

# ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, B.A.

**Begin Campus:** Any Penn State Campus

**End Campus:** Altoona

## Program Description

This interdisciplinary major is designed to provide students with an integrated and critical knowledge of the natural environment and human interactions with it. Students will receive a strong foundation in the natural sciences but will extend their studies across several disciplines, emphasizing both public policy issues and the role of the natural environment in history and culture. The goal of the program is "ecological literacy," which means that students will develop a broad-based understanding and awareness of environments and environmental issues, and they will develop the problem-solving skills to address those issues. Program requirements include interdisciplinary courses in environmental studies and a broad array of courses in biology, geology, chemistry, geography, economics, political science, English, history, and philosophy. By selecting appropriate electives to supplement the "additional courses" requirement of the major, students may develop an emphasis in either a specific field (i.e., biology, English) or in a general area of study (natural science, social science, and humanities). Graduates are equipped for employment as environmental consultants in business or with governmental agencies and public interest groups. Many may go on to postgraduate study in environmental science, public policy, or the humanities, or to law school.

## What is Environmental Studies?

Environmental Studies provides a broadly-based liberal arts background for the study of environmental issues, blending the principles of the natural sciences with the intellectual traditions of the humanities and the social sciences. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning, ecological literacy, and problem-solving with a goal towards purposeful action.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (<https://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/environmental-studies/>)

## You Might Like This Program If...

You wish to work closely with faculty and peers on undergraduate research, community service, and out-of-classroom activities. Students also have the opportunity to discuss career goals and job opportunities with alumni working in a student's field of interest.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE TO STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES (<https://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/environmental-studies/degree-options/>)

## Entrance to Major

A student wishing to transfer into the Environmental Studies program must have completed the following course: ENVST 100N, and have received a grade of C or better in the course.

## Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Environmental Studies, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	10-11
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	64-65

**21 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 3 credits of GH courses; 9 credits of GN courses; 3 credits of GQ courses; 6 credits of GS courses.**

**3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.**

## Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
<b>Prescribed Courses</b>		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
BIOL 110	Biology: Basic Concepts and Biodiversity	4
BIOL 220W	Biology: Populations and Communities	4
CHEM 20	Environmental Chemistry	3
CHEM 21	Environmental Chemistry Laboratory	1
ECON 428	Environmental Economics	3
ENGL 180	Literature and the Natural World	3
ENVST 100N	Visions of Nature	3
ENVST 200	Research Methods in Environmental Studies	3
ENVST 400W	Senior Seminar in Environmental Studies	3
GEOG 115	Landforms of the World	3
GEOG 160	Mapping Our Changing World	3
GEOSC 1	Physical Geology	3
PHIL 403	Seminar in Environmental Ethics	3
<b>Additional Courses</b>		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
ECON 102 or ECON 104	Introductory Microeconomic Analysis and Policy Introductory Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy	3
GEOG 407 or HIST 453	American Environmental History	3
PLSC 235 or PLSC 425	Environmental Politics Government and Politics of the American States	3
STAT 200 or STAT 250	Elementary Statistics Introduction to Biostatistics	3-4
Select 4 credits of the following:		4
ENVST 296 & ENVST 496	Independent Studies and Independent Studies	
ENVST 395 & INTSP 370	Internship and Internship Preparation	
ENVST 496	Independent Studies	
<b>Supporting Courses and Related Areas</b>		

*Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better*

Select 9 credits (at least 6 credits at the 400-level and 3 in each departmental list) in consultation with an academic adviser. 9

- a. Natural Sciences
- b. Social Sciences
- c. Arts and Humanities

## General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

### Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

### Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

### Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

### Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

## University Degree Requirements

### First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

### Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- United States Cultures: 3 credits
- International Cultures: 3 credits

### Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

### Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

### Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

### Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

## B.A. Degree Requirements

**World Language** (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

**B.A. Fields** (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

**World Cultures** (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

## Program Learning Objectives

- Integrate and/synthesize information from a variety of contexts or fields of knowledge.
- Critically analyze and apply methodological approaches from the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities to solve multi-dimensional environmental issues.
- Develop structural knowledge pertaining to an interdisciplinary problem or course theme.

## Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

### Altoona

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## Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

### Environmental Studies, B.A. at Altoona Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

#### First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 15, 30H, or ESL 15 <sup>‡</sup>	3 ENGL 180 <sup>‡</sup>	3
ENVST 100N <sup>*‡#†</sup>	3 World Language Course Level 2	4
ECON 102 or 104 <sup>*</sup>	3 BIOL 110 <sup>‡</sup>	4
GEOSC 1 <sup>‡</sup>	3 MATH 21	3
PSU 3	1 General Education (GHW)	1.5
World Language Course Level 1	4	
	<b>17</b>	<b>15.5</b>

#### Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
World Language Course Level 3	4 ENVST 200 <sup>*</sup>	3
B.A. Requirement Course	3 CAS 100 <sup>‡</sup>	3
CHEM 20 <sup>*</sup>	3 B.A. Requirement Course	3
CHEM 21 <sup>*</sup>	1 BIOL 220W <sup>*</sup>	4
STAT 200 or 250 <sup>‡</sup>	3 or 4 GEOG 115 <sup>‡</sup>	3
	<b>14-15</b>	<b>16</b>

#### Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
ENGL 202A, 202B, or 202C <sup>‡</sup>	3 ENVST 428 <sup>*</sup>	3
Elective	3 PLSC 235 or 425 <sup>*</sup>	3
BIOL 402W <sup>*†</sup>	3 PHIL 403 <sup>*</sup>	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
GEOG 160 <sup>*</sup>	3 ENVST 395 or 496 <sup>*</sup>	3
INTSP 370 or ENVST 296 <sup>*</sup>	1 General Education (GHW)	1.5
	<b>16</b>	<b>16.5</b>

#### Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
HIST 453 <sup>*</sup>	3 Arts and Humanities Course <sup>*</sup>	3
Elective	3 ENVST 400W	3
B.A. Requirement Course	3 B.A. Requirement Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
	General Education Course (GS) <sup>*</sup>	3
	<b>12</b>	<b>15</b>

#### Total Credits 122-123

\* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

# Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

#### University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

#### Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your

adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

## Career Paths

Prepares you for employment as an environmental professional with government agencies, non-profit agencies, consulting firms, and in the areas of conservation, outdoor adventure and sustainability. You will also be prepared for postgraduate study in public policy, the humanities, and law school.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES PROGRAM (<https://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/environmental-studies/career-opportunities/>)

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://altoona.psu.edu/academics/bachelors-degrees/environmental-studies/career-opportunities/>)

## Contact

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