

ENV440H1 Professional Experience Course

2021 Course Syllabus

DRAFT

Course Instructor: David Sider, PhD
Email: david.sider@utoronto.ca
Office hours: Thursdays 2-3 pm (online via Zoom) (starting on Sep 16)

Placement Coordinator: David Powell, MBA
E-mail: david.powell@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: By appointment (e-mail David)
Phone: 416-420-7817 (daytime)

Teaching Assistant: Natalie Szponar, PhD Candidate
Email: natalie.szponar@mail.utoronto.ca
Office hours: TBA

Course Classroom: No physical classroom, as all course meetings will be held synchronously online via Zoom

Course Meeting Times: Listed on page 2 and 3 – *Note that there are different meeting dates and class participation expectations after our initial class meeting, for students doing summer versus fall work placements.*

Quercus course website: Login at <https://q.utoronto.ca>

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to ENV440H1, the School of the Environment's professional experience course. The course enables you to gain practical experience in a professional setting by placing you in an environmental organization or agency off-campus. The academic component of the course provides you with the **opportunity to reflect** on and **analyze** your practical experience from a broader perspective. This will enable you to utilize this knowledge to direct your future career and/or studies from a position of greater awareness of yourself and the environmental field.

The purpose and design of this course is unique within the University of Toronto. It reflects the commitment of the School of the Environment to make university education relevant to student needs by linking our teaching to activities outside the university and preparing students for life beyond the School.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

There are **four main course objectives**. Through the course, students will have the opportunity to:

- 1) **Gain work experience and hone work-related skills in a professional setting and capacity.**
- 2) **Reflect on their work experience, placement objectives, and the professional and personal benefits of their experience.**
- 3) **Acquire an in-depth understanding of their placement organization and the larger context in which the organization operates.**
- 4) **Utilize and develop their academic skills in the written assignments and oral presentations, in particular, research, analysis and critical thinking skills.**

Employers have always looked for graduates who already have basic practical skills, such as good writing and presentation abilities, time management and computer literacy, and the capacity to work in and -

where necessary - lead groups. These skills form the bedrock of any professional experience course. Increasingly, however, employers are demanding that their recruits have flexible, inquiring and analytical minds that will help them take initiative in defining problems and finding solutions in a rapidly changing organizational environment. The **academic aspect of the course** is meant to engender this by encouraging you to adopt a questioning attitude to your work project and host organization.

In all workplace settings, a successful career depends on your being able to define your own goals and assess critically whether an organization is helping you to achieve them. Thus, this course is an opportunity to think about what you want to get out of a placement and the assignments encourage you to reflect on whether or not you are achieving those objectives as well as how your placement organization functions within its larger context. Throughout the course, we ask you to take a broad perspective on your project(s) and the organization in which you are working.

CLASS MEETINGS FOR STUDENTS WHO DID A SUMMER WORK PLACEMENT

Students will meet synchronously online four times during the fall term. At the first class meeting on Sep 9, all summer and fall placement students will meet online together. For subsequent class meetings, summer and fall placement students will meet online separately on different dates. In addition, after the first class, the summer placement students will be split into two groups which will meet separately for the remainder of the term. Group A will meet on the dates below from 5 to 7 pm, and Group B will meet on the same dates from 7 to 9 pm (note: these times are tentative and may be adjusted, depending on the number of students in each group). The class has been organized this way so that we will have small groups of students for the second, third and fourth meetings, which will be beneficial for class participation and discussion.

1) Thursday September 9, 5-8 pm

Go over course syllabus, discuss roles and responsibilities, work placement logistics, course marking scheme, discuss the first academic assignment (**Making a Difference – Initial Submission, due Monday Oct 18**). **Brief student presentations (1 minute) describing work placements (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

2) Thursday September 30, Group A from 5-7 pm; Group B from 7-9 pm

Detailed discussion of Making a Difference - Initial Submission assignment (**due Monday Oct 18**). Students should come with their initial ideas for the Initial Submission assignment. **Brief student presentations (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

3) Thursday October 28, Group A from 5-7 pm; Group B from 7-9 pm

Detailed discussion of the Making a Difference – Final Submission assignment (the second academic assignment) (**due Monday Dec 6**), Work Placement Evaluation assignment (**due Wednesday Dec 8**), and any other issues related to the course. **Brief student presentations (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

4) Thursday November 18, Group A from 5-7 pm; Group B from 7-9 pm

Final discussion of Making a Difference - Final Submission, and Work Placement Evaluation assignments. **Brief student presentations (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

CLASS MEETINGS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE DOING A FALL WORK PLACEMENT

Students will meet synchronously online four times during the fall term. At the first class meeting on Sep 9, all summer and fall placement students will meet online together. For ensuing class meetings, summer and fall placement students will meet online separately on different dates. After the first class, the fall placement students will be split into two groups which will meet separately for the remainder of the term. Group C will meet on the dates below from 5 to 7 pm, and Group D will meet on the same dates from 7 to 9 pm (note: these times are tentative and may be adjusted, depending on the number of students in each

group). The class has been organized this way so that we will have small groups of students for the second, third and fourth meetings, which will be beneficial for class participation and discussion.

1) Thursday September 9, 5-8 pm

Discuss roles and responsibilities, go over course outline, work placement logistics, course marking scheme, discuss the first academic assignment (**Making a Difference – Initial Submission, due Monday Oct 18**). **Brief student presentations (1 minute) describing work placements (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

2) Thursday October 7, Group C from 5-7 pm; Group D from 7-9 pm

Detailed discussion of Making a Difference - Initial Submission assignment (**due Monday Oct 18**). Students should come with their initial ideas for the Initial Submission assignment. **Brief student presentations (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

3) Thursday November 4, Group C from 5-7 pm; Group D from 7-9 pm

Detailed discussion of the Making a Difference – Final Submission assignment (the second academic assignment) (**due Monday Dec 6**), Work Placement Evaluation assignment (**due Wednesday Dec 8**), and any other issues related to the course. **Brief student presentations (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

4) Thursday November 25, Group C from 5-7 pm; Group D from 7-9 pm

Final discussion of Making a Difference - Final Submission, and Work Placement Evaluation assignments. **Brief student presentations (see specific requirements under Participation below).**

Student Technology Requirements and Online Learning

The minimum technical requirements for students to access online/remote learning, as identified by the University of Toronto, are provided at the following website:

<https://www.vicereprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/covid-19/tech-requirements-online-learning/>.

General advice for how to be successful in online learning can be accessed at:

<https://onlinelearning.utoronto.ca/getting-ready-for-online/>.

Notice of Video Recording and Sharing (Download and Re-use Prohibited)

This course, including your class participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session.

Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other sources depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. Do not download, copy, or share any course or student materials or videos without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear, please contact Dave Sider.

Communication with Course Instructor and Placement Coordinator

Besides our online class meetings, you are encouraged to **communicate individually** with the course instructor by e-mail or attending his weekly office hours. You are encouraged also to communicate with the placement coordinator by email. You and he can arrange a phone call or online Teams meeting, as needed.

Electronic Communications

Because most of your time will be spent in the physical and/or virtual workplace, personal contact with the course instructor and placement coordinator will be limited. Thus, we will use electronic communications as a means of keeping in touch. The Quercus website will be used for posting the course syllabus and other

materials related to the course. Any changes to the course design or due dates that we decide upon during class meetings will be reflected in announcements or other material posted on the course website. **NOTE: All students are advised to have their notification preferences on Quercus enabled for Announcements so that you will be receiving course announcements sent via email.**

NOTE: It is strongly recommended also that students always email the course instructor, placement coordinator and TA from their utoronto email address, not from the Inbox tool on the Quercus website. Messages sent from the website Inbox tool may not be received.

You will be submitting all assignments online via the course website. We will provide comments electronically for each assignment and return to you via e-mail. You may also use e-mail to let us know about any concerns you have with the course or your workplace. The course instructor will use e-mail to remind you of upcoming classes. **Therefore, it is essential to regularly check your utoronto e-mail.**

Course Time Commitment

The design of this course assumes that you will **commit an estimated 145 hours** over the course of the fall term (or summer/fall terms for summer work placement students). This number is based on the Faculty's workload guideline and assumes that a five-course workload would be equivalent to a full-time job of 40 hours per week over the 33 weeks in the school year, including the December holiday break. However, this number is higher because the 145 hours includes 100 hours for your work placement (the equivalent of 12.5 eight-hour days of work during either the summer or fall), 36 hours for academic assignments and presentation preparation, and 9 hours of classroom time. Because you cannot "cut corners" on the amount of time you commit to this course, it is *likely that you will find it to be a demanding course that has a heavy workload*. Good time management will be important in the course.

COURSE PERSONNEL

The following people have a role in the course; their responsibilities are described below:

- 1) The **Course Instructor** is responsible for the design of the academic component of the course and for helping students develop their academic skills. The instructor will facilitate the meetings of the class, meet with you individually, and mark the academic assignments. **You should direct your questions and concerns regarding the course organization and meetings to the instructor and go to him if you need help on the two academic assignments.** You are encouraged to e-mail him or meet with him during his online office hours.
- 2) The **Placement Coordinator**, who is responsible for coordinating the work placements and for helping students achieve their placement-related objectives for the course. David Powell will respond to your e-mails to help guide your progress on placement-related objectives. **You may discuss with David Powell about any concerns associated with your placement, your workplace supervisor, or the Work Placement Evaluation assignment.** You and he can arrange a phone call or online Teams meeting, as needed.
- 3) Your **Workplace Supervisor** is responsible for helping to define and guide your workplace project, providing you with a working environment conducive to carrying out your project, and allowing you time to ensure that your placement-related assignments for the course are completed. You may want to discuss problems associated with the workplace or work project with your Workplace Supervisor before bringing them to David Powell's attention.
- 4) The **Teaching Assistant**, who will be assisting with the assignment marking. The TA may hold office hours at times to be arranged and announced as need be during the fall term.

ENV 440H Assignments and Grading Scheme Fall 2021

| Assignment | Mark | Length | Hours of Work | Date Due | How to Submit: |
|--|--------------|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Making a Difference - Initial submission | 25 % | 8 to 10 pages (see description) | 10 hours* | Monday Oct 18 (by 11:59 PM TO time) | Upload to course website |
| Making a Difference - Final submission | 45 % | 12 to 14 pages (see description) | 20 hours* | Monday Dec 6 (by 11:59 PM TO time) | Upload to course website |
| Work Placement Evaluation (completed by student) | 10% | An evaluation form is provided | 4 hours | Wednesday Dec 8 (by 11:59 PM TO time) | Upload to course website |
| Supervisor Work Placement Evaluation (completed by supervisor) | 5% | An evaluation form is provided | n/a | Wednesday Dec 8 (by 11:59 PM TO time) | Supervisor to e-mail as Word attachment to David Powell |
| Participation | 15 % | n/a | 9 hours (in class) & 2 hours for presentation preparation | In class throughout term | n/a |
| Work Placement work | n/a | n/a | 100 hours | n/a | n/a |
| Total | 100 % | | 145 hours | | |

*Note time spent on each of these two assignments may vary, but should total 30 hours.

The two Making a Difference assignments and Work Placement Evaluation should be **submitted electronically** via the course website. The Supervisor Work Placement Evaluation (to be completed and submitted by your placement supervisor) should be **submitted by your supervisor via e-mail** to David Powell at david.powell@utoronto.ca. For all assignments, marks and comments will be emailed to you.

Requests for Extensions

If you need an extension for an assignment, you must submit your request and get permission in writing from the course instructor before the assignment is due. Requests for extensions for **any medical reason** including COVID-19 or related symptoms **do not need to** be supported with a U of T Verification of Student Illness or Injury form or other official university documentation such as a Registrar's letter, but you do **need to complete the Absence Declaration online** via ACORN and inform Dave Sider right away, in order to be given accommodation.

For requests due to **non-medical extenuating circumstances** such as a family emergency, students **do not need to** provide any supporting documentation, but you do **need to complete the Absence Declaration online** via ACORN and inform Dave Sider right away, in order to be given accommodation.

Late Penalties

If you hand in an assignment after the deadline without an extension, your assignment mark will be reduced by **three percent of the value of the assignment for each day your assignment is late, including weekend days**. For example, if you were one day late in submitting your Initial Submission paper, you would lose 0.75 marks out of 25 possible marks. Two days late would be a reduction of 1.5 marks, and so on. Assignments will **not be accepted beyond one week after the due date**, unless you have made prior arrangements with the course instructor, Dave Sider.

All students are **REQUIRED** to retain a personal electronic copy of all work undertaken for this course as well as *all rough materials, references, sources, and working notes* until the marked original has been returned.

IN CASE OF DIFFICULTIES

If you encounter any persistent difficulties in your work placement, please do not delay in attending to them. First, attempt to solve the problem yourself, in discussion with your work supervisor and/or colleagues. **If this does not work, then contact David Powell immediately.** Our experience shows that problems that could be solved if addressed early tend to become much more difficult to solve if allowed to fester. Please do not hesitate to ask for help.

If you experience difficulties relating to the academic content of the course or the assignments, please contact the **course instructor**, or bring them up in one of the class meetings.

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Accessibility Needs:

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible:

<https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement, and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

All students are advised to familiarize themselves with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* at: <https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>. It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- Making up sources or facts
- Including references to sources that you did not use
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including:
 - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work
 - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing"
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as their own without your permission

On tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers
- Misrepresenting your identity

- Submitting an altered test for re-grading

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades

You can get further guidance on academic integrity at:

<https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/academic-advising-and-support/student-academic-integrity>

COURSE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

The assignments in this course are intended to provide you with the analytical framework needed to evaluate the impact of your efforts and those of your placement organization to effect change within the environmental field and the professional skills and tools to make your efforts productive, beginning with your 440 placement and hopefully carrying on into your career.

A. "MAKING A DIFFERENCE" ASSIGNMENTS: PUTTING YOUR PLACEMENT EXPERIENCE IN A BROADER PERSPECTIVE

A key aspect of this assignment is to consider how the internal environment in which you are situated relates to, responds to, and is impacted by the external environment in which it functions. When we refer to the "internal environment," we mean the organizational environment you are working in, which includes various defining features such as its mission, philosophical approach, structure, activities, staffing, leadership, work culture and management system. When we refer to the "external environment," we mean the larger social, political, economic, technological, natural and other structures and factors that potentially affect the organization and sector in which you are working. External factors that potentially impact on organizations include the social environment (e.g., public interest in/concern about various environmental issues), political environment (e.g., government policy, legislative and regulatory environment), economic environment (e.g., state of the economy, financial support available to environmental organizations), technological environment (e.g., new or emerging technologies that can impact on the effectiveness of organizations), and the natural environment (e.g., the state of the environment that the organization is striving to address).

The purpose of the Making a Difference assignments is to answer the following **two research questions: (1) Which internal and external factors influence the role and effectiveness of your placement organization, and how?, and (2) Is your placement organization optimally adapted to achieve its mission or goals, and why or why not?** Your response to the first question will be instrumental to answering the second question. To respond well to both questions will require critical reflection. The development of this critical perspective is essential to your learning experience, and will help you complete the requirements of 440. Without it, you will simply be volunteering rather than gaining a richer understanding of the contribution that you and your host organization are making.

INITIAL SUBMISSION

Due: Monday Oct 18, 2021 (by 11:59 PM Toronto time)
Value: 25% of final grade; late penalty 3% per day, including weekend days
Expected length: 8 to 10 pages double-spaced, including the annotated bibliography
Format: Times Roman 12-point font, 1" margins, with page numbers
Submission: Upload your paper as a Word file to the course website (no PDF files please)
Note: Marks could be deducted for exceeding the page limit or not following the specified format

The **objective** of this assignment is to help you prepare for your Final Submission paper by thinking about your placement experience, placement organization, and the broader context in which the organization operates. As this assignment is intended to be the first step towards fulfilling your final paper, the assignment is an opportunity for you to receive feedback from the instructor on your understanding and assessment of your placement organization and their larger context. Besides the requirements below, you should review the Final Submission instructions before starting the assignment.

The initial submission has 5 required components:

- ***Brief introduction to your organization/placement and its activities*** (1-2 pages double-spaced):
 - In this section you should emphasize the following:
 - What is the sector (private, government, NGO/not-for-profit) in which you're working?
 - What environmental issue(s)/problem(s) does your organization seek to address or how is your organization engaged in environmental issues?
 - What gap or need in the larger community or society is your organization seeking to fill?
 - What is your organization's structure and what is the internal work culture of your organization? How do these aspects relate to the activities of the organization?
 - How does your organization fund/support its activities?
 - What is the nature of your placement activities? How do these relate to your organization's goals and activities? (check on their mission and how they say that they are achieving it – do they have a strategic plan and annual reports on how they have met the goals in their plan?)
 - If your organization has a mission or mission statement, it should be presented here.
 - In this section, you should cite your sources.
- ***Internal and external factors*** (2-3 pages double-spaced):
 - In this section of your paper, you should: a) briefly describe the range of internal and external factors that impact on your placement organization; and b) identify which internal and external factors, specifically, you intend to focus on in the Final Submission assignment and elaborate on why (or how) those factors have a significant impact on your placement organization (positively or negatively). Given that, for most organizations, the internal and external factors typically influence one another, an important part of your task in the Final Submission will be to unravel and explain the interrelationships. Since the internal and external environments of organizations are often complex, it is recommended that you limit the number of factors that will be the main focus of your Final Submission to 3 internal factors and 3 external factors. Ideally, out of all the many relevant factors that impact on your organization, you want to select, and focus on, the most important or consequential factors, those that have a significant or major impact on the functioning or effectiveness of the organization (this idea is reflected in the so-called 80:20 Rule, which maintains that, oftentimes, 80% of the outcome can be explained by 20% of the factors).
 - When defining the external environment that affects your organization, for small organizations, with no separate programs competing for resources within the organization, the external environment is simply the environment outside of the organization. For larger organizations with multiple units or programs that compete for resources among themselves, you may choose to analyze only the unit in which you are working, in which case the external environment is both the rest of the organization, as well as the environment outside of the organization. More complex still is a unit within a division/department of a municipal/provincial/federal government bureaucracy, which operates under the control and influence of an elected municipal council/provincial legislature/federal parliament, all of which operates within a larger environment external to government structures. For those students doing their placements with a government body, you would most likely be analyzing the unit of the organization in which you are doing your work placement, so each of these layers above is external to your unit, and therefore part of the unit's external environment.
 - In this section, you also need to cite your sources.

- **Methodology to be used** (1 page double-spaced):
In this section of your paper, you are to describe the various methods you intend to use to obtain information (data) about your placement organization and the external environment that will feed into the Final Submission. For each method discussed, be as specific as possible and identify what types of information you expect to obtain. If, at the time of writing, you have already utilized a number of methods, you can also report on your progress and what remains to be done. To write this section, you need to be aware of the instructions on Methodology in the Final Submission instructions.
- **Draft outline of final paper.** (1-2 pages double-spaced)
 - Outline should be as detailed as possible, but at minimum have headings and subheadings and brief description of each section (see Final Submission assignment guidelines for suggested content)
 - You are encouraged to develop a thorough outline that explains the likely focus of each section, as this will be beneficial for your final paper.
- **Annotated bibliography** (3 pages double-spaced):
 - In this part, you want to provide an alphabetized list of **four** sources, of which two or more should be academic journal articles or scholarly books or book chapters; the remaining sources can be non-academic sources such as websites, NGO reports or government documents.
 - For each source, you are to provide: 1) full bibliographic information; 2) a short summary of the source (one paragraph); and 3) in a second paragraph, explain how this source will be useful for your final paper, and critically assess its quality and relevance (strengths and weaknesses).
 - In terms of the academic sources, you want to look for academic sources that will help ground your discussion (i.e., make connections to academic ideas and sources) in the Final Submission paper. In other words, academic sources that will be useful are those which will help explain the work of your placement organization, or the environmental field more generally. As such, keep an eye out for academic sources that relate to any of your internal factors (e.g., theories on leadership in organizations) and external factors (e.g., academic perspectives on new and emerging technologies like social media). You can also draw from the academic literature any ideas, topics or themes that help to explain the context or big picture, for example, processes of social change, theories of citizen engagement or community development, neoliberalism, environmental governance or policy-making in Canada – it is wide open, as long as you can show relevance to your placement experience or placement organization. Depending on your placement organization, you are probably not going to find academic sources specific to that organization, but there is an extensive academic literature pertaining to the various internal and external factors, the different economic sectors (e.g., NGOs, public sector and private sector), and the bigger context.
 - Also, for the academic sources in your Annotated Bibliography, you can utilize one or two sources (but no more than two) from the list of examples of academic sources for the Making a Difference Assignment (file to be posted on the course website); you are not required to use sources from this list and it is optional to do so. If you do opt to use sources from the list, ensure that they are relevant and will be useful for your final paper. The reason for the limit of two sources from the list is so that you will look for some sources on your own.
 - Note: If you utilize additional sources in your Initial Submission, above and beyond the four sources in your Annotated Bibliography, list them in a separate, standard reference list (non-annotated) at the very end.

This assignment, in other words, is similar to a proposal, that is, a detailed plan about what you want to find out, why, and how. For the Initial Submission, you are not expected to have carried out all of your research or formed firm conclusions yet. In this assignment, you are encouraged to show the development of your thinking since beginning your placement, but any analysis made should be presented as preliminary. In other words, the Initial Submission paper is essentially about where you are headed in your research, not the finished product.

This assignment is worth 25% of your final grade and will be **evaluated based on the following criteria:**

- how comprehensively you've addressed the stated requirements
- the quality of information and explanation provided
- the thoroughness of the description of the methodology you have proposed
- the thinking, organization and detail that has gone into the draft outline of the final paper
- the quality of the sources and accompanying explanation in the Annotated Bibliography
- writing mechanics and style
- the overall effectiveness of your assignment

ETHICS REVIEW

A course-wide ethics review for this assignment will be completed by the course instructor, but you will have to submit an informed consent document to anyone whom you interview, or even with whom you have an informal conversation, in order to gather information for the assignment. The informed consent document will be provided to you during the course.

FINAL SUBMISSION

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Due: | Monday Dec 6, 2021 (by 11:59 PM Toronto time) |
| Value: | 45% of final grade; late penalty 3% per day, including weekends |
| Expected length: | 12 to 14 pages double-spaced, excluding reference list |
| Format: | Times Roman 12-point font, 1" margins, with page numbers |
| Submission: | Upload your paper as a Word file to the course website (no PDF files please) |
| Note: | Marks could be deducted for exceeding the page limit or not following the specified format |

The objective of this assignment is to **critically evaluate** your placement organization within its larger context. The paper you developed for the Initial Submission should be fully developed in this second assignment. Hence, the heart of the Final Submission assignment is an explanation of the key internal and external factors that influence your placement organization (which you identified in the Initial Submission) and analysis of the role and effectiveness of your placement organization in light of those factors. **The analytical component of this paper is paramount**, and you need to develop a well-supported argument and provide sound evidence for your ideas about how your placement organization reflects the internal and external environments in which it operates and whether it is optimally adapted or not to achieve its mission or goals.

While this analytic framework is useful for understanding your specific placement organization, it has more general value, being applicable to virtually any organizational setting within any sector of the economy. Thus, the framework will help you to gain insight into what certain organizations do well, what they do less well, and what they might do differently or better. In other words, the framework will enable you to evaluate the potential opportunities and the constraints that organizations face, as defined by their own internal factors and the larger external environment. Accordingly, this analytic approach could be useful to all students in your careers in the environmental field in future.

METHODOLOGY

It is expected that you will **use academically rigorous methods to obtain** information about your placement organization and the external environment. Your own observations/experience/opinion alone will not be sufficient to successfully complete the assignment. It is expected that you will **use all of the following research methods and sources, at a minimum**, to inform your Final Submission paper:

- Academic literature search (minimum of 3 sources); in the final paper, you can use as many sources as you wish from the list of examples of academic sources for the Making a Difference assignment (posted on the course website); it is entirely optional to use these sources; however, if you do use

some of the suggested sources, you must also include some additional academic sources that you have found (at least two sources)

- Review of documents, reports and website material from your placement organization, including any internal and/or external evaluations already conducted by your organization (if possible)
- Review of relevant, publicly available material from other organizations and government sources
- Your personal experience and observations at your placement organization

While not required, you are strongly encouraged to do one or more interviews with people at your placement organization or external stakeholders who can provide useful information and perspectives. Students who have taken the course in previous years have found interviews very helpful for obtaining new information, clarifying their own ideas, and gaining valuable insights about their respective organizations.

In addition, and also not mandatory, you have the option to compare and contrast your personal experience and observations at your placement organization with your experience from working/volunteering at another organization or organizations, where this is directly relevant to your assignment.

While also not required, you may wish to consider using indicators in the discussion of your external factors. Indicators, in a nutshell, are quantitative measures of key dimensions of the external environment. An example is: (1) external factor – external financial support potentially available for the organization’s activities; (2) indicator of that factor – number of relevant government programs that provide funding, or amount of government funding available. If you decide to include indicators in your analysis, you should discuss this in the methodology section of your paper. Collectively, the different methods you utilize should provide rich data for the assignment.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT YOU GROUND YOUR WORK IN THE ACADEMIC LITERATURE TO INFORM YOUR DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS, AS WELL AS TO PROVIDE A BROAD CONTEXT.

Expected paper contents:

It is strongly recommended that you think about your final paper while working on your Initial Submission. The requirements for the initial submission should help you in doing this, but you will certainly need to start working on your Final Submission by mid-November, in order to develop a coherent, substantive and well-organized final paper.

Your Final Submission paper should be structured similar to a research paper. The difference will be that you are using your experience with an organization as a launching pad for the paper, rather than academic literature. Like any research paper, you will need to have an **introduction** that clearly lays out your purpose, rationale, and the organization of your paper. Hence, in the introduction, be sure to clearly identify the scope of your work and provide your research questions or a statement of purpose.

Your **methodology** for the paper should be covered in a separate section following the introduction. The discussion of methodology should describe the different methods used to obtain your data. You should also discuss any limitations to your methods or sources used, as well as any problems encountered (e.g., not being able to access certain key documents from your placement organization).

Your paper must use **headings and sub-headings** to organize your ideas and discussion. Your paper must use citations in the text, and all assertions should be clearly supported by evidence from the literature, other sources used, or your own personal observations. Your goal for this paper should be **zero grammatical and spelling errors**. Your work should be **clear and concise**, with sentences that are **free of jargon and well-structured**.

Your paper should include a **standard reference list**, but **not** an annotated bibliography (the annotated bibliography is only needed for the Initial Submission).

This assignment is worth 45% of your final grade. Your paper will be **evaluated based on the following criteria:**

- how comprehensively you've addressed the stated requirements
- the quality of information and explanation provided
- the relevance and quality of the research you have undertaken
- the quality of the analysis and arguments you have provided
- use of academic and other sources in the discussion
- demonstration of independent/critical thinking
- organization of the paper
- writing mechanics and style
- the overall effectiveness of your assignment

B. WORK PLACEMENT EVALUATION

Due Date: Wednesday Dec 8, 2021 (by 11:59 PM Toronto time)

Value: 10% of final grade; late penalty 3% per day, including weekends

Suggested Length: 800 words (involves filling out an evaluation form that you will be sent and which will be posted on the course website)

Submission: Upload your completed form as a Word document to the course website (no PDF files please)

The purpose of the Work Placement Evaluation assignment is for you to **reflect upon the work placement experience itself** – what the work experience was like and why. You will likely find that your reflections and analysis of the work placement experience informs your analysis in the Making a Difference assignment and vice-versa. In other words, your own experience in the work placement may reflect one or more internal or external factors that facilitate or hinder the effectiveness of your organization. For example, if you had some challenges with communication with your work placement supervisor and/or colleagues, you may find that poor communication among staff in the organization is a significant internal factor that is hindering the effectiveness of the organization.

The Work Placement Evaluation will be posted on the course website. (Note: all of the assignment guidance is included in the evaluation form, and should be followed)

Marking Criteria for the Work Placement Evaluation

Writing Style: The reader is able to understand the information presented. Your writing is free of ambiguity, spelling and grammatical errors.

Organization and Structure: Not applicable for this assignment as you will be filling out a form.

Information and Analysis: Information is presented in specific and exact terms. Your reflection integrates evidence from your work placement experience, identifies themes or patterns, and draws meaningful conclusions based on your evidence. **Your assignment demonstrates thoughtfulness and thoroughness.**

C. PARTICIPATION

Percent of Course Mark: 15%

While most of your time will be devoted to your work placement, the online class meetings are an important part of the course and a great way for you to share your placement experiences with the class and to find out about the work placements of other students. The classes will be used also to cover

logistical matters related to your placements and to discuss the course assignments in detail. The participation component of the course is based on: **(a) online attendance; (b) general participation in class discussions; and (c) short, informal oral presentations by each student in class.** General participation refers to your contribution to the presentation part of the classes in the form of comments, views and ideas in response to other students or the instructor/placement coordinator. For the oral presentations, no audio-visual materials are required. Regarding the student presentations at the second, third and fourth meetings, it is expected that all students will prepare in advance for their presentations (e.g., have made notes or bullet points as a basis for the presentation). As noted in the Assignments and Grading Scheme on p. 5, two hours should be spent on class presentation preparation. The **preparation in advance is essential** to make the most of your allotted presentation time in class and also ensure that you stay within the time limit. Following each presentation, we will take a few minutes for comments from other students or the instructor/placement coordinator. See the schedule below for the specific requirements for student presentations.

IMPORTANT NOTE RE: ATTENDING MEETING TIMES FOR YOUR ASSIGNED GROUP:

Please note that, following the initial online class on Sep 9 for all students, students are to attend the meeting times for their assigned group for the second, third and fourth classes. It will not be possible for students to switch to different meetings times due to the large number of students in the class this year – the reason being that, if some students were to come to different meeting times, there might not be sufficient time for all students to do their presentations or for discussion of the assignments.

IF YOU MISS A CLASS DUE TO SICKNESS OR OTHER EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:

In the event of sickness or other extenuating circumstances that prevent you from attending a meeting time for your group, students are required to **submit an Absence Declaration online** via ACORN and inform Dave Sider right away of their absence, in order to be given accommodation. **No U of T medical form or other documentation is required.**

Students are asked to follow up with Dave Sider to arrange to do their presentations with him outside of class. Make-up presentations should take place within one week of the missed class, unless circumstances do not permit this.

In the case of students who miss classes, but do not submit an Absence Declaration online via ACORN and inform Dave Sider right away of their absence, they will not receive participation marks for the missed classes.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS WHO DID A SUMMER WORK PLACEMENT:

Thursday Sep 9 class: Each student will make a **1-minute** presentation focusing on:

- i) A brief introduction to their placement organization
- ii) The nature of their activities undertaken during the work placement
- iii) Any problems that may have arisen and how these were addressed

Thursday Sep 30 class: Each student will make a **2-minute presentation** consisting of:

- i) Their initial ideas about one important internal factor and one important external factor to examine in the Making a Difference assignment and brief description of those factors
- ii) Reflections on why (or how) those factors are particularly relevant or significant to their placement organization

Thursday Oct 28 class: Each student will make a **2-minute presentation** devoted to:

- i) A short description of two academic sources that they intend to use for the Making a Difference assignment (sources can be from the list of examples of academic sources posted on the course website or those found independently or a combination of both)
- ii) Reflections on how those sources (i.e., the key ideas, themes, theories or perspectives from those sources) relate to, or might help explain, their placement organization and/or the context in which the organization operates (i.e., the environmental field or society more generally)

Thursday Nov 18 class: Each student will make a **2-minute presentation** covering:

- i) Two examples of interconnections between their factors and explanation of how or why these interconnections are of consequence, e.g., an interconnection between two internal factors, and an interconnection between an internal factor and an external factor.

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS DOING A FALL WORK PLACEMENT:

Thursday Sep 9 class: Each student will make a **1-minute presentation** focusing on:

- i) A brief introduction to their placement organization
- ii) The nature of their current/anticipated work in the work placement
- iii) What they hope to get out of the work placement experience

Thursday Oct 7 class: Each student will make a **2-minute presentation** covering:

- i) A brief update on their current/future work in the work placement, including any problems that may have arisen and how these were/are being addressed
- ii) Their initial ideas about one important internal factor and one important external factor to examine in the Making a Difference assignment and brief description of those factors
- iii) Reflections on why (or how) those factors are particularly relevant or significant to their placement organization

Thursday Nov 4 class: Each student will make a **2-minute presentation** explaining:

- i) A brief update on their current/future work in the work placement, including any issues that may have arisen and how these were/are being addressed
- ii) A short description of two academic sources that they intend to use for the Making a Difference assignment (sources can be from the list of examples of academic sources posted on the course website or those found independently or a combination of both)
- iii) Reflections on how those sources (i.e., the key ideas, themes, theories or perspectives from those sources) relate to, or might help explain, their placement organization and/or the context in which the organization operates (i.e., the environmental field or society more generally)

Thursday Nov 25 class: Each student will make a **2-minute presentation** providing:

- i) A brief update on their current/future work in the work placement, including any problems that may have arisen and how these were/are being addressed
- ii) Two examples of interconnections between their factors and explanation of how or why these interconnections are of consequence, e.g., an interconnection between two internal factors, and an interconnection between an internal factor and an external factor

You need to be disciplined in sticking to the time allocated for these presentations, to allow for other students to comment and to permit those at the end to have as much time as those at the beginning.
Marks will be deducted for those taking too long.

It is essential for the third and fourth classes, in the context of your Making a Difference Assignments, that you focus on the analytical/theoretical lessons from your placements, rather than just provide anecdotal remarks, though these are interesting and entertaining. For example, are you

learning about what strategies are more or less successful at your organization, and how do these compare with what works at other kinds of organizations (the latter might be raised in a comment by another class member)? Are certain kinds of leadership, collaboration and/or outreach particularly effective? Do you see untapped opportunities for your organization, or areas of weakness that they could strengthen? How do their goals and mission fit in with the current priorities of the other groups that students are working with (a possibility for comments from other class members)? Of course you won't have time to report on all of these issues; just choose the ones which you feel are most pertinent and striking.

WORK PLAN SUPPLEMENTAL EXERCISE

To assist you in managing your work placement responsibilities and to get the most out of the work placement experience, you may want to take some time to undertake an optional exercise in developing a Work Placement Plan, which involves a detailed breakdown of how you will carry out your work. This exercise is derived from an assignment that was required when ENV 440H was a full course. For detailed information on this exercise, see the file posted on the course website under Pages. While this exercise is optional and no marks are given, students are encouraged to take the time to complete it.