

Developing an Interdisciplinary Program: Environmental Studies from a Geographic Perspective



Leslie Duram
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
geography.siu.edu



Abstract

Past research emphasizes the benefits of interdisciplinary scholarship, but does not provide a clear definition the scope, limits, and disciplinary balance of such endeavors within a curricular program. This research uses a case study analysis to describe the development of one interdisciplinary program—an Environmental Studies Minor—within a mid-size, public university. An over-arching question is how the connections between the interdisciplinary program and the department of geography, which plays a central role in the Minor, have been developed and continue to evolve. Thus administrative concerns are noted: the establishment, funding, and structure of various departmental participants across campus. Curriculum issues are described: advising, courses, recruitment, and disciplinary balance among topics. A detailed discussion of the required capstone course provides insight into the overall goals and outcomes of the program. Finally, the benefits and potential disadvantages of the interdisciplinary program are noted. As geography is rightfully at the core of many interdisciplinary initiatives, this investigation provides an analysis and overview of one Environmental Studies program and its linkages to the discipline of geography.

GENV Overview

The Department of Geography and Environmental Resources at SIUC focuses on environmental analysis and problem solving.

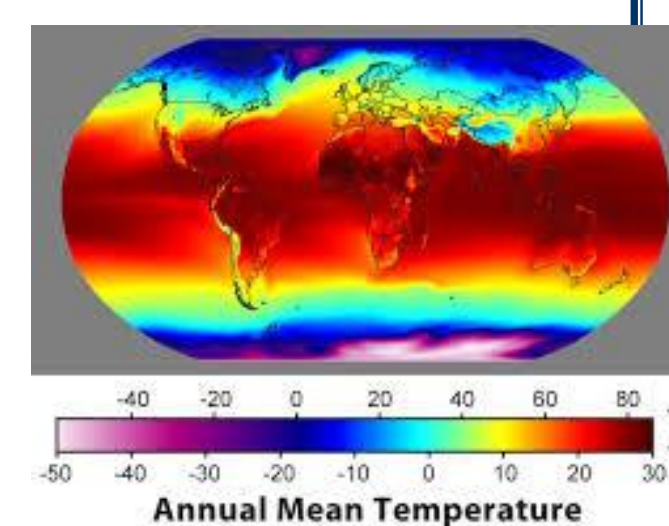
Field work, use of computers, and internships are prominent components of the integrated human-environment approach in both our undergraduate and graduate programs.



Geography & Environmental Resources

Specializations:

- Environmental Sustainability
- Geographic Information Science
- Climate and Water Resources



Environmental Studies Minor

The Department of Geography and Environmental Resources administers the Environmental Studies Minor. It is open to any Major, so students from 30 different majors (representing every College on campus) participate. The Environmental Studies Minor can add some “green” to any Major!

Curriculum Development

CORE COURSE: GEOG 300i – Geography, People and the Environment



TOPIC COURSES – (take one from each topic)

Topic 1 – Environment

BIOL 307 Principles of Ecology
CSEM 443 Soil Management
FOR 201 Ecology: North American Forests
GEOG 104 Weather, Climate, and Society
GEOG 303i Physical Geography
GEOG 330 Physical Climatology
GEOL 220 Dynamic Earth
GEOL 221 Earth through Time
HORT 238 Home Gardening
HORT 328A Landscape Design
HORT 462 Sustainable Landscape Practice
HORT 469 Organic Gardening
PLB 200 General Plant Biology
PLB 301i Environmental Issues
ZOOL 312i Conservation Natl Resources



Topic 2 – Society

ANTH 370 Contemp Human Problems
ANTH 410K Ecological Anthropology
CMST 412 Environmental Rhetoric
FOR 285 Social Influences in Policy
FOR 325 Forest Admin & Policy
GEOG 100 Environmental Conservation
GEOG 103 World Geography
GEOG 320 Environmental Sustainability
HIST 457 American Env History
MGMT 474 Management in Society
PH 488 Environmental Health
PHIL 307i Science Nature Technology
PHIL 375 Ecology and Ethics
SOC 386 Environmental Sociology



Topic 3 – Skills

ARC 231 Architectural History I
ARC 314i Expressions in Architecture
CP 440 New Media Production
FOR 420 Park & Wildland Management
FOR 423 Environmental Interpretation
GEOG 310i Intro to GIS
GEOG 401 Geo Information Systems
JRNL 301 Advertising/Marketing
JRNL 396 Publishing to www
KIN 416 Team Building
MKTG 304 Marketing Management
POLS 340 Public Administration
REC 301 Leadership in Recreation
RTD 463 Sound Art and Practice II
TRM 440 Manage Sustainable Enterprises



FINAL UNIFYING COURSE: GEOG 470 – Contemporary Issues in Environmental Studies



Geographer
The original green job.



Internships

Provide Practical, Hands-on Work Experience. Sites include:

- Environmental Education:** Campus Sustainability Hub, Keep Carbondale Beautiful, Jackson County Health Department, SIU Touch of Nature Environmental Center
- Parks and Preserves:** Giant City State Park, Green Earth Inc, US Fish and Wildlife Service: Cypress Creek Refuge or Crab Orchard Refuge
- Agencies:** City of Carbondale Development Services, National Weather Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Williamson County 911
- Sustainable Food:** All Seasons Organic Farm, Country Sprouts, LOGIC: SIU student gardens, Neighborhood Coop.



Sustainability



US NEWS & World Report:

“Sustainability managers in all sorts of companies and organizations look for ways to make the institution more efficient and produce less waste and pollution. As a result they tend to save money for their organization, which is one reason why these jobs are becoming popular.”

Sustainability is a hot college major that leads to jobs.

Students Care about Job Opportunities

There are wide-ranging job opportunities for our graduates.

For example, we have alumni in the following jobs:

Sustainability Coordinator, Recycling Program Leader, Social Studies Teacher, GIS Specialist, Cartographer, Chamber of Commerce/Tourism Officer, Emergency Manager, Regional Planner, Water Quality Manager, Graduate Student, Environmental Consultant, Environmental Educator, Geospatial Intelligence Analyst in the Office of Homeland Security,and many other diverse and exciting environmental careers.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

EnvironmentalStudies.siu.edu

geography.siu.edu

