

**ENVR 3900**  
**Professional Development in the Environmental Sectors 2 (Cr Hrs. 1.5)**  
**Fall 2017/Winter 2018**

**Instructor**

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**Course Description**

One of the many challenges you face after graduation is the task of obtaining that first 'real' career position. To achieve this end goal you will very likely need to learn the art of networking, participating in interviews and marketing yourself to highlight your skills relevant to the demands of the occupation.

*ENVR 3900 Professional Development in the Environmental Sectors 2 (1.5)* is designed to facilitate these efforts and in particular:

- advance your practical hands-on experiences relating to your professional interests;
- enhance your exposure to networking in the professional community;
- enhance your interview skills through mock interview with experts; and
- assist you in identifying the most relevant skills demanded in your chosen profession through review of professional certification standards and national occupational competencies.

In this course, students complete several components over the year that forms the foundation of their professional portfolio. Students learn specifics about their profession through investigations of certification options, and through this process, will be able to detail and communicate their competencies to prospective employers.

**Course Deliverables:**

**Professional (Electronic) Career Portfolio (40%)**

Revisions to Resume – Due October 30, 2017

Draft Portfolio – Due January 11, 2018

Final Portfolio – Due April 6, 2018

**Project and Course Participation Summary (30%)**

Contained within the Electronic Career Portfolio (Due April 6, 2018)

*Any mandatory course seminars or workshops will be held on Mondays 5:30 to 8:30. Students will be notified two weeks in advance of the session.*

**Professional Mock Interview (10%) – Schedule interview on Doodle Survey (Winter, 2018)**

Doodle survey will be made available in early January, 2018

Interviews in January, 2018

**Professional Informational Interview (10%)**

Interview Summary due April 6, 2018

**Progress Meetings with Instructor (10%)**

## **Academic Dishonesty:**

Students should acquaint themselves with the University's policy on plagiarism and cheating (see University of Manitoba General Calendar). Copying another student's assignment and submission of the same material for two or more courses is plagiarism. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are prohibited. The full definition of plagiarism and the possible penalties associated with it are outlined in the General Calendar. If your submitted assignment contains material you have copied from another source (e.g. from a textbook, web page, or from the published literature) you must give proper credit to that source.

**Note that the Voluntary Withdrawal date for this course is March 16, 2018.**

## **Cooperative Education UM Learn Site ([www.umanitoba.ca/umlearn](http://www.umanitoba.ca/umlearn))**

This course relies heavily on the Cooperative Education Option UM Learn site. At this site you will find a folder under the "Content" tab specific to the ENVR 3900 course. This includes support documentation to assignments, links to professional organizations and events, as well as drop boxes where assignments are to be submitted. Ensure that you have access to the site and that you are frequenting the site often to keep abreast of current opportunities.

### **I. Professional (Electronic) Career Portfolio – Developing Your Brand**

During the upcoming academic year, you will gain further experiences that you need to showcase in your skills assessment. In addition, you will make improvements to your resume, your cover letter, and you will have developed technical reports that pertain to your Coop placement. You are required to organize these materials in your professional portfolio. The portfolio is intended to assist you with your career exploration efforts, to strengthen your applications to employers and to assist you in conceptualizing your strengths and achievements. It not only showcases your achievements during your university career but will further provide evidence of your major skill areas and competencies building toward professional certification.

The Professional Portfolio is a continuation of the website first developed by you in ENVR 2900. Instead of designing the general structure of the portfolio, your job now turns to content and finding the justifications to reinforce your skills and abilities. Originality and design weigh heavily in the assignment grade. Surf the web and consult frequently with the course instructor to identify key components of the professional portfolio that you would like to highlight in your individual website. There is no one right way to develop a professional portfolio but there are key elements that should be included: condensed professional summary; resume or curriculum vitae; skill profiles (such as environmental monitoring, administrative and policy; environmental assessment; waste management; environmental health and safety; wildlife and fisheries management; conservation of biological diversity; environmental stewardship; etc., as well as communication abilities as demonstrated through technical reports; employer and professional feedback).

You will be evaluated during the course through your progress in developing and improving your career portfolio. Students should submit their URL for their career portfolio periodically throughout the course, and especially by the following dates:

Draft January 11, 2018

Final April 6, 2018

**Key components of the grade for the Career Portfolio are:**

**Professional Bio (Homepage)** that describes your most relevant achievements and skills concisely and also encourages the reader to explore your webpage.

**Resume** – your resume must reflect your most recent experiences and knowledge and relate to everything you have learned about skills and competencies required in your profession. Remember, it should reflect the competencies and skill themes that you identify as most relevant to your future interests.

**Individual Pages (critical to the course)** – you should develop pages related to professional activities in which you are involved. For example, you might be completing an Honours thesis whereby you can describe the research, relevant links to government agencies or researchers on campus, your proposal, progress report and final thesis report/presentation. You might have been involved in a substantial project in your Coop workterm or work with a unique organization. Alternatively, you might describe your advanced knowledge in field training by describing all of your experiences in one page. The reader should gain a sense of major areas of competence by the way you organize your webpage (e.g., field readiness, analytical and laboratory proficiencies, quantitative and computer applications such as GIS, statistical software, regulations and legislation analysis, environmental assessment, etc.). If you want to impress the reader with a particular area of knowledge or skill, then it deserves a page in your portfolio. Build your themes of relevant skills from your knowledge of the certification research such as ECO Canada's National Occupational Standards or The Wildlife Society's Certification application, for example.

**Creativity and Organization** – the website should be well-organized and easy to follow. You should use images and links to add depth and interest to the site. This is a significant component of the final grade. Links must work!

## **II. Project and Course Participation Summary**

Networking forms a skill in of itself for pending graduates. This can often be a daunting process as students may not have experienced effective networking during their undergraduate degrees.

In this course, you are encouraged and rewarded to “get out there” and make connections. This can be done through any one of a number of opportunities: participating in field studies, attending conferences, workshops, seminars where guest speakers provide their insight on their area of expertise; informational interviews where students contact practitioners and obtain face-to-face feedback about their career interests, training requirements and so on.

Events and activities are emailed out to students in ENVR 3900 throughout the term. **Only your University email account will be used. Ensure you frequently monitor for these from Jo and myself.**

Registration fees are offset by the Cooperative Education Option. Often, the program is able to pay full registration fees but this may vary depending on the number of students attending. Note - If there is an expense associated with your registration and you cannot attend, you **MUST** notify the Coop Office as soon as possible so that we can attempt to find an alternate student or cancel your registration.

**You are required to provide a summary of your activities within your professional portfolio at the end of the academic term. The summary should highlight the knowledge you acquired from participation in the event and/or specific skills acquired. This will be a useful reference to you in the future when you**

**are asked to explain your experiences and current knowledge while participating in interviews and other networking events.**

### **MEIA Coop Career Expo Winter, 2018**

Everyone in ENVR 3900 has the opportunity to assist in delivering the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Manitoba Environmental Industries Association Career Expo hosted by the Manitoba Environmental Industries Association, Cooperative Education Option and the C.H.R. Faculty of Environment, Earth, and Resources. It is an ambitious project and therefore we need everyone to assist in the day of the event. Details to follow.

**Environmental Professional Organizations – A component of networking and course participation marks may include your work and involvement with an organization. There are a number to consider and only a few are highlighted here:**

- A: Manitoba Environmental Industries Student Chapter – Student registration fee will be covered if you attend four events (<https://www.meia.mb.ca>)**  
Relevant for students in Environmental Sciences (resource based focus areas) and Environmental Studies
  
- B: The Wildlife Society – (<http://wildlife.org/manitoba/home>)**  
Relevant for students considering focus areas in biodiversity and conservation, geomatics, and ecosystem management.
  
- C: Canadian Meteorological and Oceanography Society – Atmospheric Science students should become members and also join the Weather Club offered at UofM.**
  
- D: Canada Green Building Council**  
(<http://www.cagbc.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Chapters/Manitoba/Membership/default.htm>)

If you would like to be reimbursed for your membership fee, you MUST demonstrate that you have been active in the organization through volunteering, attendance at conferences/workshops, seminar attendance etc. Use the form available on UM Learn to have your attendance recorded by the registration representative.

### **III. Professional Mock Interview**

Students will have opportunity to participate in a mock interview in which you will receive constructive feedback about your strengths in interview and areas where you can make improvements. A panel of two or more professionals will ask key questions that pertain to past experience, skill assessment, project management, and interpersonal skills that form the basis of evaluation and feedback. The interview will be conducted in a similar style to a formal “real” interview and so students should prepare by reviewing a mock job description, dress accordingly and prepare their resume as they would be expected to do in reality.

Students will be given opportunity to pick a job posting from several provided in key environmental sectors involving ecological monitoring, corporate sustainability, environmental communication, natural resource management, environmental toxicology, etc. These postings will be available early in the Winter term. Students will access the Doodle poll to schedule their interview date and time.

### **IV. Professional Informational Interview**

Students are required to conduct at least two informational interviews targeting representatives in research, government, industry, and/or ENGOs who can speak to the aspects of current trends and

challenges in the profession, specific training and wisdom s/he can share in building your network, skills and overall preparedness to enter the career upon graduation. Your “go-to” academic advisor or past employer will not suffice for this exercise. You are expected to research and connect with new professionals whom you’ve not crossed paths with in previous years.

Students are required to provide a minimum one-page summary at the end of the term describing each of the interviews and overall outcomes for their individual professional development. Students MUST interview at least one professional from the professional community external to the University of Manitoba!

#### **V. Instructor and Administrative Staff Meetings**

Students in the ENVR 3900 course and/or Coop are expected to periodically meet with the administrative staff as well as the ENVR 3900 course instructor. The objective of these meetings is to relay interests and goals in Coop, career development and overall progression in the course. While students are awarded 10% toward their final grade to frequent the office, you will not be prompted to make these appointments throughout the term. This is your responsibility.

#### **VI. Professional Certification**

Professional certification is becoming increasingly sought after by environmental sectors. Through professional certification, graduates and industry professionals:

- establish credibility at a national level
- recognize and verify environmental skills and knowledge
- enhance marketability and mobility
- gain access to a growing network of environmental practitioners

To obtain certification upon graduation, you must formally submit an application to a certifying body. For environment professions in environmental science, environmental studies and physical geography, this certification often comes from the Canadian Environmental Careers Approvals Board (CECAB; <http://www.cecab.org/public/default.aspx>), and/or The Wildlife Society (<http://www.wildlife.org/>). Successful applicants are awarded credentials including the Environmental Professional (EP), and Certified Wildlife Biologist (CWB). Most recently, the Canadian Meteorological Oceanographic Society of Canada (<http://www.cmos.ca/about.html>) developed the Professional Meteorologist certification (P Met) in collaboration with CECAB.

Understanding the requirements for certification can be challenging. In support of this, we will be hosting a workshop introducing the importance of certification, presenting wide ranging certification formats including CECAB self evaluation as well as the Wildlife Society academic review. Students will become familiar with certification options and learn more about the standards or professional requirements that build the structure of the program. Considerable time will be spent in reviewing the steps in the certification process and providing opportunity for students to complete the application during the workshop.

Undertaking certification also provides insight into the thematic areas of competencies and their rankings by employers and managers. This helps to structure marketing tools such as resumes, portfolios, business profiles and business cards.

Workshop Date – a Doodle survey will be made available in late December/early January. The workshop is planned for winter term, 2018. The information you obtain from your investigation of certification options should be built into your portfolio and resume.