NR567: Analysis of Environmental Impact
Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship
Warner College of Natural Resources

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor          Co-Instructor
Name:               Courtney Schultz
Office:             129 Forestry
Phone:              (970) 491-6556
E-Mail:             courtney.schultz@colostate.edu
Office Hours:       T & Th 2-3
Website:            http://warnercnr.colostate.edu/frs-
                     people/faculty

Term:               Fall 2015
Class Meeting Days: W
Class Meeting Hours: 9-11:50 AM
Class Location:     Forestry 212
Course Credits:     3

Course Overview
The national governments in the U.S. and globally are major sponsors of natural resource and economic development projects that have significant impacts on the environment. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 mandates that all federally-sponsored projects that significantly impact the quality of the human environment must go through a detailed analysis of those impacts. The NEPA model has been replicated in many state and local policies, and around the world. At the core of NEPA is the analysis of environmental impacts, using certain analytical standards and requirements. The purpose of this class is to examine in detail the purpose, goals, and results of NEPA, and the analytical requirements and standards of environmental impact analysis. The course will incorporate real-world case studies, including local projects. An underlying theme is the role of science in environmental policy, with a special focus on renewable natural resource management settings.

Course Goals and Objectives
By the end of the course, students will be able to:

• Critically analyze the purposes, goals, and outcomes of the National Environmental Policy Act and its role in federal agency decision-making
• Understand the role of Congress, federal agencies, the public, and the courts in shaping NEPA and its role in decision-making
• Identify the details of Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Statement processes
• Understand and apply analytical and legal standards relating to EIS development
• Develop an appreciation of the role of public values, collaboration, science, and agency expertise in decision-making
• Be able to discuss and analyze a suite of the most important and controversial NEPA issues today. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the topics through in-class discussions, Canvas journal entries, written paper assignments, and a final exam.

**Course Prerequisites**
There are no prior class prerequisites. However, there are expectations for participation. As a graduate level course, there are high standards for preparedness, reading materials, analysis, and discussion. Although the course will emphasize the role of NEPA and EIS in renewable natural resource management contexts in the U.S., students are encouraged to explore international contexts if it assists in advancing thesis or dissertation work. Key elements to the course are in-class discussion and critical thinking.

**Required Texts and Materials**
There will not be a textbook associated with this class. Selected readings will be posted as Adobe PDF files on Canvas (http://info.canvas.colostate.edu) throughout the semester.

**Supplementary (Optional) Texts and Materials**

**Library & Research Help**
The CSU Libraries Help Desk provides research and technical assistance either in person at Morgan Library or by phone at 970-491-1841. Jocelyn Boice is the librarian supporting this course. Contact her by email at jocelyn.boice@colostate.edu or by phone at 970-491-3882 to ask questions or set up an appointment for in-depth research help.

**Basis for Final Grade**
The assignments will emphasize critical thinking concerning the expectations, application, and performance of environmental impact analysis. Assignment details will be distributed in class.

Class participation: 20% (200 points)
Journal: 25% (250 points)
Group project: 35% (350 points)
Oral exam: 20% (200 points)

**Class participation:** Graduate courses should really engage your brain because of smaller class sizes, more complex topics and materials, and a self-selected group of peers. To get the most of out of a course like this, you need to come to class having read the assigned readings and actively engage in discussions to the level you are comfortable. Your attendance and substantive participation will be tracked throughout the semester. (200 points)

**Journal:** On Canvas (http://info.canvas.colostate.edu), you will be required to post five (5) journal essays in response to prompting questions throughout the semester. The prompting questions will focus on key themes and topics from reading materials, in-class lectures and discussions, and guest speakers. The purpose of the journals is to provide an opportunity for students to synthesize course concepts, engage in critical thinking, and communicate ideas through writing. Further instructions concerning the journal will be distributed and discussed in class. (50 points x 5 journals =250 points)
**Group Project:** NEPA implementation continues to evolve. Agency practitioners and academic researchers are generally unaware of the “living” nature of NEPA and its evolving administrative application and federal case law. The group project is a chance to delve into a specific NEPA-related topic with more depth. A separate assignment will be handed out that describes this assignment in greater detail. (350 points)

**Oral exam:** Students will be tested on course concepts and materials through an oral exam. The exams will involve 2-3 students and the instructors. Oral exams will be scheduled the weeks of November 30 and December 7. Oral exam scores will be based on a grading rubric. The rubric will be distributed in class prior to the oral exam time period. (200 points)

**Course Schedule and/or Schedule of Assignments**

1. **8/26:** Class Overview, Context for NEPA, and Congressional Intent in NEPA

   **Readings (due 9/2):**

   Administrative Procedures Act – excerpted text

   National Environmental Policy Act of 1969


2. **9/2:** Focus on Federal Land Management Agencies: Rule-Making and Planning

   **Readings (due 9/2):**


   Forest Service Decision Making System (undated)


3. **9/9:** Executive Branch Interpretation and Implementation of NEPA: Requirements, Regulations, and EA/EIS procedures

   **Readings:**

   CEQ regulations

   CEQ’s 40 most asked questions about NEPA. Available at: [http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/40/40p1.htm](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/40/40p1.htm)
GROUP TOPICS ASSIGNED

4. 9/16: Judicial Review of NEPA

Readings:


5. 9/23: Review & Analysis of NEPA example

Readings:

In-depth review and analysis of the example Environmental Assessment – TBD and posted on Canvas along with guiding questions

GROUP PROJECT ABSTRACT DUE WEDNESDAY, Sept. 23

6. 9/30: The Role of Science and Uncertainty in Decision-Making

Readings:

Sierra Club v. Marita 46 F. 3d. 606 (7th Cir. 1995)


7. 10/7 Group Project Work Day

8. 10/14: USDA Forest Service interpretation and application of NEPA requirements: Dave Loomis, Environmental Coordinator, USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region

GROUP PROJECT DETAILED OUTLINE DUE WED., OCTOBER 14
9. 10/21: Adaptive Management and NEPA

Readings:

CEQ guidance on mitigation and monitoring


10. 10/28: Climate Change and NEPA

Readings:


11. 11/4: Integrating climate change into NEPA – guest speakers from National Park Service

12. 11/11: Public Involvement and Collaboration in NEPA

Readings:


Federal Advisory Committee Act & Bureau of Land Management’s summary of FACA compliance

13. 11/18: Guest speaker (TBA)

GROUP PROJECT PAPERS DUE WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2

14. & 15. 12/2 & 12/9: In-Class Group Project Presentations
Oral exams will take place the weeks of Nov. 30 and Dec. 7.
Course Policies

Late Work Policy
You must inform the instructor at least 3 days in advance of an assignment deadline if your work will be delayed and need an extension. Uninformed late journal essays and final papers will be assessed a penalty of a half-letter grade if it is one day late, or a full-letter grade for 2-7 days late. Essays and papers will not be accepted if overdue by more than seven days.

Extra Credit Policy
No extra effort will be offered.

Grades of "Incomplete"
Per university policy, an instructor may assign temporary grade of Incomplete to a student who demonstrates that he or she could not complete the requirements of the course due to circumstances beyond the student's control and not reasonably foreseeable. A student must be passing a course at the time that an Incomplete is requested unless the instructor determines that there are extenuating circumstances to assign an Incomplete to a student who is not passing the course. When an instructor assigns an Incomplete, he or she shall specify in writing using the Department Incomplete Grade Form the requirements the student shall fulfill to complete the course as well as the reasons for granting an incomplete when the student is not passing the course. The instructor shall retain a copy of this statement in his or her grade records and provide copies to the student and the department head or his or her designee. (Section I.6 of the Academic Faculty and Administrative Professional Manual)

Library & Research Help
The CSU Libraries Help Desk provides research and technical assistance either in person at Morgan Library or by phone at 970-491-1841. Jocelyn Boice is the librarian supporting this course. Contact her by email at jocelyn.boice@colostate.edu or by phone at 970-491-3882 to ask questions or to set up an appointment for in-depth research help.

Disability Access
Colorado State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations must first contact Resources for Disabled Students before requesting accommodations from the professor. Resources for Disabled Students (RDS; http://rds.colostate.edu/home) is located in room 100 of the General Services Building. Their phone is (970) 491-6385 (V/TDD). Students who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations.

Attendance Policy
Because this course meets only once a week, attendance is critical to your success in the course. Attendance will be taken, since 20% of your grade is based on class participation. An obvious aspect of class participation is showing up to class.

Instructors and departments are responsible for establishing attendance policies for classes and examinations. These policies must accommodate student participation in University-sanctioned extracurricular/co-curricular activities. Students must inform their instructors prior to the anticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor’s supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established University procedures.
For the purposes of this regulation, University-sanctioned activities include competitions, events and professional meetings in which students are officially representing the institution. Appropriate sanctioned activities include:

a. Intercollegiate athletics;
b. Collegiate club sports and competitions;
c. Conferences and workshops recognized by the University not related to academics;
d. Commitments on behalf of the University (ASCSU, band, etc.); and
e. Professional activities recognized by the University related to academics.

Department heads or their designated representatives must approve sanctioned professional and departmental activities. Other sanctioned activities must be approved by the appropriate program director on record with the Division of Student Affairs offices or the Department of Athletics.

**Religious Accommodation**
Participation in official University activities, e.g., an out-of-town athletic event, or special religious observances may provide a legitimate reason for an excused absence. The student is responsible for discussing this with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

**Final Exam Policy**
Final examination week is part of the regular semester. Student attendance shall be consistent with University policy.

If a student has three or more final examinations (not classes) scheduled for the same day or if conflicts of examination times occur, the student may negotiate a time change with the instructors involved. If the parties involved cannot find a mutually agreeable time, the Registrar's Office indicates which courses must be changed. **Note:** The Registrar’s Office must be notified at least one week prior to Final Examination Week to allow instructors time to make appropriate accommodations. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate negotiations.

Any student who has a conflict with the examination schedule must inform the instructor as soon as possible before the examination. If an agreement cannot be reached between the instructor and student as to the appropriateness of a make-up examination the student should appeal to the department head. [http://www.registrar.colostate.edu/final-exams](http://www.registrar.colostate.edu/final-exams)

**Professionalism Policy**
Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, etc., and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade. When emailing the instructor or TA, please include your full name, CSU ID, and the course number in your email.

**Academic Integrity**
The Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship takes academic integrity seriously. At minimum, academic integrity means that no one will use another’s work as their own. The CSU writing center defines plagiarism this way:

> Plagiarism is the unauthorized or unacknowledged use of another person's academic or scholarly work. Done on purpose, it is cheating. Done accidentally, it is no less serious. Regardless of how it occurs,
plagiarism is a theft of intellectual property and a violation of an ironclad rule demanding "credit be given where credit is due."
Source: (Writing Guides: Understanding Plagiarism.

If you plagiarize in your work you could lose credit for the plagiarized work, fail the assignment, or fail the course. Each instance of plagiarism, classroom cheating, and other types of academic dishonesty will be addressed according to the principles published in the CSU General Catalog (see page seven, column two:
http://www.catalog.colostate.edu/FrontPDF/1.6POLICIES1112f.pdf).

Of course, academic integrity means more than just avoiding plagiarism. It also involves doing your own reading and studying. It includes regular class attendance, careful consideration of all class materials, and engagement with the class and your fellow students. Academic integrity lies at the core of our common goal: to create an intellectually honest and rigorous community. Because academic integrity, and the personal and social integrity of which academic integrity is an integral part, is so central to our mission as students, teachers, scholars, and citizens, we will ask to you sign the CSU Honor Pledge as part of completing all of our major assignments. While you will not be required to sign the honor pledge, we will ask each of you to write and sign the following statement on your papers and exams:

"I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance."

Title IX Information
CSU’s Student Sexual Harassment and Violence policy, following national guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, requires that faculty follow CSU policy as a “mandatory reporter” of any personal disclosure of sexual harassment, abuse, and/or violence related experiences or incidents shared with the faculty member in person, via email, and/or in classroom papers or homework exercises. These disclosures include but are not limited to reports of personal relational abuse, relational/domestic violence, and stalking. While faculty are often able to help students locate appropriate channels of assistance on campus (e.g., see the CSU Health Network link below), disclosure by the student to the faculty member requires that the faculty member inform appropriate CSU channels to help ensure that the student’s safety and welfare is being addressed, even if the student requests that the disclosure not be shared.

For counseling support and assistance, please see the CSU Health Network, which includes a variety of counseling services that can be accessed at: http://www.health.colostate.edu/. And, the Sexual Assault Victim Assistance Team is a confidential resource for students that does not have a reporting requirement and that can be of great help to students who have experienced sexual assault. The web address is http://www.wgac.colostate.edu/need-help-support.
Source: http://oeo.colostate.edu/title-ix-sexual-assault

Non-Discrimination Statement
the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and all civil rights laws of the State of Colorado. Accordingly, equal opportunity of employment and admission shall be extended to all persons. The University shall promote equal opportunity and treatment in employment through a positive and continuing affirmative action program for ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and veterans. The Office of Equal Opportunity is located in 101 Student Services. Source: http://oeo.colostate.edu/non-discrimination-statement