

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE, MINOR

Liberal Arts (Code 489-401)

Advisors: J. Boulter, K Mumford, J. Phillips (Chemistry), C. Pierce, D. Soll.

The Environment, Society, and Culture minor enables students to probe the human dimensions of environmental issues through a variety of courses crossing many disciplines. Built around a core science requirement, the program is rounded out with courses in ethics, philosophy/religion, history, sociology, geography, and economics—courses that examine social conflict and the policies that engender and address conflict. This minor is open to all students; while perhaps best suited to students majoring in the humanities and social sciences, it is designed to be flexible so that students can tailor it to meet their particular needs and interests.

In this minor, students gain the ability to answer critical environmental challenges ranging from air quality, food production safety and distribution, loss of critical habitats, issues related to urban growth, climate change, water pollution, and the spread and prevalence of disease, while applying principles or environmental justice, civic engagement and strategic policy approaches. These solutions require students to integrate and apply concepts and tools of multiple disciplines from across the university and into the community.

Contemplation of the environment raises many questions, some of them clearly scientific in nature: “What chemical is polluting the river? What are that chemical’s toxicological properties, and how will they affect the ecosystem?” Some of the questions raised transcend the purely scientific perspective: “Who is dumping that chemical in the river? Why did they make that choice—was profit involved? Mere carelessness?” Or “Do any societal needs drive demands for this chemical? Can those needs be met in alternative ways?” And “Who lives by the river, what socio-economic conditions brought them there and how are they affected by this chemical’s presence?” Or again—“What laws pertain to the river? To whom does the river ‘belong?’” Such questions, equally important and as intellectually challenging as the purely scientific inquiries, in fact provide a larger context for the science. To ask this full range of questions is to think ecologically—that is, with an awareness of the entire mechanism—about environmental issues.

This minor requires a minimum of 24 credits, of which at least 12 credits must be from courses numbered 300 and higher.

Select at least one gateway course from the following:

BIOL 180 Environmental Biology and Conservation

CHEM 127 Chemistry and Climate

GEOG 178 Conservation of the Environment

ENPH 110 Introduction to Environmental Health

ENPH 115 Global Environmental and Public Health

Select at least three of the following from the “Socio-cultural Perspectives” category:

ECON 268 Environmental Economics

ENV 310 Sustainable Cities

ENV 330 Waste & Society: Energy, Food, and Efficiency

ENV/GEOG 377 U.S. Environmental and Sustainability Policy

GEOG 369 Geography of Food

GEOG/ENV 378 International Environmental Problems and Policy

GEOG 445 Historical Geography

HIST/ENV 346 American Environmental History

SOC 301 Environmental Sociology

SOC 310 Principles of Demography

PHIL 320 Environmental Ethics

WMNS 375 Ecofeminism - Women's Studies and Environmental Justice

Natural Science Focus Area: A two-course sequence in a natural science chosen from the following options:

BIOL 328 Conservation Biology¹

CHEM 115 Chemical Principles & CHEM 304 and Environmental Chemistry²

GEOG 115 Environmental Geology & GEOG 301 and Earth Resources
or GEOG 303 Water Resources

GEOG 104 The Physical Environment & GEOG 304 and Introduction to Geomorphology
or GEOG 302 Climatology

or GEOG 305 Environmental Hazards

Select additional courses selected from those listed above or from the options below to reach a total of 24 credits:

BIOL 329 Biological Field Experiences and Service-Learning Capstone

ENGL 415 Seminar in Science and Nature Writing

ENPH 441 Water and Wastewater

ENPH 445 Hazardous and Solid Waste Management

ENPH 450 Epidemiology

GEOG 270 Land Use Issues and Problems

GEOG 350 Soils and the Environment

GEOG 365 Tourism Geographies

GEOG 368 Geography Field Seminar

GEOG/AIS 322 Native Geographies

MATH 108 Earth Algebra

PHYS 205 Physics of Renewable Energy

SOC 314 Social Class and Inequality

¹ Must take either GEOG 178 or BIOL 180 as the gateway course as a prerequisite to BIOL 328.

² CHEM 103 and CHEM 104 may be used in lieu of CHEM 115 but only six credits may be counted toward the minor from these courses.

Note 1: Credits from other courses may be applied as electives, pending advisor and college approval, when they focus specifically on environmental topics. Examples of such courses include: CHEM 100, Hnrs courses, IDIS 151-IDIS 155, IDIS 351-IDIS 355, NRS 255, and WRIT 114, WRIT 116, WRIT 118, WRIT 120. Also, various departments may offer special topics courses, directed studies courses, independent study courses, and/or internships that may also apply.

Note 2: For students pursuing a standard major in Geography, a maximum of 12 credits from the major may be applied to this minor.