School of Environment, Resources and Sustainability
Faculty of Environment
University of Waterloo

ERS 215
Environmental and Sustainability Assessment I (Online)

Instructor:
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Office Hours: Please check the LEARN site for updated weekly office hours.

TAs:
See the online course site for TA contact details.

Description:

An introduction to 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 methodologies for, and controversies surrounding, the design and conduct of environmental impact studies, and the testing of reported findings. The main focus is on the purposes and design of environmental assessment processes, with particular reference to the Canadian federal and Ontario provincial environmental assessment systems, and the 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 EA as a potential venue that can contribute to sustainability;
- Describe the different steps and components of an EA 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).

Approach:

Modules 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 videos and by regular attention to case studies. Assigned readings throughout the semester are critical for providing additional depth and breadth. Quizzes and the assignment 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 (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

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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.*

Required Readings:

Noble, Bram (2014). **Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment: a Guide to Principles and Practice***, 3rd Edition.* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Other required readings will be posted to the course website and will be available through course reserves.

COMMUNICATION

Students' UW email accounts will be used for all communication. Students are responsible to check their UW email and 'Learn' accounts regularly. All course announcements will be posted to LEARN. *An effort will be made to deal with email requests within two business days of receipt. The instructor does not respond to email outside of regular working hours (M-F ~8AM-6PM).* Often the quickest way to a response is to post to the course's LEARN discussion board, which is monitored twice daily by the TAs.

*There is an expectation that all emails and communications with the TAs and instructor will remain professional, at all times. Any emails that are unprofessional will not be tolerated and will be reported.

Course and University Policies

Missed Examinations:
All exams are mandatory, and thus, students are expected to be present at the time of each exam. If you miss an exam you must provide reasonable documentation explaining the reason for your absence, degree of incapacitation, dates covered by the note to be considered for an alternative arrangement. Please make a copy of this note and give the copy to your instructor by hand or scanned and sent by email (email to cbarbeau@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.

Religious Observances:
Student needs to inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

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. See (www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity).
Students who are unsure what constitutes an academic offence are requested to visit the on-line tutorial at:
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. For typical penalties, check Guidelines for Assessment of Penalties, 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. 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 i here 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

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) .

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 (e.g. www.Turnitin.com). Plagiarism offices 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 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. Use of such material without complete and unambiguous acknowledgement, however, is an offence under Policy 71.

Quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing (source: 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.

Turnitin:
Plagiarism detection software (Turnitin) will be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin is primarily a plagiarism detection tool, but can also be used to help students understand academic integrity in written assignments. Turnitin generates 'originality reports' on student submissions, which can provide instructors with information about plagiarized sources, but the reports can also be used to help students understand the proper use of quotation marks, how to cite sources properly, and how to paraphrase.

Students will be given an option if they do not want to have their assignment screened by Turnitin. In the first week of the term, details will be provided about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. NOTE: any student not wishing to submit materials for Turnitin detection must contact the instructor by **January 25th**, to arrange for an alternative 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:

Your final grade will be based on one assignment, completion of module review questions/activities, two LEARN quizzes and a final

exam. The professor determines the content and establishes the grading rules for all assignments and quizzes. The teaching assistants will assist the instructor with grading course work. The first quiz is mostly based on material covered in Modules 1 - 4 (including all readings for each module). The second quiz is mostly based on the second part of the course material (Modules 5 – 7, including all readings). Both quizzes will by multiple choice and true/false questions. The quizzes are to be an independent course component, that you are to complete on your own. Any evidence of academic dishonesty will be reported.The final exam will be cumulative. When determining a student's final grade in the course, the instructor will examine the record of each individual student's achievement; the final grade may be adjusted to take into account extenuating and compassionate circumstances and the student's general pattern of achievement in the course.

Course Component	*Percentage*
LEARN Quiz 1(**Opens:** TBA **Closes:** TBA)	**15%**
LEARN Quiz 2 (**Opens:** TBA **Closes:** TBA)	**15%**
Assignment: Briefing Note (Due TBA)	**25%**
Module Review Questions/Activities (Refer to the online course site for more information on the module review questions – Due each Sunday @ 11:55 PM)	**20%**
Final Exam (During final exam period)	**25%**

Numeric grades on a scale from 0-100 are used in grading all assignments at the University of Waterloo. The following list will give you an idea of the basis upon which numeric grades
are assigned:

>90%   Work that shows a high level of initiative and is clearly above and beyond what is expected. Referencing, style, grammar/spelling, content and the development of ideas are all superior. (similar to A and A+ in the previous system)

80-89%   Work that shows good initiative and is above what is expected. Referencing, style, grammar/spelling, content and the development of ideas are all good. (Similar to B+ and A- in the previous system)

70-79%   Work that shows initiative and is about what is expected, but one or more problems are evident in referencing, style, grammar/spelling, content and/or the development of ideas. (Similar to B- and B in the previous system)

60-69%   Work that does not demonstrate initiative, has a series of problems in referencing, style, grammar/spelling, content and/or the ideas, and overall, does not fully convince the reader that the topic has been well considered (Similar to C-, C and C+ in the previous system)

50-59%   Work that is substandard/sloppy in places, has many problems in referencing, style, grammar/spelling, content and/or the development of ideas, and overall, raises more questions in a reader's mind than the work answers. (Similar to D-, D and D+ in the previous system)

40-49%   Work that is of consistently poor quality, demonstrates gaps in comprehension of the assigned material, and/or indicates that not enough time was taken to properly address the assignment. (Similar to F and F+ in the previous system)

<40   Work that is clearly of poor quality, demonstrates a lack of comprehension of the assigned material, shows little attempts at a personal development of ideas or efforts to back up arguments with suitable evidence, and/or indicates that the work was completed 'at the last minute'

Requirements, Late assignments, Grade Penalties and Special Considerations:

Readability and Clarity:
Students are expected to present well organized, and properly written work. Penalties of up to **25%** may be applied in cases where readability and/or clarity are inadequate. Please visit the writing centre on campus for help with editing your assignment. If you are not on campus have another set of eyes read your work over for grammar.

Lateness penalty:
The briefing note assignment is due on the date set by the professor. **There is a 10% penalty off the final mark of the briefing note assignment submitted up to 7 days past the due date. Assignment submitted past the 7 day extended due date deadline will not**

be accepted and a mark of zero will be given. *In order to ensure fairness no extensions will be granted unless you have an verification of illness form.

The time/due dates of the quizzes and review questions are set in the course. You are required to complete the quizzes and review questions in the timeslots given. No extensions or late submissions will be accepted after the due dates for the review questions or quizzes. **To receive an extension on a quiz or review questions submission you are required to submit a verification of illness for *prior* to the due date.**

Please ensure that you are diligent in ***backing up computer files*** and making ***draft copies*** of all assignments, as computer/disk failures, printer problems, etc, will not normally be considered a valid reason to waive the late assignment deduction. NOTE: Perhaps the easiest way to prevent computer file loss is to send to yourself an email attachment of your assignment after each significant work session. Ensure that you upload all components of the briefing note assignment – you will not be allowed to modify or add to your assignment after the due date without the late penalty.

Course Notes: Information for Students Using LEARN

LEARN is a web-based course management system that enables instructors to manage course materials (posting of course content, 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. Minimum requirements include:

PCs running Windows:
- Internet Explorer 7 or 8 (Download Version 8)
- Firefox 2 or 3 (Download Firefox)

MACs running OS X:
- Firefox 2 or 3 (Download Firefox)

Once you have started up your browser, type in the following URL: http://learn.uwaterloo.ca. Provide your Quest/UWdir userid and password (case sensitive). 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.

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 take comprehensive notes.

PowerPoint Viewer
The web addresses for Microsoft PowerPoint viewers (for those who do not have PowerPoint on their computers) is:
http://www.microsoft.com/download/en/details.aspx?id=13

BRIEFING NOTE ASSIGNMENT (25% of final grade)
Your Briefing Note Assignment is worth 25% of your final grade. In this assignment you will write a briefing note to the Minister regarding improvements to the current CEAA 2012 (federal EA process).

- **IMPORTANT:** You should present your paper in an academic research paper format, based on adequate and appropriate reading and reflection, and it must acknowledge intellectual indebtedness through proper citations.

Required format for your assignment:
- 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.
- Submit your assignment as a word doc.

- Please read over further instructions/information posted on the online course site

Important. You are responsible for ensuring your assignment is uploaded correctly into the LEARN dropbox. Failing to submit your assignment will result in late penalties. Double check that your submission uploaded.

Assignment –Briefing Note for the Minister

In this **individual** assignment, you will prepare a briefing note suggesting how to improve the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA 2012). The briefing note should be addressed to the Cabinet Minister (Minister of Environment and Climate Change). You should include at least 3 main points that should be addressed during a possible review of the current CEAA.

Use the "How to Write Briefing Notes" document and briefing note examples (LEARN) as guidance for assignment 1.
- *Length***:** The maximum page length for this assignment is 3 pages (single-spaced)

Deadline: **Electronic copy (MS Word file)**: TBA @ **11:55 p.m.** (LEARN dropbox).

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 many 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.

Handing in your Assignments:
- **You are responsible for making sure that your professor receives your work. The assignment is to be submitted via LEARN dropbox using the course website.
- *Lost or misplaced assignments*: It is your responsibility to make more than one electronic copy of your work. Excuses are not accepted in the case of crashed computer and lost or misplaced work.

Tips/Hints:
- Seek out help from your TAs – they are there to help you
- 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 module materials as a source of inspiration/discussion in your assignment.
- 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. Make sure to cite throughout your assignment.
- Proofread and spell-check your work before submission, please.
- Read "How to Write Briefing Notes" posted in your briefing note resources online. Also, read over the examples of good briefing notes from previous students.

MODULE REVIEW QUESTIONS (20% of final grade)

All module review questions are due on the date specified. Late submissions will not be accepted without a verification of illness form. These review questions are designed for you to begin to generate a critically understanding of the keys topics and themes from the module content. You must include in-text citations. There is no requirement to submit a reference list, but be prepared that your TA might ask you to provide a full reference for anything you have cited. You must show evidence of critical thinking and not just re-stating module content. No marks will be given to answers that are taken directly (or are very similar) to the module content. General comments and feedback will be given by TAs and also by the instructor via an online video recording. Any requests for re-marking will go first through the TA and then through the instructor. However, be aware that your mark may go up or down if a re-mark is requested. This is an independent course component that you are to complete on your own. Any evidence of academic dishonesty will be reported.