

EARTH AND SUSTAINABILITY, MINOR

- You would like to explore both the scientific and the social aspects of big problems like population growth, resource management, and climate change.

Requirements for a minor may be completed at any campus location offering the specified courses for the minor. Students may not change from a campus that offers their major to a campus that does not offer their major for the purpose of completing a minor.

Program Description

By the time current undergraduates send their children to college, Earth's population will have increased to more than eight billion people. One or more metropolitan areas in our increasingly crowded world will have experienced a devastating earthquake or volcanic eruption, sea level rise will be inundating low-lying coastal cities such as Jakarta along with whole island nations, energy resources will be less available and more expensive, and our climate will be warmer and characterized by more frequent extreme weather events.

How we choose to plan for and attempt to mitigate these "grand challenges" will have consequences for individuals, nations, and our global socioeconomic and political systems.

Personal and collective actions are needed to ensure the sustainable use of our natural resources and environmental systems—land, air, and water—in an ethical and responsible manner. The United States needs to build robust educational pathways for its citizenry to develop the global perspective, cultural sensitivity, economic wisdom, and scientific acumen to inform their actions and address these grand challenges. The geosciences (marine, Earth, and atmospheric sciences) that explain the workings of the Earth system provide critical insight into all of these challenges and, consequently, must be firmly integrated into those educational pathways. These programs seek to promote that integration through engaging the geoscience community and their colleagues in allied disciplines in the development of high-quality educational materials, and mechanisms by which these materials can be effectively brought to large numbers of students.

The goal of this minor is to dramatically increase geoscience literacy of undergraduate students, including the large majority that do not major in the geosciences, and especially adult learners through the online program, such that they are better positioned to make sustainable decisions in their lives and as part of the broader society.

What is Earth and Sustainability?

The Earth and Sustainability minor program is designed to provide students with the knowledge needed to make well-informed, environmentally sustainable decisions. It increases geoscience literacy and addresses key sustainability issues, such as the impact of climate change on Earth and its inhabitants, access to clean drinking water, sustainable energy, and the hazards posed by our overpopulated coastal regions.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You are passionate about sustainability and the environment.
- You want a better understanding of the science behind and potential effects of climate change.
- You want to know more about the complexities, challenges, and opportunities involved in planning for the Earth's future.