

Environmental Studies Program

2020 Fall Courses for First-Year Students

ENVS 3: Environment and Society

Time Period: E, Remote with Synchronous Components

The relationship between humans and the environment is mediated by the consumption of natural resources, the discharge of pollution and waste, and the transformation of landscapes and ecosystems. Unsustainable outcomes arise because individuals and organizations have incentives to undertake actions that degrade the environmental quality, often in the context of markets. As a result, achieving sustainability requires laws, public policies, social norms, and shared understandings that align individual action with collective well-being. This course analyzes the causes and solutions of environmental problems through the integration of concepts from a variety of social science disciplines. In addition, it explores the central role that ecology and ecosystem science play in understanding and responding to sustainability challenges.

Dist: SOC. Instructors: Howarth, Erbaugh

ENVS 17: Marine Policy

Time Period: D, Remote with Synchronous Components

People use the oceans for transportation, recreation, food, mineral wealth, waste disposal, military defense, and many other important things. This course explores the most significant human-ocean interactions known today from two perspectives: science and policy. From the scientific literature, students will learn about issues ranging from the physical effects of sea level rise to the biological impacts of pollution to the bioeconomic repercussions of overfishing. For each of the problems that are revealed by science, we will also critically evaluate relevant policy solutions to understand how institutional design can (or can't) enhance human interactions with the oceans. This includes insights into the politics surrounding oceans issues in the US and around the world.

Dist: SOC. Instructor: Webster.

ENVS 18/NAS 18: Indigenous Environmental Studies

Time Period: Asynchronous

In this course, we examine Indigenous worldviews, environmental values and everyday life through the lens of environmental issues facing Indigenous nations and communities. Our geographic focus is on North America and the Pacific, with limited examples from other places and peoples globally. Through course materials, discussions, and assignments, students gain exposure to varied Indigenous perspectives and Indigenous knowledges expressed and enacted by scholars, Elders, community people, political leaders, and activists. Key concepts in Indigenous environmental studies will be discussed including Indigenous rights and responsibilities, Indigenous environmental stewardship, energy and development, land-language linkages, tribal sovereignty and self-determination, empowerment and resurgence.

Dist: TMV. WCult: NW. Instructor: Reo

ENVS 20: Conservation of Biodiversity

Time Period: E, Remote with Synchronous Components

On a global scale we are witnessing an unprecedented decline in what has come to be called Biodiversity. Human population growth and increasing rates of material consumption and technological development have increased the rate and scale at which we impact populations of native animals and plants. One goal of the course will be to address the biological aspects of this issue. What is Biodiversity? How is Biodiversity distributed geographically and taxonomically? What does humankind do to cause animal and plant extinctions? Is there a Biodiversity crisis? What is the current rate of extinction and what is the natural extinction rate? What properties of individual species make them vulnerable to extinction? What are the major threats to Biodiversity? The second objective is to examine the social dimensions of Biodiversity. How do our cultural and political perceptions and institutions contribute to the loss of Biodiversity? What value is Biodiversity to humankind? What is being done to preserve Biodiversity in the realms of science, technology, and policy? These questions will be addressed through lecture material, course readings, and writing assignments.

[Please note: Most appropriate for first-year students who have taken AP Environmental Science.]

Dist: TAS. Instructor: Bolger

ENVS 60: Environmental Law

Time Period: Arrange, Remote with Synchronous Components

Environmental law and policy deals with the ways that human societies regulate the interaction of individuals, communities, businesses, and governments with environmental systems – both natural systems, such as forests, grazing lands, and marine ecosystems, and human-created systems such as the manufacturing industry, fossil fuel production and use, agriculture, and cities. While the focus of this course is environmental law, it is for anyone interested in learning about the foundations and practice of the Law in general, both nationally and internationally. Using the regulation of pollution, waste, land (private and public), and biodiversity as our models, we will cover how laws are made by courts (judicial opinions), legislatures (statutes), administrative agencies (regulations), and Presidents (executive orders). In addition, through assignments and class projects, we will cover the fundamentals of legal research, writing, and argument that are critical for the practice of law, as well as being necessary for anyone interested in the study of environmental law and policy. Most lectures will be available for online viewing, leaving more class time for discussions, mock legal proceedings, and other activities.

[Please note: Most appropriate for first-year students who have taken AP Environmental Science and have strong writing skills.] *Dist: SOC. Instructor: Jones*