

**Environmental Analysis and Management**  
**Preliminary Syllabus. Final, definitive, version will be handed out in class**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This is a short but intensive course that is intended to provide a working knowledge of one of the key components of environmental management, that is, environmental impact assessment (EIA). This is a course that attempts to relate the need for environmental management with the practical skills and techniques available for environmental management. It draws on the strengths of having students from different academic backgrounds and explores mechanisms for the kind of collaborative problem-solving that is essential in environmental work. It strives to achieve three goals: 1) to build your familiarity with the procedures of EIA, particularly in Canada; 2) to allow you to understand something of the complexity of applying EIA in real situations; and 3) to provide a normative framework that will allow you to evaluate how and when EIA is achieving its larger mission of contributing to truly sustainable development.

But despite commitments to collaborative problem-solving, the challenges of environmental work have proven to be significant. Consider the July 6, 2013 disaster at Lac-Mégantic. The final damage, the overall consequences of either event, will not be fully known for years, or perhaps decades, but two immediate and incontrovertible conclusions can be drawn: one, we live within increasingly complex social-economic-technological-ecological systems, and, two, to minimize the risks associated with the complexity, we are obliged – morally, economically and ecologically – to focus intelligence and attention on adaptive planning and management. That is what “environmental impact assessment” started out to do. Approximately 45 years of serious effort have gone into trying to understand and manage our systemic interactions with our environment but, still, we are faced with what seems an increasing flood of concerns about environmental limits, threats and catastrophes. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, it appears that the political mood is increasingly detached from serious environmental management.

While risk and vulnerability continue to increase, there are successes (acid rain; ozone and CFCs in fridges; lead in gasoline; river restoration; AND smarter people). A third conclusion, or at least observation, arising from events like the Megantic disaster, is that our obligations to improve our ability for adaptive planning will require concerned, informed and empowered citizens. Your university education – including this course – should help. This course is part of the on-going effort to “focus intelligence and attention on adaptive planning and management” of how humans relate to their habitat.

## **2. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Environmental studies attempts to nest the expertise of specific contributing disciplines into a common framework of general understanding. This is necessary to define compatible directions and mutually supportive roles for individuals involved in environmental management. Since environmental management deals with action intended to improve environmental conditions, it requires appreciation of both methods and goals. This course addresses both. It should help you to put your existing knowledge into context, develop a perspective on the range of practical management strategies, acquire an understanding of some of the major relevant theoretical issues, and establish your own priorities for further study.

The course has two specific objectives, one related to **how**, one related to **why**.

- \* Objective 1: to ensure that all students are conversant with essential concepts of environmental analysis and management that determine how things are done in this field – this is a technical subject, but it is contested, interdisciplinary, experimental and rapidly evolving.

- \* Objective 2: to consider elements of humanity's evolving perception, understanding and valuing of environmental resources that determine why things are done – this is not technical, but value laden and driven; it is more complex and more contested, and yet, for all that, it is arguably more important, more interesting, and more appropriate to a university setting.

### **3. READING and STRUCTURE**

There is one required texts for this course:

Bram F. Noble (2014) Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment A Guide to Principles and Practice, Third Edition. OUP Canada ISBN-10: 0195429621 Price: TBA

Lectures and text readings are intended to complement, not duplicate, one another. You are responsible for both. The tests will draw on lectures and material from the book, including material not covered in class. Material from the lectures, not covered by the book, will also be examinable (so coming to class is a good idea). Additional readings will be assigned as needed for special topics.

### **4. GRADES**

The final marking scheme is to be confirmed, but is normally structured approximately as follows:

Four in-class tests @ 10%	- 40%
Two group exercises	- 30%
Individual project write-up	- 20%

### **5. INSTRUCTORS, OFFICE HOURS and CONTACTS.**

The instructor for the course is Thomas Meredith. There are also 2 TAs who will be actively involved in your group assignment. Email communication for the course will be announced (but please note that they will be limited). Office hours and contacts TBA

### **6. THE FINE PRINT**

1. "McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see [www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/) for more information).(approved by Senate on 29 January 2003)
2. "In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded."(approved by Senate on 21 January 2009 - see also the section in this document on Assignments and evaluation.)
3. For information on university and department policies for student assessment, please go to <http://www.mcgill.ca/geography/studentassessment>.
4. Instructor generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions, etc.) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.
5. "As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009."
6. Guidelines for the use of mobile computing and communications (MC2) devices in classes at McGill have been approved by the APC.
7. "End-of-course evaluations are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available on Mercury, the online course evaluation system. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students."
8. "McGill has policies on sustainability, paper use and other initiatives to promote a culture of sustainability at McGill." (See the Office of Sustainability.)
9. In keeping with McGill's preparedness planning strategies with respect to potential pandemic or other concerns: "In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change."
10. "Additional policies governing academic issues which affect students can be found in the McGill Charter of Students' Rights"