Environmental Studies

Professors: Girdler, Hussen (Co-Directors)

The concentration in environmental studies is based upon the recognition that environmental and resource problems are not just biological, geological, economic, or political. Therefore, the concentration is structured as an interdisciplinary study by selecting appropriate courses from the natural and social sciences, as well as the humanities, in order to pool knowledge from across traditional disciplinary lines. This information is essential for an interdisciplinary assessment, analysis, and evaluation of environmental problems.

The Concentration in Environmental Studies

Number of Units

Six units are required.

Required Courses

One from each group is required of all concentrators:
BIOL 115 Environmental Science or BIOL 224 Ecology & Conservation with Lab  
CHEM 101 Chemistry and Society or CHEM 105 The Physical Earth or CHEM 120 Chemical Reactivity  
ECON 235 Environmental and Resource Economics  
(pre-requisite of ECON 101)*  
ENVS 490 Environmental Studies Senior Seminar

Electives

BIOL 115 Environmental Science (if not used above)  
BIOL 312 Population and Community Ecology with Lab  
BIOL 322 General Microbiology with Lab  
CHEM 105 The Physical Earth (if not used above)  
CHEM 240 Analytical Chemistry with Lab  
CHEM 420 Instrumental Analysis with Lab  
ECON 490 Senior Topic (if topic relates to env. economics)  
ENGL 151 RTW: Environments  
ENGL 217 World Indigenous Literature: The People and the Land  
HIST 212 American Environmental History  
HIST 217 History of Leisure and Recreation in America  
PHIL 108 Ecological Philosophy  
PHYS 105 Energy and the Environment  
SEMN 401 Energy Policy & Use Worldwide

*Additional special topics one-time course offerings may count as electives depending on content (e.g. ENGL, RELG); please discuss the suitability of these courses with Dr. Girdler or Dr. Hussen.

The concentration in environmental studies is open to students regardless of their majors and prepares students for graduate work and/or careers in a variety of areas including resource economics and management, city and regional planning, natural resource conservation, aquatic or terrestrial environments, environmental law, environmental education, environmental journalism, public administration, agribusiness, and food and population. For general advice and effective planning of their schedules, all students desiring this concentration are encouraged to see one of the directors as early as possible, preferably no later than the sophomore year.

Students interested in environmental studies are urged to keep this interest in mind when selecting a site for study abroad. If approved ahead of time by the co-directors, up to one course from study abroad can count toward the completion of the concentration. Moreover, pursuing these interests abroad emphasizes the important international dimensions of many
environmental issues while often permitting students to gain familiarity with some problems (and their possible solutions) in other countries. Courses from study abroad sites in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Kenya, and Thailand are particularly suitable.

Additional courses that may be relevant to students interested in this concentration include BIOL 232, 296; COMP 105, 110; ECON 240, 412; MATH 260, 360.

Environmental Studies courses

ENVS/ANSO 350 Political History of Environmental Thought
This course explores a partial (Western) history of how humans have understood themselves in relation to nature. To do so, this course relies on a landmark text in the field along with a series of primary texts, tracing the continuities and ruptures in thought during different historical periods have engaged with the idea of nature and the place of the human within it. Although, the course relies mostly on a broadly defined Western thought tradition in this course but students are encouraged to undertake research on other traditions and bring those into the classroom. The readings for this course are organized temporally, starting with the oldest.
Prerequisite: ANSO-103

ENVS/SEMN 401 Energy & Environmental Policy Worldwide
National patterns of energy use and approaches to environmental policy vary over a wide range around the World. An intelligent analysis of these divergent behaviors and their environmental and financial consequences requires input from the fields of Science, Political Science, and Economics, and is also informed by international experiences. Possible careers involving environmental science, engineering and politics/policy will be discussed.
Prerequisite: At least three courses in either natural science, economics, or political science, with a major in one preferred.

ENVS 490 Environmental Studies Senior Seminar
Examination and analysis of selected contemporary environmental and resource problems and issues from an interdisciplinary perspective. In addressing these issues, special attention is given to the application and integration of principles, theories, and analytical techniques introduced in the core courses. Topics covered in the seminar are likely to vary annually as new problems, policies, and solutions develop.
Prerequisite: Core courses plus senior standing, or permission.

ENVS 593 Senior Individualized Project
Each program or department sets its own requirements for Senior Individualized Projects done in that department, including the range of acceptable projects, the required background of students doing projects, the format of the SIP, and the expected scope and depth of projects. See the Kalamazoo Curriculum -> Curriculum Details and Policies section of the Academic Catalog for more details.
Prerequisite: Permission of department and SIP supervisor required.

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