

Environmental Policy and Planning, BA

The Environmental Policy and Planning major at Iowa empowers students to address pressing environmental challenges through policy or planning pathways. Students drawn to this major are focused on learning about the environment through a human-centered lens.

You'll explore solutions for land use, water access, and climate change, gaining practical skills and real-world experience. Our program's unique interdisciplinary approach fosters a deep understanding of environmental policy and planning tools, preparing you to make a difference in shaping a sustainable future.

Learning Outcomes

Graduates will:

- recognize the connections and relationships between human and environmental activities and outcomes across space and time;
- identify key stakeholders and sources of information in the natural and social sciences to consider in developing solutions to environmental problems;
- be able to explain the role of policy and planning in addressing environmental issues locally, regionally, and globally;
- be capable of working collaboratively in interdisciplinary teams to design approaches to managing environmental problems; and
- understand and be able to implement key tools and methods for environmental planning and policy making.

Requirements

The Bachelor of Arts with a major in environmental policy and planning requires a minimum of 120 s.h., including at least 55 s.h. of work for the major. Students must maintain a grade-point average of at least 2.00 in all courses for the major and in all UI courses for the major. They must also complete the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences GE CLAS Core. Transfer students must complete a minimum of 15 s.h. of School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability coursework in the major.

In planning coursework, students should be guided by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences maximum hours rule: students earning a BA may apply a maximum of 56 s.h. earned in one department to the minimum 120 s.h. required for graduation, whether or not the coursework is accepted toward requirements for the major; students who earn more than 56 s.h. from one department may use the additional semester hours to satisfy requirements for the major (if the department accepts them), and the grades they earn become part of their grade-point average, but they cannot apply the additional semester hours to the minimum 120 s.h. required for graduation.

Students who are earning two majors from the same department (e.g. a BA in environmental policy and planning and a BA in earth and environmental science), two degrees from the same department (e.g. a BA in environmental policy and planning and a BS in geographical and sustainability sciences), or a major and a minor from the same department (e.g. a BA in environmental policy and planning and a minor

in earth and environmental science) may apply more than 56 s.h. from their home department toward their degree, but they must earn at least 56 s.h. of credit in courses outside their home department in order to graduate.

The BA with a major in environmental policy and planning requires the following coursework.

Requirements	Hours
Shared Courses	43-45
Track Courses	12

Shared Courses

Course #	Title	Hours
Introductory Courses		
All of these:		
SEES:1035	Our Digital Earth	3
SEES:1070	Contemporary Environmental Issues	3
SEES:1085	Fundamentals of Environmental Science	4
SEES:2010	Interdisciplinary Environmental Seminar	1
SEES:2013/ BUS:2013/ URP:2013	Introduction to Sustainability	3
SEES:2050	Foundations of GIS	4
ANTH:2261	Human Impacts on the Environment	3
ECON:1100	Principles of Microeconomics	4
Intermediate Courses		
This course:		
POLI:3111	American Public Policy	3
One of these:		
AMST:1290/ GHS:1290/ HIST:1290/ NAIS:1290	Native American Foods and Foodways	3
ANTH:3103	Environment and Culture	3
One of these:		
SEES:2950	Environmental Conservation	4
SEES:3350	Urban Ecology	3
Methods Courses		
One of these:		
PSQF:4143/ STAT:4143	Introduction to Statistical Methods	3
STAT:1020/ PSQF:1020	Elementary Statistics and Inference	3
STAT:1030	Statistics for Business	4
STAT:2010	Statistical Methods and Computing	3
STAT:2020	Probability and Statistics for the Engineering and Physical Sciences	3
STAT:3510/ IGPI:3510	Biostatistics	3
Communications Courses		
One of these:		
CNW:3664/ ENGL:3764	Writing About Science	3

JMC:1800	Environmental Communication	3
JMC:3185	Topics in Understanding Media	3
Research and Experiential Learning		
At least one of these (for a total of 3 hours):		3
SEES:3400	Iowa Environmental Policy in Practice	3
SEES:3992	Undergraduate Research (Or ICIGO)	1-3
SEES:4995	Honors Thesis	arr.
CCP:1201	Academic Internship	1-3

Tracks

Students must complete one of two tracks: planning or policy. Each track consists of two required courses and at least 6 s.h. in elective courses. Students may not use any course to satisfy more than one requirement.

Planning Track

Course #	Title	Hours
Both of these:		
SEES:3920/ URP:3001	Planning Livable Cities	3
SEES:4750/ URP:4750	Environmental Impact Analysis	3
At least 6 s.h. from these:		
SEES:2930	Water Resources	3
SEES:3250/ CPH:3400	Health, Work, and the Environment	3
SEES:3315	Ecosystem Ecology	4
SEES:3350	Urban Ecology	3
SEES:3400	Iowa Environmental Policy in Practice	3
SEES:3520/ IGPI:3520	GIS for Environmental Applications	3
SEES:3540/ IGPI:3540	Geographic Visualization	3
SEES:3760/ GHS:3760	Hazards and Society	3
SEES:3780/ GHS:3780/ HIST:3240/ POLI:3431	U.S. Energy Policy in Global Context	3
SEES:3800	Environmental Policy	3
SEES:4770/ AFAM:4770/ GHS:4770	Environmental Justice	3
ECON:3625/ URP:3135	Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	3
HIST:3128	Global Environmental History: Nature and Power in the Modern World	3
HIST:3230	American Environmental History	3
URP:3134/ ECON:3640	Regional and Urban Economics	3
URP:3350/ ECON:3750/ SEES:3940	Transportation Economics	3

Policy Track

Course #	Title	Hours
Both of these:		
SEES:3800	Environmental Policy	3
ECON:3625/ URP:3135	Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	3
At least 6 s.h. from these:		
SEES:3250/ CPH:3400	Health, Work, and the Environment	3
SEES:3400	Iowa Environmental Policy in Practice	3
SEES:3520/ IGPI:3520	GIS for Environmental Applications	3
SEES:3540/ IGPI:3540	Geographic Visualization	3
SEES:3760/ GHS:3760	Hazards and Society	3
SEES:3780/ GHS:3780/ HIST:3240/ POLI:3431	U.S. Energy Policy in Global Context	3
SEES:3920/ URP:3001	Planning Livable Cities	3
SEES:4750/ URP:4750	Environmental Impact Analysis	3
SEES:4770/ AFAM:4770/ GHS:4770	Environmental Justice	3
HIST:3128	Global Environmental History: Nature and Power in the Modern World	3
HIST:3230	American Environmental History	3
PBAF:3117/ POLI:3117	Bureaucratic Politics and Public Administration	3
POLI:2417	Comparative Environmental Policy	3
POLI:3100	American State Politics	3
POLI:3102	The U.S. Congress	3
POLI:3110	Local Politics	3
POLI:3118	Interest Groups	3
POLI:3424	Global Development	3
POLI:3430/ NAIS:3430	Environmental Politics and Indigeneity	3
POLI:3432/ NAIS:3432	Agriculture Politics and Policy	3

Honors

Graduating with departmental honors and graduating with university honors are two opportunities available to high-achieving undergraduate students, each with specific and distinct requirements. Some students pursue both options while others pursue one or the other.

Honors in the Major

Within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, each major develops its own requirements to achieve honors in the major. In order to graduate with honors in the major, students in the School of Earth, Environment, and Sustainability (SEES) pursue study beyond the typical undergraduate level. They

work under the direction of a faculty member to conduct original research and then prepare and present a written honors thesis based on their work.

Potential honors students must complete an honors thesis contract with their advisor and obtain approval from the department's undergraduate committee by the first semester of their senior year or earlier. They are also required to register for SEES:4995 Honors Thesis as they work to complete their thesis, where they must earn a grade of B or higher. Additionally, SEES honors students must maintain a cumulative grade-point average of at least 3.33 in all University of Iowa and SEES coursework.

University of Iowa Honors Program

In addition to honors in the major, students have opportunities for honors study and activities through membership in the University of Iowa Honors Program. Visit Honors at Iowa to learn about the university's honors program.

Membership in the UI Honors Program is not required to earn honors in the environmental policy and planning major.

Academic Plans

Sample Plans

Sample plans represent one way to complete a program of study. Actual course selection and sequence will vary and should be discussed with an academic advisor. For additional sample plans, see MyUI.

Environmental Policy and Planning, BA

- Planning Track
- Policy Track

Planning Track

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
GE CLAS Core: Sustainability ^a		
Hours		0
First Year		
Fall		
SEES:1070	Contemporary Environmental Issues ^b	3
SEES:1085	Fundamentals of Environmental Science ^b	4
ENGL:1200 or RHET:1030	Interpreting Literature or Rhetoric: Writing and Communication	3 - 4
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	1
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Hours		15-17
Spring		
ANTH:2261	Human Impacts on the Environment ^b	3
SEES:1035	Our Digital Earth ^b	3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric: Writing and Communication or Interpreting Literature	3 - 4

GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		2
Hours		15-17

Second Year

Fall		
ECON:1100	Principles of Microeconomics ^b	4
SEES:2010	Interdisciplinary Environmental Seminar	1
SEES:2013	Introduction to Sustainability ^b	3
GE CLAS Core: Understanding Cultural Perspectives ^e		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Hours		15-16

Spring

JMC:1800	Environmental Communication ^{b, f}	3
SEES:2050	Foundations of GIS	4
GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab ^e		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		2
Hours		16-17

Third Year

Fall		
ANTH:3103	Environment and Culture ^g	3
SEES:3920	Planning Livable Cities	3
STAT:1020	Elementary Statistics and Inference ^{b, h}	3
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives ^e		3
Elective course ^d		3
Hours		15

Spring

POLI:3111	American Public Policy	3
SEES:2950 or SEES:3350	Environmental Conservation or Urban Ecology	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^e		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Hours		15-16

Fourth Year

Fall		
Major: planning track elective course ⁱ		3
Major: planning track elective course ⁱ		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Hours		15
Spring		
SEES:4750	Environmental Impact Analysis ^j	3
Major: research and experiential learning course ^j		1 - 3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		2

Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall)

Hours	15-17
Total Hours	121-130

- a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative or Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Society.
- b Fulfills a major requirement and may fulfill a GE requirement.
- c Students who have completed four levels of a single language or two levels of two different languages in high school or college have satisfied the GE CLAS Core World Languages requirement. Students who have completed three levels of a single language may complete a fourth-level course in the same language or may choose an approved World Language and Cultural Exploration course. Enrollment in world languages courses requires a placement exam, unless enrolling in a first-semester-level course. Contact your academic advisor or CLAS Undergraduate Programs Office with questions concerning the World Languages requirement.
- d Students may use elective courses to earn credit towards the total s.h. required for graduation or to complete a double major, minors, or certificates.
- e GE CLAS Core courses may be completed in any order unless used as a prerequisite for another course. Students should consult with an advisor about the best sequencing of courses.
- f Students can opt to take either CNW:3664 or JMC:3185 instead of JMC:1800, but would also need to take an additional course to satisfy the GE CLAS Core Values and Society requirement.
- g Students can opt to take AMST:1290 instead of ANTH:3103.
- h Students can opt to take PSQF:4143, STAT:1030, STAT:2010, STAT:2020, or STAT:3510 instead of STAT:1020, but may also need to take an additional course to satisfy the GE CLAS Core Quantitative or Formal Reasoning requirement.
- i See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.
- j Choose from SEES:3400, SEES:3992, SEES:4995, CCP:1201.
- k Please see Academic Calendar, on Office of the Registrar website, for current degree application deadlines. Students should apply for a degree for the session in which all requirements will be met. For any questions on appropriate timing, contact your academic advisor or Degree Services.

Policy Track

Course	Title	Hours
Academic Career		
Any Semester		
GE CLAS Core: Sustainability ^a		0
First Year		
Fall		
SEES:1070	Contemporary Environmental Issues ^b	3
SEES:1085	Fundamentals of Environmental Science ^b	4

RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric: Writing and Communication or Interpreting Literature	3 - 4
CSI:1600	Success at Iowa	1
GE CLAS Core: World Languages First Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5

Hours	15-17
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Spring

ANTH:2261	Human Impacts on the Environment ^b	3
SEES:1035	Our Digital Earth ^b	3
RHET:1030 or ENGL:1200	Rhetoric: Writing and Communication or Interpreting Literature	3 - 4
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Second Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		2

Hours	15-17
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Second Year

Fall

ECON:1100	Principles of Microeconomics ^b	4
SEES:2010	Interdisciplinary Environmental Seminar	1
SEES:2013	Introduction to Sustainability ^b	3
GE CLAS Core: Understanding Cultural Perspectives		3

GE CLAS Core: World Languages Third Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
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Hours	15-16
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Spring

POLI:3111	American Public Policy	3
SEES:2050	Foundations of GIS	4
GE CLAS Core: Historical Perspectives ^e		3
GE CLAS Core: World Languages Fourth Level Proficiency or elective course ^c		4 - 5
Elective course ^d		2

Hours	16-17
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Third Year

Fall

ANTH:3103	Environment and Culture ^f	3
SEES:2950 or SEES:3350	Environmental Conservation or Urban Ecology	4
STAT:1020	Elementary Statistics and Inference ^{b, g}	3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		2

Hours	15
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Spring

JMC:1800	Environmental Communication ^{b, h}	3
SEES:3800	Environmental Policy	3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3
Elective course ^d		3

Hours	15
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Fourth Year

Fall

ECON:3625	Environmental and Natural Resource Economics	3
Major: policy track elective course ⁱ		3

GE CLAS Core: Natural Sciences without Lab ^e	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Hours	15
Spring	
Major: policy track elective course ⁱ	3
Major: research and experiential learning course ^j	1 - 3
GE CLAS Core: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts ^e	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	3
Elective course ^d	2
Degree Application: apply on MyUI before deadline (typically in February for spring, September for fall)	
Hours	15-17
Total Hours	121-129

a Sustainability must be completed by choosing a course that has been approved for Sustainability AND for one of these General Education areas: Natural Sciences; Quantitative or Formal Reasoning; Social Sciences; Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues; Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts; or Values and Society.

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f Students can opt to take AMST:1290 instead of ANTH:3103.

g Students can opt to take PSQF:4143, STAT:1030, STAT:2010, STAT:2020, or STAT:3510 instead of STAT:1020, but may also need to take an additional course to satisfy the GE CLAS Core Quantitative or Formal Reasoning requirement.

h Students can opt to take either CNW:3664 or JMC:3185 instead of JMC:1800, but would also need to take an additional course to satisfy the GE CLAS Core Values and Society requirement.

i See the General Catalog for list of approved courses.

j Choose from SEES:3400, SEES:3992, SEES:4995, CCP:1201.

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