ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT AMHERST

The Environmental Studies Faculty members at Amherst College welcome your interest in our courses and research. Here are answers to questions frequently asked by first-year students and resources for following up to find additional information.

Why consider a major and courses in Environmental Studies?

Quite simply, there is nothing going on in the world that isn’t -in some way- connected to environmental studies. Issues such as climate change, consumption and unlimited growth, inequality, and management of natural resources are critical to address. The Environmental Studies major encompasses multiple fields of study and provides students with the opportunity to investigate the Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences. Our graduates go on to careers in the sciences, law, policy, architecture, the arts, and fiction and non-fiction writing.

What does the Environmental Studies major involve?

The ENST major consists of a minimum of eleven courses including: a gateway course to introduce you to the department and areas of study, five core courses (History, Economics, Statistics, Ecology, & Policy), four elective courses selected among the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences and a senior capstone seminar. Find out more about these courses (& others), and recommended sequences through the major by visiting our website. https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/environmental_studies/major

What Environmental Studies courses can I take my first year at Amherst?

Students interested in Environmental Studies should consider taking one of the following core requirements of the major in the fall semester of the first year: Environmental History (HIST-105), Statistics (STAT-111 or STAT-135) or Economics (ECON-111, also see note marked by asterisk* below). Depending on whether your interests lean towards the sciences or the humanities/social sciences, we would also recommend (BIOL-181 or GEOL-105, if interested in the sciences) or (POSC-112 or POSC-307, if interested in the social sciences).

In the spring semester (spring 2020), you definitely should take ENST 120: The Resilient (?) Earth, in your second semester because it is a pre-requisite for some upper division core courses (Ecology, Environmental Policy), and several upper level electives. In addition, ENST-230/ECON111E*, which fulfills the core course in economics and Environmental History (ENST-220/HIST-104) will also be taught in the spring.

Links to these courses are available on the ENST website. https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/environmental_studies/information-for-new-students

Can I get advanced placement in Environmental Studies?

Amherst College does not offer advanced placement credit, and the Department does not allow students to place out of its introductory course.
Can I double-major as an Environmental Studies major?

You certainly can combine a major in Environmental Studies with a second major, and anywhere from about a third to a half of our majors are double majors. Popular combinations are ENST-BIOL, ENST-GEOL, and ENST-ECON, but our majors also have majored in the arts, political science, and the languages.

Can I study abroad as an Environmental Studies major?

The Environmental Studies Faculty encourage our majors to spend a semester abroad, and most do so in their junior year. There are numerous study abroad programs that offer hands-on experience in policy and conservation, and our majors have spent semesters in Africa, Asia, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Many of the courses you take in these programs will apply towards the major and the experiences of several of our students abroad have subsequently lead to a senior thesis. Check out the Amherst’s Global Education Study Abroad website.
https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/global-learning/study_abroad/new-resources-for-students

Are there research opportunities available to me as an ENST major?

Amherst College Faculty are committed to research and consider it part of our job. The best way to find out about research opportunities is to talk with professors teaching courses that especially interest you. They may have a project that you can be part of or can direct you to others needing a research assistant. In addition, check out the Office of Sustainability (see below) for research and internship possibilities.

How can I stay engaged in environmental issues on campus?

Amherst is committed to a Climate Action Plan that will bring the college to carbon neutrality by 2030 and the Office of Sustainability (Director: Laura Draucker) is a great resource for students interested in learning about various programs and opportunities at the college. In addition, opportunities for engagement with the College’s on-site Book and Plow Farm are available.

Also, look for college announcements about seminars and lectures hosted by the department. This year we are extremely pleased to be searching for a new faculty position in Environmental Science. As part of this search, there will be opportunities (mid-November - early December) for students to attend research seminars and meet with candidates.

See links available on the ENST website at… https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/environmental_studies/information-for-new-students

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