ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES MAJOR

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

The following requirements are necessary to complete the ENVS linked-major:

- An introductory course or an AP 4 or 5 on Environmental Science AP Exam
- Sophomore Seminar ENVS201
- Three core electives, one from each area
- Three additional electives, whether or not in the core list
- Two semesters of senior colloquium, ENVS391, ENVS392
- A senior capstone project course

One of the following introductory courses serves as the gateway to the ENVS linked-major program:

- BIOL197/E&ES197
- E&ES199

With the exception of BIOL197/E&ES197 or E&ES199, all other courses must be at the 200 level or higher.

- Two courses that are either student forums or research tutorials may be substituted for non-core electives

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

A total of six elective courses are required; two must be at the upper level of academic study (usually 300 level or higher), and one elective must come from each of the three following core areas:

CORE ELECTIVES AREA 1

- ENVS214 Women, Animals, Nature
- ENVS230 The Simple Life
- ENVS305 Moral Ecologies and the Anthropology of Vitality
- ENVS307 The Economy of Nature and Nations
- PHIL212 Introduction to Ethics
- PHIL215 Humans, Animals, Nature
- PHIL270 Environmental Philosophy

CORE ELECTIVES AREA 2

- ECON212 The Economics of Sustainable Development, Vulnerability, and Resilience
- ENVS285 Environmental Law and Policy
- ENVS325 Healthy Places: Practice, Policy, and Population Health
- GOVT206 Public Policy
- GOVT221 Environmental Policy
- GOVT322 Global Environmental Politics

CORE ELECTIVES AREA 3

- BIOL216 Ecology
- BIOL220 Conservation Biology
- BIOL226 Invasive Species: Biology, Policy, and Management
- ENVS340 The Forest Ecosystem

- E&ES234 Geobiology
- E&ES250 Environmental Geochemistry
- E&ES260 Oceans and Climate
- ENVS361 Living in a Polluted World

Students will choose an additional three electives with their ENVS advisor. These electives may be selected from the entire list, in addition to those courses listed in core elective areas 1–3 above. Three of the elective courses must constitute a disciplinary or thematic concentration including at least one upper-level course (usually at the 300 level). Thematic concentrations are encouraged to be interdisciplinary. Courses selected from the three core areas above may be used as part of the concentration. Students are encouraged to develop their own thematic concentrations that require approval by their ENVS advisor. The following are some possible examples.

EXAMPLE 1—CONSERVATION

- BIOL216 Ecology
- BIOL220 Conservation Biology
- E&ES234 Geobiology

EXAMPLE 2—FOOD SUSTAINABILITY

- ENVS135 American Food
- ENVS226 Invasive Species: Biology, Policy, and Management
- ENVS235 Science of Sustainability

EXAMPLE 3—CLIMATE CHANGE 1

- E&ES260 Oceans and Climate
- ECON310 Environmental and Resource Economics
- GOVT221 Environmental Policy

EXAMPLE 4—CLIMATE CHANGE 2

- E&ES260 Oceans and Climate
- E&ES359 Global Climate Change
- GOVT221 Environmental Policy

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- Competence beyond the major-track introductory level in interpreting environmental information
- Develop a deeper understanding of the complex connections between environmental issues and social or political issues
- Develop the analytical and critical capacities necessary to formulate compelling arguments about environmental issues
- Engage both scholars and the lay public in discourse about environmental issues (mode of expression varied)
- Engage with scholars in the field who are making important environmental contributions
- Practical and theoretical experiences in environmental issues by undertaking a senior project

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Self-assessment. Upon entering the major, students will write a one-page self-assessment. This assessment will be posted to the student's electronic portfolio and made available to the student's advisor. In the assessment, students will describe their reasons for selecting the major, their current strengths and weaknesses with respect to environmental studies, and their personal goals within the major, including plans for
a concentration. They will be encouraged to integrate the program’s learning goals in their self-assessment. Students will periodically meet with their environmental studies advisor to reflect on their progress in the major, using their self-assessment as a frame of reference. At minimum, these meetings will occur once per semester during the course scheduling period. Because environmental studies is inherently multi-disciplinary and because every student is linked to a primary major, student trajectories within the major are highly individualized. The self-assessment will make these plans explicit, and will help both the student and advisor chart the most successful path through the major.

Senior capstone and senior colloquium. Every major completes a capstone project during their senior year. The format of the capstone is typically determined by the students’ primary departments (e.g., thesis, essay, performance, exhibit). The purpose of the capstone experience is to challenge students to think creatively, deeply, and originally about an environmental issue and to produce a significant work that uses their expertise from their primary major. All capstone projects are formally evaluated by at least one faculty member. In addition, several times throughout their senior year, students present progress reports of their projects in the senior colloquium; faculty and student-peers attending the colloquium provide feedback for improvement.

Senior reflection. As a book-end to the self-assessment, seniors will be asked to reflect on their experiences in the major. They will analyze their personal development in environmental studies and how the program impacted their development. These reflections will be recorded in the form of a questionnaire. Also, during one of the final colloquia in the spring, students will be encouraged to share their thoughts in a group setting and this will be recorded.

HOW THE DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM USES ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

The self-assessment and the subsequent iterative process between student and advisor of discussing the assessment will help to maximize student success in the program. The capstone projects and, more informally, the oral presentations in the senior colloquium, will help faculty evaluate the success of the curriculum in fulfilling the learning goals of the program. Both the iterative process of the self-assessment and the senior reflection will help inform curricular needs. For a multi-disciplinary program with faculty spread across all three divisions, the three common experiences (self-assessment, senior capstone/senior colloquium, and senior reflection) will be critical for the evaluation of both students and the program. Once a year, a committee will use information from these common experiences to discuss the state of the program. A summary of these discussions, including any recommendations for change, will be shared with the full ENVS faculty.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

With the exception of the introductory courses, 100-level courses do not count toward the major.

- Up to three courses from the primary major may be counted toward the ENVS-linked major.
- Students may substitute two reading or research tutorials, or one tutorial and one student forum, for two electives with approval of the ENVS advisor. Only one tutorial may count within a concentration; only one student-run forum can count toward the concentration.
- Up to three credits from study-abroad programs may be used for non-core elective courses, including for the concentration, with prior approval of the ENVS advisor and as long as the credits from abroad are accepted by Wesleyan.
- One course in the student’s entire curriculum must satisfy the essential capabilities for writing.

With the approval of the advisor and a written petition by the student, certain internships (e.g., Sierra Club, state agency, EPA, NOAA) may be substituted for one non-core elective.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

The ENVS linked-major program provides a capstone experience that includes a senior project and a full year of senior colloquia. The purpose of the ENVS capstone experience is to challenge students to think creatively, deeply, and originally about an environmental issue and to produce a significant work that uses their expertise from their primary major. The students will then have the opportunity to present and discuss their research in the ENVS391/ENVS392 with seniors and faculty.

Senior capstone project. The creative exploration of a critical environmental issue through independent research is an essential part of ENVS. All ENVS majors must complete a senior capstone project in one of three categories discussed below, though students are encouraged strongly to pursue a project in either of the first two categories. The topic must concern an environmental issue and must be approved in advance by the ENVS advisor. The student must be officially enrolled in one or more courses while they complete the research project. The students must submit to the director of ENVS no later than the last day of classes in the spring semester in their junior year a three-page research prospectus on their planned course of research. This plan must be signed by the potential mentor of the senior research. The mentor does not have to be a member of the ENVS faculty.

- **Category 1.** The capstone project may take any of the forms accepted by the primary department as a senior project (e.g., senior thesis, senior essay, senior performance, senior exhibition, senior film thesis). The senior project is submitted only to the primary department and is not evaluated by ENVS. Students may select an interdisciplinary thesis topic such that they solicit the help of more than one mentor if permitted by the primary department.
- **Category 2.** The capstone project may be a thesis submitted in general scholarship. The student must have a mentor for the thesis, and the topic must be approved by the ENVS advisor.
- **Category 3.** In the event that the student cannot satisfy the conditions for the above categories, the student may register for and complete a Senior Essay. Environmental Studies (ENVS403/ENVS404). The mentor can be any Wesleyan faculty member and the topic must be approved by the ENVS advisor. If the student cannot find a mentor, then it will be the responsibility of the ENVS program director to find a suitable reader or to evaluate the written work. The due date for the senior essay is set between the student and the mentor.

Senior colloquium. The ENVS Senior Colloquium provides students and faculty the opportunity to discuss, but not evaluate, the senior projects. Students will make 10-minute presentations on their projects followed by five minutes of discussion. Any interested faculty may attend, but the project mentors and ENVS advisors will be especially invited. Two weeks prior to their presentation, students will distribute a one- to two-page summary of their findings to enhance the level of discussion for their topic. The colloquium may also invite several presentations by faculty or
outside speakers. Students must be formally enrolled in the colloquium each semester of their senior year.

Additionally, all declared ENVS majors will be invited to the dinners and to the colloquium to enrich their early experience and encourage them to begin thinking about their future projects; their attendance is encouraged only and they do not enroll in the colloquium until their senior year.