ERS 215

Environmental and Sustainability Assessment I

7:00-9:50 pm, Thursdays
AL 116

Instructor:
Denis Kirchhoff, B.Eng., M.Sc., Ph.D.
Office EV2-2038
dkircho@uwaterloo.ca

Instructor Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

TAs:
Christine Barbeau cbarbeau@uwaterloo.ca
Ken Burrell k2burrel@uwaterloo.ca
Gwyneth Govers ggovers@uwaterloo.ca
Andrea Isogai adisogai@uwaterloo.ca
Bruce Mackenzie b2macken@uwaterloo.ca
Amy Robinson amy.robinson@uwaterloo.ca
Jeff Thomson jatthoms@uwaterloo.ca
Skye Vandenberg scvanden@uwaterloo.ca

TA Office Hours: TBD

Description:

This course is an introduction to the world of environmental assessment. We will explore processes and techniques for incorporating environmental considerations in planning and evaluating proposals for future undertakings that may have significant social and ecological effects. The course provides an overview of the methodologies for the design and conduct of environmental impact studies. The main objective of this course is to introduce students to environmental assessment, with a focus on the origins, purposes and processes of environmental assessment, with particular reference to the Canadian federal environmental assessment systems, as well as the gradual evolution of environmental assessments toward a sustainability-oriented framework.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to…

- Define the aims and objectives of environmental assessments, as well as key terms and concepts in EA
- Identify the role and relevance of environmental assessment as a potential venue that can contribute to sustainability;
- Describe the different steps and components of an environmental assessment process, particularly in Canada;
- Apply EA principles for best practices to case studies and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of environmental assessments; and
- Identify the important relationship between EAs and other environmental planning and management instruments (i.e., SEA, CEA, SA).

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1 When communicating via email, please identify the course (e.g. “ERS 215”) in the subject line. Make sure to use your UW account. Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, among other non-UW domains, can be treated as spam by the university system.

Prof. Denis Kirchhoff
**Approach:**

Lectures will be used to provide an overview of key topics and also to highlight important themes. Key topics and themes will be elaborated on through in-class discussions and by regular attention to case studies. Assigned readings throughout the semester are critical for providing additional depth and breadth. Exams and assignments provide an opportunity for integrating key topics and themes, as well as for linking them with the broader scholarly literature on environmental assessment.

**Website:** [http://learn.uwaterloo.ca](http://learn.uwaterloo.ca) (LEARN, ERS 215)

You will need to access the course website frequently, as some of the course material will be made available and managed through LEARN (Desire2Learn).

**Required Textbook:**


Required and suggested readings are presented below ("Lecture Schedule"). Additional material will be presented in class and/or made available through the course website or library.

**Course and University Policies**

**Attendance:**

Attendance in class is at your discretion. However, there is often extra content in the notes displayed in class vs. the notes posted on the course webpage (e.g., discussion points or questions asked of the class, graphics-heavy images such as maps or diagrams), and all in-class discussions are valid “testable” materials. Also, all A/V materials (e.g., DVDs screened in class) are valid, “testable” materials, so complete notes should be taken for each lecture and each DVD screened. For these reasons, attendance at each lecture is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

**Missed Tests:**

All tests are mandatory, and thus, every effort should be made to attend each test. The only exceptions to this are those students who have a valid medical reason, personal or family emergency, etc.:

1. **Valid medical reason such as illness or accident** (appropriate proof such as a Doctor’s note is required);
2. **Personal or family emergency**, death in the family, etc. (with suitable proof where possible);

If you know in advance that you will not be able to make a test, please contact the instructor as far in advance as possible to discuss alternatives.

**If you miss a test:**

1. Communicate to the instructor the reason you missed the quiz.
2. IMPORTANT! As soon as possible, please obtain a *valid medical, counselor’s or other ‘proof of absence’ note* explaining the reason for your absence, degree of incapacitation, dates covered by the note, etc.
3. Please make a copy of this note and give the copy to your instructor by hand or scanned and sent by email (email to dkirchho@uwaterloo.ca).

**Note for Students with Disabilities:**

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.
**Academic Integrity:**
In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at: [http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/](http://www.lib.uwaterloo.ca/ait/).

**Discipline:**
A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm). For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm).

**Grievance:**
A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm). When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

**Appeals:**
A decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground, A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should defer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm).

**Consequences of Academic Offences:**
Students are strongly encouraged to review the material provided by the university’s Academic Integrity office. See [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoacad/Students/index.html](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infoacad/Students/index.html).

**University Policies: Plagiarism**
Please familiarize yourself with the University of Waterloo’s policy dealing with plagiarism. Be especially careful when using materials from the internet, and be aware that software available to instructors can be used to check student submissions for plagiarism. Plagiarism offences are normally treated quite seriously by the University and can result in significant penalties being assessed (e.g. failing grade on an assignment, repeating a course, suspension or expulsion).

**Definition of Plagiarism:**
“The act of presenting the ideas, words or other intellectual property of another as one's own.”  
*Source: University of Waterloo, Policy 71.*

**To Avoid Plagiarism**
The use of other people’s work **must be properly acknowledged and referenced** in all written material such as assignments, take-home examinations, essays, research papers, laboratory reports, work-term reports, design projects, statistical data, computer programs and research results. The properly acknowledged use of sources is an accepted and important part of scholarship. However, use of such material without complete and unambiguous acknowledgement is an offence under UW Policy 71.

**Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing** (source: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/563/1/))
These three ways of incorporating other writers’ work into your own writing differ according to the closeness of your writing to the source writing.

- **Quotations** must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author with page number.
- **Paraphrasing** involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.
- **Summarizing** involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source. Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.
**Group Work**
Tests and the assignment are to be completed **individually**. No group work or collaboration is allowed on any test or on the assignment.

**Unclaimed Assignments**
Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in Quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW’s **confidential shredding procedures**.

**Evaluation:**
The professor determines the content and establishes the grading rules for all assignments, tests, and any quizzes. The teaching assistants will assist the instructor with grading course work.
The midterm is based on material covered in lectures and readings up to and including the class before the midterm exam. The final exam is based on all term material and will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Students are expected to be present in class at the time tests are scheduled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam (in class, Feb 14th)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment (due March 21st)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Numeric grades on a scale from 0-100 are used in grading all assignments.

**Information on using Waterloo LEARN**
LEARN is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (posting of lecture notes, etc.), interact with their students (drop boxes for student submissions, on-line quizzes, discussion boards, course e-mail etc.), and provide feedback (grades, assignment comments etc.). The degree to which LEARN is utilized in a particular course is left to the discretion of the instructor and therefore, you may find a large variance in how LEARN is being used from one course to another.

**Logging Into LEARN**
Since LEARN is a web-based system, you will need a browser. Once you have started up your browser, type in the following URL: [http://learn.uwaterloo.ca](http://learn.uwaterloo.ca). Provide your Quest/WatIAM userid and password (case sensitive) to login. Once you have logged in, you should see a list of your LEARN courses under the Courses header bar. Clicking on the course name will take you to that course.

**Getting Help**
Documentation has been tailored to the uWaterloo environment.
- URL for Student Help for LEARN - [https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students](https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students)
- URL for Student FAQ - [https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students/frequently-asked-questions](https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students/frequently-asked-questions)

Additional queries can be sent to the Waterloo LEARN help email: learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca

**Multimedia Notes (DVDs, Videos, in-class internet-based videos, etc.).**
Approximately 15% of course content is delivered through multi-media materials (DVDs, online audio or video clips), and **ALL** of this material is valid testing/quiz material. Therefore, each student should attend regularly and take comprehensive notes. If you miss a day when this material is shown, please arrange to obtain the notes from a classmate, and if possible, **discuss** these notes briefly with the note-taker. Most materials shown are the personal property of the instructor and some are available on the internet.

**PowerPoint Viewer**
### Lecture Schedule (topics might span more than one class):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-Jan</td>
<td>Course Outline and Introduction to EA</td>
<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<td>Course Syllabus</td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 1: Aims and Objectives of EIA</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Suggested Reading:</strong></td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>17-Jan</td>
<td>EA in Canada</td>
<td>Required Reading:</td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 2: A Brief Overview of EIA in Canada</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Suggested Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>24-Jan</td>
<td>Environment Canada and the Mining Sector</td>
<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 5: Screening Procedures</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 6: Scoping and Environmental Baseline Assessment</strong></td>
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<td>Suggested Readings:</td>
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<td>Chapter 4: Methods Supporting EIA Practice</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>31-Jan</td>
<td>The EA process I:</td>
<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<td><strong>Screening</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Scoping</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 8: Determining Impact Significance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Suggested Reading:</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter 7: Predicting Environmental Impacts</td>
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<td>Chapter 4: Methods Supporting EIA Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>07-Feb</td>
<td>The EA process II:</td>
<td>Required Readings:</td>
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<td><strong>Identifying and Predicting Impacts</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Impact Significance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Chapter 7: Predicting Environmental Impacts</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Suggested Reading:</strong></td>
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<td>Chapter 4: Methods Supporting EIA Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>14-Feb</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>21-Feb</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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### Week 8
**28-Feb**

**Public Participation**

**Required Readings:**
Chapter 11: Public Participation in EIA


**Suggested Reading:**

### Week 9
**07-Mar**

**Monitoring and Follow-up**

**Required Reading:**
Chapter 10: Post-decision Monitoring


**Suggested Reading:**

### Week 10
**14-Mar**

**Cumulative Effects Assessment (CEA)**

**Required Readings:**
Chapter 12: Cumulative Environmental Effects


**Suggested Readings:**


### Week 11
**21-Mar**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

**Required Reading:**
Chapter 13: Strategic Environmental Assessment

**Suggested Readings:**


**Assignment due date**

### Week 12
**28-Mar**

**Sustainability Assessment (SA)**

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Reading:**

**Guest Lecture**

### Week 13
**11-25 Apr**

**Final Exam**

**Date, time and place to be announced**

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Prof. Denis Kirchhoff
Assignment: Short research paper on EA practice, due Thursday March 21st.

Prepare a research paper that describes, illustrates, and critiques an Environmental Assessment in a Canadian jurisdiction. To do this, you will choose and use the EA report from a project (i.e., your case study) as your main source of information. The case can be from any province or the Canadian federal EA legislation. Your paper must include a critical/analytical component as well as descriptive elements. You must demonstrate that you are familiar with the current state of EA in your case study jurisdiction. You may include figures, maps, tables and comparative lists/charts to help explain key points.

- **Length:** Present your paper in an academic research paper format no longer than 12 pages (excluding title page, bibliography page, tables and figures), double spaced, with reference list and any figures or tables you wish to include. **Extra pages will not be read.**

- **Deadline:** Hardcopy: March 21st, beginning of class.

Assignment Format:
- Your assignment must have a plain title page with the title of your assignment, your name, course number (ERS 215), the date, your student number, and the term instructor's name.
- Include your name & student ID number on each page (inserting this into a ‘header’ is the easiest way to go!).
- Please number all pages
- Typed/word-processed, with 1” margins.
- Double-spaced and 12 font (Times New Roman)
- Please staple all pages in the upper left corner. **Bindings and/or folders should not be used.**
- Maps, diagrams and figures/tables are optional, but appreciated. If included, should be at the end of your assignment, starting on a separate page.

Important Steps:
**Step 1: Choose a project**
Identify a project that you will use for analysis. The project must be concrete and set in a Canadian jurisdiction. You will need the environmental assessment report for this project as the main source of information for your analysis/critique. You can find and download EA reports from a specific public registry website (see below for web address):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Internet Web Address (accessed March 2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta</td>
<td><a href="http://environment.alberta.ca/1283.html">http://environment.alberta.ca/1283.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia</td>
<td><a href="http://a100.gov.bc.ca/appsdata/epic/html/deploy/epic_home.html">http://a100.gov.bc.ca/appsdata/epic/html/deploy/epic_home.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td><a href="http://www.acee-cea.gc.ca/050/index_e.cfm">http://www.acee-cea.gc.ca/050/index_e.cfm</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manitoba</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eaal/registries/index.html">http://www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eaal/registries/index.html</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td><a href="http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-e.asp">http://www.gnb.ca/0009/0377/0002/index-e.asp</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Territories</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mveibnt.ca/register/index.php">http://www.mveibnt.ca/register/index.php</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/">http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca/ERS-WEB-External/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quebec</td>
<td><a href="http://www.baper.gouv.qc.ca/sections/mandats/">http://www.baper.gouv.qc.ca/sections/mandats/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yukon</td>
<td><a href="http://www.yesabc.ca/assessments/public_registry.html">http://www.yesabc.ca/assessments/public_registry.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Prof. Denis Kirchhoff
Every registry works differently and some are more user-friendly than others. It is your job to find a suitable case for your assignment (i.e., a project that has undergone an EA process and you can access the EA report).

**Step 2: Describe and analyze the EA**
Based on the EA report, describe and discuss EA elements related to your case, such as:
- the sector/industry;
- the legislation or legal context used in the application of EA;
- the type of EA used;
- scoping and alternatives (e.g., VECs and other important issues considered, space and time boundaries of the study, alternatives considered, etc.);
- public involvement (e.g., main stakeholders involved, degree of involvement, etc.);
- methods used; and,
- adherence to EA best practice principles as indicated in the literature (e.g., IAIA and IEA, 1999 – see week 4 readings).

**Step 3: Conclude**
Based on your preceding discussion, what do you conclude about the strengths and weaknesses of the EA case study you presented?

**ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THE ASSIGNMENT:**
1. Title page (check requirements under "Assignment format")
2. Introduction - Introduce the topic of your paper (but keep it short)
   - the EA System (jurisdiction) – (where, types of EA)
   - the project/activity (location, when, what industry/sector?)
3. Body of paper – Likely more than one section
   - Brief description of the EA system in the chosen jurisdiction (for example, definition of environment narrowly defined?, types of EA in more detail, what triggers the EA legislation?)
   - Critical discussion about the case study (addressing for example: type of EA used, what triggered the EA?, what alternatives were considered?, public participation, methods used, adherence to EA best practice principles)
4. Conclusions
   - At least 4 conclusions about strengths and weaknesses (2 of each) of the case study presented (or the EA system as a whole)
5. References – There must be a minimum of 6 references.
   - One reference will be the EA report (or Environmental Impact Statement) of the chosen project.
   - Statements in the assignment must be supported by the literature. Only articles cited in the text are to appear in the Literature Cited section (and vice versa).
   - Wikipedia should not be used as reference.
   - The APA reference format should be used for all references, including websites (for info on using the APA style, see http://ereference.uwaterloo.ca/display.cfm?categoryID=15&catHeading=Citation%20%20Style%20Guides#Allstyles:RefWorks
6. Signed Assignment Checklist
   - Make sure you read and sign the assignment checklist form (at the end of this document) and include it with your assignment

NOTE: It is critical to provide evidence throughout your paper. Thus, you will need to cite all ideas, facts/dates, identified trends, etc. that are not yours throughout your paper. Papers written without reference to appropriate evidence will have marks deducted. It may be helpful to think of writing your paper like a lawyer argues a court case: a systematic presentation of documented evidence that eventually convinces the ‘jury’ (i.e., the reader) to believe you.
Helpful Online Resources for assignment:
International Association for Impact Assessment: http://www.iaia.org
Journal of Environmental Assessment, Policy and Management: http://www.worldscinet.com/jeapm/
Impact Assessment and Project Appraisal: http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/tandf/iapa

Peer-reviewed articles from the above Academic Journals (JEAPM, IAPA and EIAR) can be accessed through UW's Library website: http://sfx.scholarsportal.info/waterloo/az

Assignment Grading:
- Evaluation of assignments takes into account organization, structure, style and presentation, research, quality of analysis and content. Writing quality and content are both considered in grading.
- Students are expected to present well organized and properly written work. Penalties of up to 20% may be applied in cases where readability and/or clarity are considered inadequate.

Lateness penalty:
- All assignments are due on the date set by the professor. To be fair to students who hand in their assignment on time, late assignments will be penalized. The first day an assignment is late brings about a 20% penalty. A cumulative 5% penalty is assessed for each additional late business day. A student's assignment more than one week late will not be accepted and a grade of ‘zero’ will be recorded for that assignment.
- Any requests for extension without penalty or for more than one week must be made in writing in advance of the assignment due date. The instructor reserves the right to waive this deduction if the following prevents the student from handing in an assignment on time:
  1. Valid medical reason such as illness or accident (appropriate proof such as a Doctor's note is required);
  2. Personal or family emergency (with suitable proof when possible);
- Please ensure that you are diligent in backing up computer files of all assignments, as computer/disk failures, printer problems, etc., will not be considered a valid reason to waive the late assignment deduction.

Handing in your Assignments:
- You are responsible for making sure that your professor receives your work. Students who mail assignments in, place work on the floor outside an office, or slip assignments under a door do so at their own risk.
- Lost or misplaced assignments: It is your responsibility to keep a photocopy of your work, and to make more than one copy of your work. Excuses are not accepted in the case of lost or misplaced work.

Tips/Hints:
- Begin well in advance of the deadline – last minute work is usually obvious to markers.
- As you write, use the concepts, language and ideas presented in lecture materials as a source of inspiration/discussion in your assignment.
- Begin by assigning approximate word or length limits to each main section.
- Be sure to identify the factors that fostered a positive or negative outcome for the proposed undertaking.
- Refer to your course readings and other general and theoretical materials to develop a critique of the EA approach used in your case study area.
- Create sub-headings for each of the main sub-sections (you can remove these or keep these later…they are intended as a guide to writing to ensure you address each sub-section!).
- Cite all materials/information you obtain from sources other than your own personal knowledge. The APA reference format should be used for all references, including electronic sources.
- Don’t forget to include personal knowledge and ‘brainstorming’ in your analysis – it’s a very powerful way to personalize your writing.
- Before printing off your final version, proofread and spell-check your work please.
The following student signed Checklist was developed by the University of Waterloo Secretariat as a means of emphasizing the importance of attribution of referenced work and reducing plagiarism. Please read, sign, and hand in with your assignment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Checklist</th>
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<tr>
<td>Please read the checklist below following the completion of your assignment. Once you have verified these points, hand in this signed checklist with your assignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I have referenced and footnoted all ideas, words or other intellectual property from other sources used in the completion of this assignment.

2. I have included a proper bibliography, which includes acknowledgement of all sources used to complete this assignment.

3. This assignment was completed by my own efforts and I did not collaborate with any other person for ideas or answers.

4. This is the first time I have submitted this assignment or essay (either partially or entirely) for academic evaluation.

Signed: __________________________________________ Date: ______________________

Print Name: _______________________________ UW-ID# _________________________