

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND CENTRE FOR ENVIRONMENT**  
**University of Toronto**  
**Workshop in Environmental Assessment**  
**JGE 1413H S**  
**Winter-Spring 2010**

**Course Instructor:** Virginia Maclaren, SSH 5050, 978-4977,  
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**Time and Location:** Thursdays, 4-6pm, SSH 5017B

OUTLINE

This course will provide a short introductory overview of the theory and practice of environmental assessment and then move on to more advanced topics. Environmental assessment is a procedure that examines the positive and negative environmental implications of proposed projects (this type of assessment is typically referred to as environmental assessment or environmental impact assessment), policies, programs or plans (together, these three types of assessment are known as strategic environmental assessment). EA seeks to identify ways to mitigate negative effects and involves continued monitoring and assessment of effects after a project has been constructed or after a policy/plan/program has been implemented. Many of the examples of EA presented in the course will come from Canada, but a comparative international perspective will also be offered on several topics.

The first hour of each class will consist of lectures by the instructor or readings presentations by the students. The second hour of class will be devoted to workshop activities and to guest speakers. The focus of the workshop activities will be group work that follows up the results of one or more completed environmental assessments.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Essay.** The essay is an opportunity for you to examine, in detail, a topic of your choice that is related to environmental assessment. You should discuss your proposed topic with the instructor and prepare an essay proposal, identifying the context for the paper, the research questions, proposed structure of the paper, and include at least 6 references.

**Reading Critiques.** You are expected to do the required readings before each class meeting. For five of the last eight weeks with assigned readings, you should also prepare a single page (250-500 word)

commentary of the assigned readings. These are meant to be short analytical responses (rather than summaries) that evaluate the arguments made and point to connections between readings (assigned that week or read earlier). Email this to me by Tuesday (no later than 9pm) and I will distribute it to the rest of the class. For the weeks that you do not submit a commentary, please email me two questions based on the readings.

**Workshop Report.** The objective of the workshop report will be to compare the predictions about impacts found in an EA report to the actual outcomes experienced some years later and to determine why discrepancies exist. The report may also re-analyse data provided in the original EA report using different models or approaches.

### GRADING SCHEME

(Penalty for all late assignments: 5% per day)

Readings critiques and questions	20%
Essay proposal (approx. 500 words)	5%
Essay (12-14 pages)	35%
Workshop proposal (approx. 500 words)	5%
Workshop report	35%

### COURSE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

- January 7. Introduction and history of EA
- January 14. Overview of the EA process
- January 21. EA policy and legislation
- January 28. EA follow-up
- February 4. Evaluation of alternatives
- February 11. Stakeholder participation in EA
- February 25. Wind, waste and transportation EAs
- March 4. Cumulative effects
- March 11. Strategic EA
- March 18. Integrated assessment/sustainability assessment
- March 25. International EA
- April 1. Workshop presentations