **ten** out of twelve possible forum reflections as well as participate in **five** out of a possible nine synchronous discussion sessions (the first and last synchronous discussions, Sept 14 and Oct 7, do not count towards the attendance mark). Quality of contribution will not be marked for either the forum or attending synchronous discussions—simply a yes/no record of participation will be taken. Students who not anticipate being able to attend at least five synchronous discussion sessions due to technological, logistical, or financial limitations must advise the instructor as soon as possible so as to develop an alternate assignment.

Assignment 6: Facilitation of discussion session (Bonus)

To gain up to two bonus marks, students may sign up to facilitate a 30-minute period of the weekly synchronous discussion. Facilitation will include introducing the guest speaker or discussion topic and using the most-upvoted reflections and questions from the discussion forum to guide conversation. Students will be expected to facilitate stimulating conversation and to ensure the inclusion, safety, and civility of all members. Students who wish to gain the bonus mark but cannot facilitate a synchronous discussion session due to technological or financial limitations must advise the instructor as soon as possible so as to develop an alternate assignment.

Grading

Conversion of numerical grades to Final Letter Grades follows the [Dalhousie Common Grade Scale](#)

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (65-69)	D	(50-54)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	C (60-64)	F	(<50)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (55-59)		

Course Policies

1. Attendance and participation is your responsibility. You are expected to attend all lectures and review all course content. Attendance will count towards participation marks where detailed in the course assessment instructions.

2. Collegiality. You are expected to treat all classmates and your instructor with collegiality and to treat each person as an equal, independent of any factors relating to their identity.

3. Brightspace. Keeping up to date with the announcements, learning materials, and discussions posted on Brightspace, as well as submitting your assignments through the Brightspace dropbox, is your responsibility.

4. Late assignments. A deduction of 10% will be taken off for each day an assignment is late. Arrangements to hand in assignments late due to extenuating circumstances must be made with the instructor at least 48 hours before the assignment is due. All assignments are due at 10:00 PM ADT unless otherwise stated on the assignment instructions. To improve time management skills, visit [Studying for Success](#) for a self-assessment, free workshops, and personal coaching.

5. Your wellness and inclusion is priority. This course has been designed to the best of the instructor's ability with [principles of universal design](#), which supports accessible education as a default. Access should be proactive and inclusive, with the course designed for all. If the course materials do not meet your access needs, in addition to contacting [Accessibility Services](#), please contact the instructor to discuss alternate arrangements or redesigning course elements. Any conversations with the instructor about accessibility are confidential and are strictly for facilitating learning needs or accommodations.

Course Schedule

The course is structured in 12 modules which occur on an approximately weekly basis. The schedule below could be subject to further change, particularly in relation to the scheduling of guest speakers. Planned discussion topics may also be substituted with newsworthy issues without warning. You will be informed ASAP if there are any changes to the schedule via Brightspace announcements.

Session	Topics	Tasks (check Brightspace for details)
Block 1 Sept 8-13	1. Introduction to each other and course outline 2. Introduction to IA terms and concepts 3. Introducing Assignment 5 4. Introducing Bonus Assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself in Brightspace • Forum question: Setting classroom norms • Sign up for time slots for Bonus Assignment (optional)
Block 2 Sept 14-20	5. Overview of IA in Canada 6. Introducing Assignment 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Sept 14): Pt 1. Introductions & classroom norms, Pt.2 Assignment 5 Q&A, Pt. 3 Assignment 6 Q&A • Forum question: Vista Coal Mine Expansion
Block 3 Sep 21-27	7. How IA legislation gets made: IAA case study 8. Overview of IA in Nova Scotia (Renata Magesta de Silva, Nova Scotia Department of Environment) 9. Introducing Assignment 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Sept 21): Pt 1. Discussion: Vista Coal Mine Expansion, Pt 2. Assignment 1 Q&A • Forum question: Principles of strong science in IA legislation
Block 4 Sept 28-Oct 4	10. Scoping: What's in and what's out? (Tony Walker, Dalhousie University) 11. Valued components: Scoping and predictions 12. Introducing Assignment 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Sept 28): Pt 1. Discussion about principles of strong science in IA legislation, Pt. 2. Q&A with Renata Magesta de Silva, Pt. 3 Assignment 2 Q&A • Assignment 2 roles allocated • Last day to drop class without a "W" (Oct 2) • Assignment 1 due (Oct 4) • Forum question: VCs in the oil sands
Block 5 Oct 5-11	13. Cumulative effects assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Oct 5): Pt 1: Camp Edwards Machine Gun Range, Pt 2. Assignment 3 Q&A, Pt 3. Q&A with Tony Walker • Forum question: Camp Edwards Machine Gun Range
Block 6 Oct 12-18	14. Regional assessment (Camille Ouellet-Daillaire, Natural Resources Canada) 15. Strategic environmental assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NO DISCUSSION, Oct 12: Thanksgiving Holiday • Complete mid-term course review (not for marks) • Forum question: Testing the federal Open Science & Data Platform

Block 7 Oct 19-25	16. Professional reliance (Tej Heer, Evidence for Democracy) 17. Introducing Assignment 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Oct 19): Pt 1. Q&A with Camille Ouellet-Daillaire, Pt 2. Discussion: Open Science & Data Platform, Pt. 3 Discussion: Camp Edward Machine Gun Range • Assignment 2 due (Oct 25) • Forum question: TBD • Start signing up for Assignment 4 topics
Block 8 Oct 26- Nov 1	18. Gender Based Analysis Plus+ 19. Working in IA (Curtis Vieville, Blackfly Environmental Consulting; Amanda Lavallee, Stantech Inc.; Walker Smith, Natural Resources Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Oct 26): Pt 1. Q&A with Tej Heer, Pt 2. Discussion on topic TBD, Pt 3. Assignment 4 Q&A • Forum question: TBD
Block 9 Nov 2-8	20. Public & Indigenous participation and Indigenous-led assessment (Melanie Walker and Michelle George, Tsleil-Waututh First Nation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Nov 2): Pt 1. Q&A with Curtis Vieville, Amanda Lavallee, Walker Smith, Pt 2. Discussing mid-term course review feedback • Nov 2, last day to drop class with a "W" • Forum question: TBD • Finish signing up for assignment 4 topics
Fall study break Nov 9-13, no synchronous session		
Block 10 Nov 16-22	21. Decision-making: Significance & public interest (Victoria Goodday, University of Calgary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Nov 16): Pt 1. Q&A with Melanie Walker & Michelle George, Pt 2. Discussion topic TBD, Pt 3. Q&A about Assignment 4 • Forum question: TBD
Block 11 Nov 23-29	22. Follow-up and monitoring (Chris Sergeant, UMontana) 23. Reflection on IA: A system worth keeping?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Nov 23): Pt 1. Q&A with Victoria Goodday, Pt 2. Discussion topic TBD, Pt 3. Q&A about Assignment 4 • Forum question: A system worth keeping?
Block 12 Nov 30- Dec 8	Any unfinished content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion (Nov 30): Pt 1. Q&A with Chris Sergeant, Pt 2. Discussion on whether to keep IA as a system, Pt 3. Q&A about Assignment 4 • Discussion (Dec 7): Course celebration • Assignment 4 due (Dec 6) • Assignment 5 due (Dec 6) • Complete course review

Policies and services

Accommodation policy for students

Though this course has been designed with universal principles, students still may face barriers to success related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic protected under Canadian Human Rights legislation. The full text of Dalhousie's Student Accommodation Policy can be [accessed at this link](#). Students who require accommodation for classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the **Student Accessibility Centre** prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Find more information and the **Request for Accommodation** form [online](#).

Student health and wellness

Your health and wellness is a priority. Students in Halifax should be aware of the in-person [Student Health and Wellness Centre](#) where you can see doctors, nurses, psychiatrists, counsellors, and other health professionals. Counselling is provided free of charge to Dalhousie students.

Completing a full courseload involves a great deal of screen time on computers and other devices, which may be stressful for some students' physical and mental well-being. Free text-to-speech/speech-to-text software, Read and Write Gold, is available through Dalhousie's [software library](#). Students may wish to consider using this or similar software to convert long readings to audio or to write first drafts of papers by dictation.

The Student Accessibility Centre also has a [Lending Library](#) which includes technology resources that may ease eyestrain, improve audio quality, improve seated ergonomics, or make it possible to work effectively in unavoidably noisy study spaces. Examples include tablets, noise-cancelling headphones, a portable text-to-speech pen, recording devices, and more.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity, with its embodied values, is seen as a foundation of Dalhousie University. It is the responsibility of all students to be familiar with behaviours and practices associated with academic integrity. Instructors are required to forward any suspected cases of plagiarism or other forms of academic cheating to the Academic Integrity Officer for their Faculty.

The Academic Integrity website (<http://academicintegrity.dal.ca>) provides students and faculty with information on plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty, and has resources to help students succeed honestly. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offence that may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even the revocation of a degree. See the [full text](#) of Dalhousie's **Policy on Intellectual Honesty and Faculty Discipline Procedures**. You should be familiar with the [Faculty of Management Professor and Student Contract on Academic Integrity](#), and it is your responsibility to ask questions if there is anything you do not understand.

Dalhousie offers many ways to learn about academic writing and presentations so that all members of the University community may acknowledge the intellectual property of others. Knowing how to find, evaluate, select, synthesize and cite information for use in assignments is called being

“information literate.” Information literacy is taught by Dalhousie University Librarians in classes and through online tutorials.

Do not plagiarize any materials for or from this course. For further guidance on what constitutes plagiarism, how to avoid it, and proper methods for attributing sources, see [these resources](#). If you suspect cheating by colleagues or lapses in standards by a professor, you may use the confidential email: managementintegrity@dal.ca which is read only by the Assistant Academic Integrity Officer.

Student code of conduct

Dalhousie University has a [student code of conduct](#), and it is expected that students will adhere to the code during their participation in lectures and other activities associated with this course. In general:

“The University treats students as adults free to organize their own personal lives, behaviour and associations subject only to the law, and to University regulations that are necessary to protect

- the integrity and proper functioning of the academic and non – academic programs and activities of the University or its faculties, schools or departments;
- the peaceful and safe enjoyment of University facilities by other members of the University and the public;
- the freedom of members of the University to participate reasonably in the programs of the University and in activities on the University's premises;
- the property of the University or its members.”

Other services available to students

The following campus services are available to help students develop skills in library research, scientific writing, and effective study habits, as well as to connect with other students to support both coursework and campus life. The services are available to all Dalhousie students and, unless noted otherwise, are **free**.

[Academic advising](#) – Support for understanding degree requirements and academic regulations. Academic advising can support you through academic or other difficulties and ensure you meet your educational or career goals.

[Black student advising centre](#) – Provides support for Black students including scholarship and bursary information as well as a directory of Black student societies and groups and related events. Also provides a physical space for Black students to study and network.

[Dalhousie's libraries](#) – Beyond simply being a place to do online or in-person research, librarians advice on search methods, support you with finding materials to complete assignments, and help you reference your work correctly. You can also book a computer, study room, or space for group work in the library.

[Dalhousie Student Union societies](#) – Peer support and team-building is an essential part of the university experience. With over 250 active societies, students can meet others with mutual interests or identities. Student societies can be of particular importance for those who may face identity-related barriers to the university experience.

[Indigenous student centre](#) – Provides support for Indigenous students including regular smudging, scholarship and bursary information, and orientations and other events. Also provides a physical space for Indigenous students to study and network. The [Elders in Residence](#) program provides students with access to First Nations Elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the Indigenous Student Centre, 1321 Edward Street, or email elders@dal.ca.

[International student centre](#) – Provides support for international students including one-on-one mentorship and guidance for university life Canada. Also provides information for domestic students wishing to study abroad.

[South House](#) – A full-time gender justice centre which provides support to those of marginalized sexual and/or gender identities, including LGBTQ2S+ identities and beyond. Offers space for relaxation or studying, a community computer, and a vast library. Regularly offers workshops and educational events relating to gender justice and sexual and gender diversity.

[Writing Centre](#) – Provides free coaching/tutoring to support any assignment with a written component, ranging from a graduate thesis to a poster to an annotated bibliography and anything in-between. Students will be paired with a tutor from the same discipline who can assist with discipline-specific writing conventions and referencing. The Writing Centre also provides free workshops and comprehensive resource guides.