

Environmental Studies

Contact Information

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Office Location: MS PAC 350

- Bachelor of Arts
- Minors (2)

Admissions

Students interested in pursuing Department Honors must work individually with faculty to identify a feasible R/S/C work. An application must be completed and approved by the faculty supervisor and department chair; a copy of the application will be retained by the department and by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Applications must be approved by 15 March of the spring before the Undergraduate Capstone is taken. This allows at least one year to complete the research, including time to seek funding (if necessary) and prepare for presentation at a symposium or publication. Send an email to ens@uis.edu to request an application for the Departmental Honors program.

Curricular Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies at UIS includes a multi-disciplinary curriculum with interdisciplinary learning goals, incorporating the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities.

To earn their degree, students must complete a minimum of 34 credit hours, which include four core courses and seven elective courses. The four required core courses are ENS 251 Introduction to Environmental Sciences, ENS 271 Introduction to Sustainability, ENS 451 Undergraduate Capstone, and ENS 476 Environmental Ethics.

Because this is an interdisciplinary major, students must select at least two elective courses from each of three thematic areas: Environmental Policy/Law/Planning, Environmental Sciences, and Environmental Social Sciences/Humanities. At least four elective courses must be at the 400 level; two of the remaining electives must be either 300 or 400 level. Students must earn at least a C in the four required courses and a C average in the elective courses. Students are expected to meet with an ENS advisor before beginning the major.

Departmental Goals and Objectives

The mission of the Department of Environmental Studies is to provide students with the advanced interdisciplinary training necessary for solving environmental problems. Graduates of the department are prepared for diverse careers in the environmental field. Students will acquire knowledge and skills based on three broad objectives:

1. Competency in scientific concepts when studying the environment
2. Capacity to critically examine environmental issues and apply contributions from the natural sciences, social sciences, and the

humanities for understanding and resolution of environmental issues and concerns

3. Ability to demonstrate and integrate knowledge of natural resource policy, regulations, and the current issues in natural resource management

Honors Requirements

Students pursuing Departmental Honors in ENS will complete the same Undergraduate Capstone closure course as other majors. However, the Capstone project must be the student's research/scholarly/creative (R/S/C) work, which will necessarily be more substantive than the projects pursued by students not seeking Departmental Honors. Students must enroll in at least 1 credit of ENS 425 Undergraduate Research to document their R/S/C work.

Topics encompassed by environmental studies are broad, and student R/S/C works will similarly be diverse. Student R/S/C work might take the form of *discovery*, *integration*, *application*, or *teaching*. (Please refer to Ernest Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* for detailed discussion of these terms.) Students must present their results/products at a professional symposium or in a refereed medium before graduation. Students will work directly with ENS faculty who will serve as the primary supervisor; if appropriate, other ENS faculty can assist. Faculty supervisors will

- Work collaboratively with students in developing and refining the R/S/C work
- Advise the student regarding resources and/or course work needed to accomplish the R/S/C work
- Advise the student regarding the Institutional Review Board, Institutional Committee for the Care and Use of Animals, and/or other units providing research oversight, if necessary for the particular R/S/C work
- Read and critique the written component of the R/S/C work
- Help the student find a forum for dissemination of the results; this may take the form of a professional symposium or publication in a refereed medium

There are no a priori length minima or maxima for the written document that must be approved by the faculty supervisor; instead the length should be dictated by the topic. Students should follow APA style unless there is a compelling reason the faculty supervisor requests another style (such as writing in the style of a particular journal where the manuscript will be submitted for publication). The final written document must be approved by the faculty supervisor and the Undergraduate Capstone instructor; in the case where those positions are held by the same person, the department chair or designee will be the second approver. This document must be approved before the week of final exams in the semester during which the student will graduate.

With the approval of the faculty supervisor, students may submit a Student Petition to apply up to four credits of ENS 425 Undergraduate Research based on their R/S/C work toward electives required for the major in Environmental Studies. Those credits can be applied toward the total required number of upper division hours for a degree from UIS. With an approved Individualized Course Title form, ENS 425 can be listed on the student's transcripts

with a more descriptive name representing the specific work being done.

To receive Departmental Honors students must graduate with a cumulative undergraduate, UIS, and ENS GPA of at least 3.5. Students may apply to the Department Honors program for provisional admission provided that each of those GPAs are at least 3.25 and it is mathematically possible to bring them to 3.5 by the time of graduation.

Undergraduate Departmental Honors in Environmental Studies

Departmental Honors is distinguished from “Undergraduate Honors” which is awarded at graduation for designated GPAs and are labeled *summa cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and *cum laude*. Departmental Honors is also separate from the Capital Scholars Honors Program, which has its own set of requirements. Each academic program may define the requirements for Departmental Honors involving three elements:

- Course work or closure requirements
- Independent, high-quality research/scholarly/creative work
- Specific grade point average requirements

The Bachelor's Degree

To earn a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies, students must complete four core courses and seven elective courses (22 credit hours of electives) with a minimum of two courses from each focus area. Of the elective courses, a minimum of four must be at the 400 level; two of the remaining electives must be either 300 or 400 level. In addition, students must complete all general education requirements in the UIS undergraduate curriculum. Up to nine semester hours of lower-division courses may be transferred from an accredited institution; the decision to accept transferred hours will be made on an individual basis by the department. Students are expected to meet with an ENS advisor soon after declaring the major.

Program Learning Outcomes

Students earning a bachelor's degree in environmental studies will:

1. Develop basic interdisciplinary literacy in the natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities as they contribute to an understanding of environmental issues
2. Critically analyze environmental problems by integrating evidence from multiple sources.
3. Critically evaluate the ethical implications of environmental actions and engage in responsible decision-making
4. Identify key stakeholders involved in environmental issues and understand their perspectives, values, and objectives
5. Acquire knowledge of the historical roots of environmental problems and the impact of human and natural activities over time
6. Skillfully address environmental issues through appropriate policies and regulations

7. Work collaboratively and productively in interdisciplinary professional settings with people from diverse backgrounds with different types of expertise
8. Communicate effectively and persuasively (orally, visually, and in writing) and adjust communication styles to fit the intended audience
9. Develop, implement, manage and evaluate short-and long-term and solutions to environmental problems

Requirements

Core Course Requirements

ENS 251	Introduction to Environmental Sciences	3
ENS 271	Introduction to Sustainability	3
ENS 451	Undergraduate Capstone	3
ENS 476	Environmental Ethics ¹	3-4

List of thematic categories and appropriate electives ²

The 100- to 300-level elective courses listed below are each three credit hours. Undergraduate students enrolling in 400-level courses listed as “three or four hours” must enroll in the three-credit hour section. 400-level courses counted toward an undergraduate degree cannot be taken again and counted for credit toward a graduate degree.

Environmental Policy/Law/Planning

ENS 304	Mapping our Physical and Social World
ENS 401	ECCE: Environmental Justice: Science, Policy, and Activism
ENS 403	Transportation: Problems and Planning Procedures
ENS 404	Fundamentals of Geographic Information Systems
ENS 419	Environmental Law
ENS 449	Agricultural Politics & Policy
ENS 455	Introduction to Environmental Consulting
ENS 483	Environmental Policies: National Environmental Policy Act

ENS 485	Environmental Policies: Water Quality
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Environmental Social Sciences/Humanities

ENS 101	Women and the Environment
ENS 311	ECCE: Global Change in Local Places
ENS 411	ECCE: Introduction to Environmental Education
ENS 418/ HIS 438	ECCE: American Environmental History
ENS 421	Environmental Economics
ENS/SOA 422	Environmental Sociology
ENS 448	Sustainable Food Systems
ENS 475	Political Ecology AKA The Political Life of Trees, Trash, & Turtles
ENS 488	China's Environment and the World

Environmental Sciences

BIO 371	Principles Of Ecology
ENS 151	Earth Science
ENS 262	Environmental Physical Geography
ENS 405	Fundamentals of Remote Sensing

ENS 425	Ecological Issues
ENS/BIO 444	Aquatic Ecology
ENS/BIO 445	Biology Of Water Pollution
ENS 447/ CHE 431	Environmental Chemistry
ENS 463	Our Changing Climate
ENS 464	Paleoecology
ENS 465	Water Resources and Society
ENS 468	Environmental Geology
ENS 472	Urban Environments
ENS 477	Renewable Energy
Total Hours	34

¹ Students must enroll in the three-credit hour section.

² Students may count up to four hours of ENS 440 Topics in Environmental Studies with approval of a Student Petition.

The department offers a BA/MS program in Environmental Studies. Students who complete a BA in Environmental Studies at UIS with a minimum GPA of 3.5 in ENS courses and a GPA of 3.5 in cumulative undergraduate course work can be accepted into our MS in Environmental Studies with 8 credit hours of course work waived. This requires approval by the Department Chair, College Dean, and campus Associate Vice Chancellor for Graduate Education.

Environmental Studies Minors

- Environmental Studies Minor
- Geographic Information Systems Minor