

Environment and Society

The goal of the Environment and Society Program is to inspire and prepare students to become leaders in the quest for a sustainable world.

Since the turn of the 21st century, global scientific assessments have demonstrated that human activity is having far-reaching negative effects on the Earth system. Biologists propose that the Earth is experiencing the Sixth Mass Extinction. Climate scientists warn that we are approaching a global warming threshold that, if crossed, will result in dangerous climate change. Some scientists propose that we have entered a new geologic epoch called The Anthropocene, the age in which humans have become the dominant force changing the face of the Earth. These changes are the result of complex interactions between human societies and the natural world in which we are embedded.

Through the Environment and Society Program, students come to understand the social structures that are driving these Earth system changes, and the worldviews that underpin them. They also discover how power is exercised to maintain the status quo, and how they themselves can become change agents.

Major in Environment and Society

Environment and Society is offered as a double Major. Students choosing Environment and Society as their Major will also complete a second Major in another field of study. Because Environment and Society studies are interdisciplinary, any discipline that a student may choose would complement their ENVS program. ENVS electives offered by other departments may count both for the ENVS Major and for the Major in that department.

Note that not all courses are offered every year. Students should consult with the ENVS program coordinator to plan their program of studies.

The Major in Environment and Society will consist of 36 credit hours distributed as follows:

A. Required Environment and Society Courses

ENVS 1013	Environment and Society I: Introduction to Environmental Problems
ENVS 2023	Environment and Society II: Perspectives on Human-Nature Relations
ENVS 3013	Environment and Society III: Policy, Power and Politics
ENVS 3023	Environmental Praxis
ENVS 4003	Capstone Seminar in Environment and Society

B. Natural Sciences (Student are required to take 3 credit hours in an approved natural science course)

ENVS 2113: Ecological Literacy

Another natural science courses may be substituted with permission of the ENVS Program Coordinator.

C. Electives (18 credit hours from the following):

ENVS 1023	Introduction to Environmental Praxis: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally
ENVS 2123	Food, Science and Sustainability (STS)
ENVS 2133	Religions and Ecology (RELG)
ENVS 2203	Community Economic Development (ECON)
ENVS 2213	Society and Ecology (SOC)
ENVS 2253	The Ethics of Sustainability: Thinking, Acting Green (PHIL)
ENVS 2313	Energy and Society (STS)
ENVS 2333	Ecological Economics (ECON)
ENVS 2443	Environmental Psychology (PSYC)
ENVS 3033	Nonprofit Management (BUSI 3023)
ENVS 3053	Campus Sustainability
ENVS 3103	Political Parties and Elections in Canada (POLS)
ENVS 3123	The Canadian Constitution: Federalism (POLS)
ENVS 3203	Science, Technology and Nature (STS)
ENVS 3213	Media and Politics in Canada (POLS)
ENVS 3323	Hunter-Gathers in the Modern World (ANTH)
ENVS 3333	Environmental Economics (ECON 3323)
ENVS 3723	Human Ecology (ANTH)
ENVS 4006	Work-Study Project
NATI 3223	Native Environmental Ethics and Ecology
NATI 3923	Aboriginal Rights: The Land Question

Other courses may qualify as electives. Please consult with the ENVS coordinator.

Minor in Environment and Society

The Minor in Environment and Society will consist of 18 credit hours distributed as follows:

A. Required Environment and Society Courses - 6 credit hours

ENVS 1013	Environment and Society I: Introduction to Environmental Problems
ENVS 2023	Environment and Society II: Perspectives on Human-Nature Relations

B. Electives - 12 credit hours from list "A", "B" or "C" in the Majors category.

Honours in Environment and Society

An Honours program in Environment and Society may be arranged as an Interdisciplinary Honours. Students interested in this should consult with the ENVS Program Coordinator, the Coordinator of Interdisciplinary Studies, and the Interdisciplinary Studies section of the STU Academic Calendar.

ENVS-1013. Environment and Society I: Introduction to Environmental Problems

Earth systems science reveals that the environmental conditions that supported the development of human civilization over the past 10,000 years are becoming increasingly destabilized. This course introduces students to the Earth's regulatory systems such as climate, nitrogen and phosphorus flows, forests, oceans and biodiversity, and the social structures and processes that are interfering with them. Students will come to understand

that environmental problems cannot be solved by individual behavioural changes; solutions will require collective action to achieve systemic change.

ENVS-1023. Introduction to Environmental Praxis: Thinking Globally, Acting Locally

Praxis can be understood as reflection and action for social change. Drawing on learning in ENVS 1013, students will investigate how global environmental problems are manifested at the local level. They will then develop local action strategies to effect change in those systems. This approach will foster citizenship skills and empower students in the face of global problems. This course will qualify for the STU Experiential Learning Certificate. Prerequisite: ENVS 1013.

ENVS-2023. Environment and Society II: Perspectives on Human-Nature Relations (HMRT 2243)

Social systems are constructed on a set of dominant beliefs, assumptions and values that are largely unexamined but shape the way societies perceive and interact with the natural world. In this course, students examine the dominant perspectives that give rise to environmental degradation, as well as alternative paradigms offered by Green, eco-justice, global south, sustainability, and indigenous movements. Students also engage with political, economic and cultural theories of environmental change. Prerequisite: ENVS 1013 or permission of the instructor.

ENVS- 2113. Ecological Literacy

This course introduces students to key ecological concepts through the study of the Grand Lake Lowlands ecoregion where Fredericton is located, including its biodiversity and ecosystems, the flow of materials, energy and waste from the ecosystem through human systems and back again, and the implications of these flows for sustainability. As they become acquainted with the local ecoregion, students will also explore the literary tradition of nature writing in which writers infuse their intense observations of local natural history with ethical reflections on being an inhabitant, rather than simply a resident, of a place.

ENVS-2123. Food, Science & Sustainability (STS)

This course explores the relationships in our society among science, technology, and food by examining the ways that technology and scientific knowledge have altered food production. In addition, we will look more broadly at how our technical relationship to food has laid the foundations of modern civilization. We will also look at advocates of alternative modes of food production and consumption who claim to redress some of the dilemmas of our modern food ways.

ENVS-2133. Religion and Ecology (RELG)

Many religious traditions display a variety of stances towards the environmental crisis, ranging from indifference to reform. Through critical and comparative study, this course explores religious approaches to ecology in a variety of traditions. Topics may include environmental stewardship, deep ecology, ecoliberation, ecofeminism and ethnic indigenous ecology.

ENVS-2203. Community Economic Development (HMRT) (ECON)

A course which explores the theory and practice of community economic development. It will include the examination of case studies of successful community economic development. The focus will be on the appropriateness and applicability of the model to the Maritimes.

ENVS-2213. Society and Ecology (SOC)

This course is an introduction to the sociological study of environmental problems and the issues they raise, using C. Wright Mills' notion of the 'sociological imagination.

ENVS-2253. The Ethics of Sustainability: Thinking, Acting Green (HMRT, PHIL)

An historically-conscious analysis of various normative stances in environmental ethics integrated with a sustained consideration of how to apply this ethical theory to modern life. Topics may include deep and shallow ecology, biocentrism, eco-feminism, environmental justice, environmental virtue ethics, the ambiguous role of technology in the environmental crisis, the ethics of the green economy, the ethics of green public policy, a survey of various locally-employed environmental initiatives. Recommended preparation: PHIL 2213.

ENVS-2313. Energy and Society (STS)

This course examines energy systems (oil, gas, coal, hydroelectric, nuclear, and renewable) both historically and in the contemporary world, in terms of environmental and economic impacts, theories of technological change in their creation, deployment, and decommissioning, as well as public policy issues.

ENVS-2333. Ecological Economics (ECON)

Starting from the understanding that the economy is a subsystem of the ecological lifesupport system, the course utilizes a transdisciplinary approach (ecological, social and economic) to examine the problems of scale, equity, and efficiency in contemporary human social formations. The course will also discuss the distinctive policy implications of ecological economics. No prerequisite required.

ENVS-2443. Environmental Psychology (PSYCH)

Human behaviour is at the heart of a wide range of such environmental problems as global warming, ozone depletion, pollution, species extinction, deforestation, and population growth. This course emphasizes the positive role that psychology can play in supporting those human values, attitudes, and behaviour that will help to resolve these crises and advance the attainment of a sustainable future.

ENVS-3013. Environment and Society III: Policy, Power and Politics (HMRT 3213)

The modernist view is that knowledge leads to rational decisions. From an environmental perspective, however, this idea is seriously challenged. Never has society known so much about ecological and climate change; yet collective responses to these changes have failed to reverse the downward trends. This course examines this dynamic by examining the politics of the environmental crisis, and in particular the power struggles between those resisting change and those promoting alternative visions of a sustainable society. We consider how those alternative visions translate into public policy and how citizens can engage to make this happen. Prerequisites: ENVS 1013 and ENVS 2023, or permission of the instructor.

ENVS-3023. Environmental Praxis (HMRT 3223)

This course explores how alternative visions of the future translate into political action at the international, national, provincial, community, and personal levels. This involves an analysis of alternative theories of the nature of social change. A component of this course may be service learning. Prerequisites: ENVS 1013 and ENVS 2023, or permission of the instructor.

ENVS-3033. Nonprofit Management (BUSI 3023)

The course introduces students to the specific issues that arise in managing nonprofit organizations. Topics covered include strategic planning, accountability, board governance, financial planning, fund raising, and human resources.

ENVS- 3053. Campus Sustainability

The course examines the practices of environmental auditing as they apply to a university campus. Topics include alternative audit designs, the role of audits in changing institutional and individual behaviour, and the contributions of social sciences to university audits. Students' projects will involve carrying out components of a university wide environmental audit.

ENVS-3103. Political Parties and Elections in Canada (POLS)

Canada's major national parties are examined in regard to their historical evolution, internal structure, ideological orientation, and public image and reputation. Trends in voting behaviour are discussed, as are the implications of voting patterns in Canada. Distinctive provincial political parties (such as the Parti Quebecois) are also considered.

ENVS-3123. The Canadian Constitution: Federalism (POLS)

This course will focus on the manner in which the evolution of constitutional law has shaped the Canadian federal system. The course will proceed primarily by means of class discussion of leading constitutional decisions and by student presentations.

ENVS-3203. Science, Technology and Nature (STS)

In this seminar, students will be asked to question the boundary between culture and nature. Although we will explore how humans have made and remade the "natural" world, often with technologies of almost unimaginable power, we will also consider how natural forces - the sun, the soil, horses, rivers, germs, insects, even gravity - shape our built environments.

ENVS-3213. Media and Politics in Canada (COPP 3033, POLS)

This course will examine the role of media in Canadian politics and government. It will examine the effect of media on policy agenda setting and public opinion, and how political elites seek to use media to advance political goals. Prerequisite: POLS 1013, or permission of the instructor.

ENVS-3323. Hunter-Gatherers in the Modern World (ANTH)

This course begins by exploring the definitions of hunter-gatherers and by examining what sets them apart from other peoples. Early evolutionary views of hunter-gatherers are contrasted with current research on the diverse economic foundations of hunter-gatherer societies. The course covers questions of identity, property rights, gender, modes of production, and distribution of resources, drawing upon examples from various geographical areas. Prerequisite: ANTH 1013.

ENVS-3333. Environmental Economics (ECON 3323)

An examination of the relationship between the ecological system, economics, and institutions. Topics covered may include such issues as technological choice, steady state economics, limits to growth, the adequacy of the market mechanism, world food supplies, the economics of conservation, and alternative futures.

ENVS-3723. Human Ecology (ANTH)

Since its beginning, anthropology has been interested in the relationship between people and the geographical setting where cultures develop. The history of the discipline is full of contrasting examples in which nature and culture are used, within different conceptual and methodological frames, to explain cultural change, social structure, cultural development, and landscape history, among other topics. The main objective of this course is to explore such different approaches using examples from different biogeographical regions. Prerequisite: None.

ENVS-4003. Capstone Seminar

This is a required course for the Major in Environment & Society which is designed to integrate the entire program of study. The seminar will focus on developing a multidisciplinary understanding of a selection of environmental issues as determined by student and faculty interests. Issues considered will include ecological damage, social origins, and alternative approaches to addressing problems. Prerequisites: ENVS 3013 and ENVS 3023 or permission of the instructor.

ENVS-4006. Work-Study Project

This is a course in experiential learning for students in the final year of their Major in ENVS. Students will work with a non-profit organization which is actively involved in addressing environmental problems. Each student's activities will be designed under the direction of a faculty supervisor in consultation with the student and the work-place mentor. Enrolment is subject to the approval of the Coordinator of the Environment and Society program.

NOTE: Not all courses listed are offered each year. Please consult with the Department Chair for more information about current and planned course offerings.