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

ERS 215
Environmental and Sustainability Assessment I

Instructor:
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Office Hours*: TBD – there will hopefully be on-campus office hours but as COVID restrictions are evolving, office hours will be updated to LEARN.
Due to COVID restrictions, most questions can and should be answered via email. Those questions that are more personal or require detailed discussion can be booked virtually. There will also be weekly virtual office hours run by your TAs.

TAs:
See LEARN

<u>**Description:**</u>

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. Further, students will get the opportunity to develop their skills on how to write a briefing note to a government decision maker. This assignment will develop the skills to quickly (concisely) and effectively convey key issues surrounding impact assessment in Canada. You will develop an in-depth understanding of key principles and priorities of a well-done impact assessment. This knowledge will be transferable to any impact assessment act. In this course we will focus on IAA 2019, but will also refer to the CEAA 2012 as many of the challenges and shortcomings of CEAA 2012 are still relevant with the new IA Act.

<u>**Intended Learning Outcomes:**</u>

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/IA
- Identify the role and relevance of EA/IA as a potential venue that can contribute to sustainability;
- Describe the different steps and components of an EA/IA process, particularly in Canada;
- Apply EA/IA principles for best practices to case studies and critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of environmental assessments; and
- Identify the important relationship between EAs/IAs 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.*

- An essential component of the course is developing the skills to write a briefing note to a government minister. Students will develop the skills to quickly (concisely) and effectively convey the key issues surrounding the federal IAA to a government discussion maker. Therefore, all students must complete the briefing note assignment.

Approach:

Online asynchronous 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 assignments provide an opportunity for integrating key topics and themes, as well as for linking them with the broader scholarly literature on environmental assessment. From this course you will develop a key understanding of what an EA should be and therefore, you can apply this knowledge and understanding to any assessment act. Please refer to LEARN for all course details.

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

Required Readings:

Noble, Bram (2021). **Introduction to Environmental Impact Assessment: A Guide to Principles and Practice**, *4th Edition.* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

The course textbook is available through WStore and an e-text of Noble available for sale through our UW Vitalsource e-store: https://uwaterloo-store.vitalsource.com/products/introduction-to-environmental-impact-assessment-bram-f-noble-v9780199028917?term=9780199028894. Additional readings will be posted to the course website and made available through Library Course Reserves, available through LEARN.

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

Communication with Instructors and TAs

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 by the TAs and the Instructor to deal with email requests, within two business days of receipt (48 hours). The instructor does not respond to emails outside of regular working hours (M-F ~8:30 AM- 5:50 PM). If you require a timelier response, post your question to the LEARN discussion board. The courses LEAD TA will be monitoring the discussion board daily. Further, other students in the course might respond quicker. All emails and communications with the TAs and course instructor must be respectful and professional. Any unprofessional and disrespectful emails will be reported.

Please note it is your responsibility to ensure that your computer is up to date and compatible.

IMPORTANT: Technical Support

If you are unable to access Waterloo LEARN or course content you must contact Technical Support at learnhelp@uwaterloo.ca. **Include your full name, WatIAM user ID, student number, and the course name and number**. Technical support is available during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 8:30 to 4:30 PM (Eastern Time). Further, trouble shooting for LEARN can be found here: https://uwaterloo.ca/learn-help/students. Often, if you log out of LEARN and exit your web browser and then log back in, you

can access LEARN again. Remember that your textbook has a lot of course material in it – so you can access a lot of course content without LEARN, should you need to study etc. Ultimately, if access issues are not due to any University of Waterloo changes/updates, it is your responsibility to fix the problem.

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)

Requests for Extension on Briefing Note Assignment and Public Comment Paper: Regular Deadline and Extended Deadline

The briefing note is an essential learning component of the course so you must hand in the assignment to receive a mark for the course. There is an extended deadline available to you for your briefing note and Public Comment Paper assignments. You have 3 days past the assignment's regular due date to submit your briefing note or comment paper assignment without a penalty. After 3 days (72 hours) there will be a 10% late penalty taken off the final mark of the assignment you then have up until 7 days after the initial due date to submit with the 10% penalty. This extended deadline is available to everyone and therefore you do not need to ask for an extension. After the 7 day extended deadline, assignments will no longer be accepted. No further extensions will be granted.

Each quiz will continue to be available one week after open date listed on LEARN. This additional week is a built-in flexibility for students who require that additional week. Quiz submissions will not be accepted once the availability of the quiz has ended.

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 and review questions 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 you will need to email the instructor by September 24th and let them know. NOTE: any student not wishing to submit materials for Turnitin detection must arrange for an alternate format for all assignments, quizzes and final exam – including submitting an annotated bibliography.

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 two assignments, the completion of five review quizzes (top four marks count towards the 40% of the final grade) 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 however, the final grade of a course component is ultimately determined by the professor.

Course Component	*Percentage*
LEARN Review Quizzes (5 total – only the top 4 marks will count @ 10% each) -First Quiz Opens September 17th and then usually every other Friday	**40%**
Public Comment Paper on Waterloo Region Airport Runway Extension Project (See LEARN for Details)	**15%**
Assignment: Briefing Note (See LEARN for Details)	**20%**
Take Home Final Exam Monday, December 13th - Wednesday, December 15th, 2021 Released Monday, December 13th at 9AM EST Due Wednesday, December 15th at NOON EST	**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, 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. There are campus resources to help with your writing. Please make an appointment with the writing and communication centre (https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/).

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.

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

REVIEW QUIZZES
5 quizzes total (top 4 grades will count with each being worth 10% of final grade)

Review quizzes are will be available on LEARN on a generally bi-weekly basis (5 quizzes in total, however your top 4 marks will count toward the 40% of your final grade). The quizzes will cover the module content for two weeks (e.g., Review Quiz 1 will cover material from Modules 1 and 2). Questions in the review quizzes will include a variety of multiple choice, short answer, and long (paragraph) answer, and contain select review questions that are presented at the end of each weekly module. Students will have a one-week window to attempt the module review quiz, only one attempt will be allowed per quiz, and time limit (2 hour) will not be enforced. **These quizzes are to be done independently.** While the review question quizzes are not enforced as closed book, it is highly recommended that students use these as an opportunity to test their own knowledge without extensive use of external sources. See LEARN for more details.

ASSIGNMENT: Briefing Note (20% of final grade)

This assignment is an essential course component. Students will write a briefing note to the Environment Minister regarding improvements to the current federal EA process. The briefing note will be addressed to the Cabinet Minister (Minister of Environment and Climate Change) and contain at least 3 main points that should be addressed during a possible review of the current environmental assessment. See LEARN for more details.

Public Comment on Waterloo Region International Airport Runway 14-32 Extension Project
(15% of Final Grade)

The IAA recognizes the importance of open and transparent public participation that occurs early and often. This assignment will give you the opportunity to take a critical look at a current and local project. Based on your understanding of IA best practices and as a member of the public, living in the Region of Waterloo - you will provide commentary on the Waterloo Region International Airport Runway 14-32 Extension Project. This assignment gives to opportunity to interact with a local IA, and begin to apply your knowledge to a real-world case study. The IA for this project is on-going, however you are to read the Initial Project Description for the project (posted to LEARN). You are then to provide two comments, based on your understanding of IA best practice and your perspective as a member of the public living in the Region of Waterloo, on the Initial Project Description phase of the Waterloo Region International Airport Runway 14-32 Extension Project. See LEARN for more details.

FINAL TAKE HOME EXAM (25% of Final Grade)

The final exam will assess student learning and understanding through questions that focus on synthesis, evaluation, and analysis. The exam will consist of short answer and long answer questions that will require students to make connections between the various content learned in the course. These may include scenario-based and problem-solving based questions that the students will have encountered throughout the modules as well as through the module review quiz questions. Final exams will be administered through LEARN and will be subject to antiplagiarism (e.g., Turnitin software). The final exam will be released on Monday, December 13th at 9AM EDT and Due Wednesday, December 15th at NOON EDT.

Marking of your Review Quizzes and Assignments and Final Exam:

Marking will follow the marking rubrics posted to the course website. If you have questions regarding your mark, you must first discuss this with your TA. You must email your TA with a specific concern and a written response as to why you believe you deserve more marks. The fact that you are simply not happy with your mark is not a valid reason for asking for a re-mark. If you still have questions/concerns after talking with your TA, and you would like the instructor to remark your assignment or module review questions, please note, that a re-mark will be for the entire assignment/module - possibly resulting in a higher or lower mark. *You have 14 days from the time the mark is posted to ask for a re-mark.* It is not a valid reason to say that you believe you should have a higher grade because a friend had a similar assignment and received a higher grade. Your assignment and modules are marked as an individual effort and therefore, is unique and is marked as such. If you believe they are similar enough to receive a similar mark, then there might be issues regarding academic integrity.