Environmental Studies

Master of Science in Environmental Sciences (on-campus and online)
Master of Arts in Environmental Studies
Sustainable Development and Policy Concentration (on-campus and online)
Environmental Planning and Management Concentration (on-campus and online)
Environmental Humanities Concentration

Graduate Certificate
Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies
Undergraduate Minor in Environmental Studies

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Departmental Goals and Objectives

The mission of the Department of Environmental Studies is to provide students with the advanced interdisciplinary training necessary for addressing environmental problems. Graduates of the department are prepared for diverse careers in environmental fields.

The principal emphasis in the M.S. and the M.A. degrees is on professional development. The graduate degrees are designed for those who intend to enter the job market for the first time, as well as for mid-career professionals. Faculty work with each student to create a specialized educational plan (developed before or during the first semester of study). Students should consult advising documents for their chosen degree and concentrations.

• Master of Science in Environmental Sciences
• Master of Arts in Environmental Studies

Advising

All new on-ground students must participate in a graduate student orientation before their first semester. New online students must complete a similar orientation online. In conjunction with his or her academic advisor, each student must prepare an educational plan before or during completion of the first semester of study. The educational plan is submitted to the department chair for final approval.

Grading Policy

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a scale during their course of study. A maximum of four hours of C (2.0) grades (a grade of C- or lower will not be acceptable) is applicable to an ENS degree, provided each hour of C is balanced by an hour of A (a grade of A- will not be accepted), and an approved Student Petition form is on file in the Office of Records and Registration. Failure to maintain an overall graduate grade point average of 3.0 or higher will result in initiation of academic dismissal by the Department of Environmental Studies. Courses that are offered on a letter-grade basis must be taken for a letter grade.

NOTE: Students also should refer to the campus policy on Grades Acceptable Toward Master’s Degrees section of this catalog.

Master’s Closure

M.S. and M.A. candidates, with the assistance of their advisors and graduate committees, are required to complete one of the three available closure options. For some ENS students, the culminating experience of graduate-level work is a formal thesis. Other ENS students develop a substantial and carefully-designed graduate project, such as an interpretive plan for a nature center, an exhibit for a museum or visitors’ center, a film or multimedia show with supportive materials, or a finished and well-researched draft of environmental legislation or policy. ENS students are required to present and defend their thesis/graduate project proposal and completed thesis/graduate project before the graduate committee. The third closure option is the Capstone Closure course (see below for details).

Students enroll for thesis or graduate project credit hours with the approval of their thesis/graduate project advisor. Students must enroll in a total of four credit hours of closure; however, they may accrue the total in increments. Once students begin taking closure hours, they are required by campus policy to be enrolled in at least one closure hour per regular semester (fall and spring) until the four-credit hour closure requirement is completed. If the closure exercise is not completed by the time four credit hours have been completed, students must register for zero credit hours (one billable hour) of ENS 511, ENS 529, or ENS 557 (as applicable) in all subsequent regular semesters (fall and spring) until the closure exercise is completed.

M.A. candidates also have the option of completing the Capstone Closure course (ENS 550). This course requires instructor permission and prior approval by the faculty of the Internship Plan; the Internship Plan must be approved at least four weeks before the end of the previous semester (excluding summer semesters). Students who fail ENS 550 will receive a grade of No-Credit and will be required to take ENS 550 again within one year. Students who fail ENS 550 twice will not be permitted to complete their ENS graduate degree as the ENS department will seek to have admission to the ENS graduate degree program revoked. Students receiving credit for ENS 550 during the second attempt will have the previous grade of No-Credit for ENS 550 changed to an R for repeat. If students are unable to successfully complete the requirements of ENS 550 due to extenuating circumstances (at discretion of ENS 550 instructor), they will receive a DFR (deferred grade) and must enroll in ENS 557 each regular semester (fall and spring) until the course requirements are completed satisfactorily. Students must enroll in ENS 557 with the same instructor from whom they take ENS 550.

Student’s Educational Plan

Development of an educational plan is a key activity through which student and academic advisor identify course work appropriate for the student’s background, aspirations, and needs. The plan indicates the courses for the chosen degree and concentration, and is developed prior to or during the first semester of study. Upon completion of the plan the advisor and Department chair review the plan. Minor amendments (such as electives) may be made during the course of study with approval of the academic advisor; significant changes in direction (changes between concentrations or degrees) also require the approval of the Department chair and necessitate a Change of Curriculum form. Variances from Department requirements must be indicated and approved through the Student Petition form process.
Online Master’s Program

Students interested in the MS in Environmental Sciences or MA in Environmental Studies can obtain their degree online with the same curricula as the on-campus programs. Students must apply specifically for the online degree. Applicants to the MS program must have the approval of a research advisor before their application will be considered.

• Graduate Certificate in Geographic Information Systems