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 or SEMN 408 Slow Farming: Resilient, Just, and Joyful Agriculture

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
POLS 295 Oil and Politics
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/BIOL 195 Science and Social Justice
Why does anyone become a scientist? What problems do you want to solve? This course is intended for first year students who are interested in exploring the STEM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and also want to empower their communities to address some of society's most vexing problems. We will take an interdisciplinary scientific approach to issues such as lead in pipes and paint, sinking coastal cities, contested genomes, and conflicts between technology and culture. At the same time we will necessarily confront intersecting ethical and social factors that set the context for these issues, such as race, gender, citizenship status, colonial history, and access to healthcare and education. No prior knowledge of any scientific discipline is required to be successful in this course, although we will be doing science. 
Note: You must co-enroll in the laboratory section of this course.

ENVS/ANSO 350 Political Histories of Western 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.
Note: Prerequisite: ANSO 103

ENVS/ANSO 365 Humans and Non-Humans
What does it mean to be human? What is the history of the notion of the human, and who or what has been excluded from it? What does it mean to study non-humans through a humanistic frame? How can we know non-human beings? What kinds of knowledges exist at the edges of the discourse on the human? This course will introduce students to these issues through a combination of readings that engage with the field known as new materialisms to consider the ways in which the study of humanity has been challenged by new modes of thinking about being, producing situated answers to these questions.

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.
Note: 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.
Note: 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.
Note: Prerequisite: Permission of department and SIP supervisor required.
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