

# Environment and Society

Over the past few decades, the injurious effects of human behaviour on Earth's natural systems have become increasingly obvious. There can be little question that ecological changes leading to extinction of species and loss of habitat pose a threat not only to our health, our prosperity and even our existence, but to the biosphere as a whole. Our failure to change our ways must be acknowledged and confronted. With its expertise in many domains of human endeavour, St. Thomas University is well prepared to help students interrogate the social processes that promote both our degradation of Earth and our persistence in such destructive behaviour.

Students completing the Major in Environment and Society are required to complete a second Major as well. This second Major may be in any field of their choice. ENVS electives taken from other departments may be counted both for the ENVS Major and for the Major in that Department.

The Major in Environment and Society will consist of 36 credit hours distributed as follows:

## *A. Required Environment and Society Courses*

ENVS 1013	Introduction to Environmental Problems
ENVS 2023	Introduction to Perspectives on the Environment
ENVS 3013	Environmental Policy
ENVS 3023	Environmental Praxis
ENVS 4003	Capstone Seminar in Environment and Society

*B. Natural Science (Students are required to take 3 credit hours in an approved natural science course). Recommended courses are:*

BIOL 2113	Ecology
PHYS 2543	Environmental Physics

Other courses may be substituted for either of these with the approval of the Program Director.

*C. Electives (18 credit hours from the following):*

ENVS 2123	Food, Science and Sustainability (STS)
ENVS 2133	Religions and Ecology (RELG)
ENVS 2203	Community Economic Development (ECON)
ENVS 2213	Society and Ecology (SOC)
ENVS 2253	The Ethics of Sustainability: Thinking, Acting Green (PHIL)
ENVS 2313	Energy and Society (STS)
ENVS 2333	Ecological Economics (ECON)
ENVS 2443	Environmental Psychology (PSYC)
ENVS 3033	Nonprofit Management (BUSI 3023)
ENVS 3053	Campus Sustainability
ENVS 3103	Political Parties and Elections in Canada (POLS)
ENVS 3123	The Canadian Constitution: Federalism (POLS)

ENVS 3203	Science, Technology and Nature (STS)
ENVS 3213	Media and Politics in Canada (POLS)
ENVS 3323	Hunter-Gathers in the Modern World (ANTH)
ENVS 3333	Environmental Economics (ECON 3323)
ENVS 3523	Environmental Ethics (RELG)
ENVS 3723	Human Ecology (ANTH)
ENVS 4006	Work-Study Project
NATI 3223	Native Environmental Ethics and Ecology
NATI 3923	Aboriginal Rights: The Land Question

*Electives Available from UNB*

HIST 3925	Technology and Western Society
PHIL 3221-19	Selected Topics in Philosophy of the Environment
POLS 1603	Politics of Globalization

**ENVS-1013. Introduction to Environmental Problems**

This course introduces students to the nature of ecological problems and the relationships between human activities and environmental deterioration. The course examines the nature of the biosphere: how living plant, animal and microbial communities and their supporting air, water and soil cycles function.

**ENVS-2023. Introduction to Perspectives on the Environment (HMRT 2243)**

This course explores how society has attempted to understand the social origins of environmental degradation and the changes necessary in society to end human disruption of the environment. This involves a review of the different perspectives within the environmental movement, and of the attempts by the social sciences and the humanities to understand the social origins of environmental degradation. Prerequisite: ENVS 1013, or permission of the instructor.

**ENVS-2123. Food, Science & Sustainability (STS)**

This course explores the relationships in our society among science, technology, and food by examining the ways that technology and scientific knowledge have altered food production. In addition, we will look more broadly at how our technical relationship to food has laid the foundations of modern civilization. We will also look at advocates of alternative modes of food production and consumption who claim to redress some of the dilemmas of our modern food ways.

**ENVS-2133. Religion and Ecology (RELG)**

Many religious traditions display a variety of stances towards the environmental crisis, ranging from indifference to reform. Through critical and comparative study, this course explores religious approaches to ecology in a variety of traditions. Topics may include environmental stewardship, deep ecology, ecoliberation, ecofeminism and ethnic indigenous ecology.

**ENVS-2203. Community Economic Development (HMRT) (ECON)**

A course which explores the theory and practice of community economic development. It will include the examination of case studies of successful community economic development. The focus will be on the appropriateness and applicability of the model to the

Maritimes.

### **ENVS-2213. Society and Ecology (SOC)**

This course is an introduction to the sociological study of environmental problems and the issues they raise, using C. Wright Mills' notion of the 'sociological imagination.

### **ENVS-2253. The Ethics of Sustainability: Thinking, Acting Green (HMRT, PHIL)**

An historically-conscious analysis of various normative stances in environmental ethics integrated with a sustained consideration of how to apply this ethical theory to modern life. Topics may include deep and shallow ecology, biocentrism, eco-feminism, environmental justice, environmental virtue ethics, the ambiguous role of technology in the environmental crisis, the ethics of the green economy, the ethics of green public policy, a survey of various locally-employed environmental initiatives. Recommended preparation: PHIL 2213.

### **ENVS-2313. Energy and Society (STS)**

This course examines energy systems (oil, gas, coal, hydroelectric, nuclear, and renewable) both historically and in the contemporary world, in terms of environmental and economic impacts, theories of technological change in their creation, deployment, and decommissioning, as well as public policy issues.

### **ENVS-2333. Ecological Economics (ECON)**

Starting from the understanding that the economy is a subsystem of the ecological lifesupport system, the course utilizes a transdisciplinary approach (ecological, social and economic) to examine the problems of scale, equity, and efficiency in contemporary human social formations. The course will also discuss the distinctive policy implications of ecological economics. No prerequisite required.

### **ENVS-2443. Environmental Psychology (PSYCH)**

Human behaviour is at the heart of a wide range of such environmental problems as global warming, ozone depletion, pollution, species extinction, deforestation, and population growth. This course emphasizes the positive role that psychology can play in supporting those human values, attitudes, and behaviour that will help to resolve these crises and advance the attainment of a sustainable future.

### **ENVS-3013. Environmental Policy (HMRT 3213)**

Building upon familiarity with the major perspectives within the environmental movement, the course will examine various approaches to resolving environmental problems such as: bioregionalism, sustainable growth, deep ecology, rightsizing economic activity, etc. Students will explore how alternate visions of the future would translate into public policy. Prerequisites: ENVS 1013 and ENVS 2023, or permission of the instructor.

### **ENVS-3023. Environmental Praxis (HMRT 3223)**

This course explores how alternative visions of the future translate into political action at the international, national, provincial, community, and personal levels. This involves an analysis of alternative theories of the nature of social change. A component of this course may be service learning. Prerequisites: ENVS 1013 and ENVS 2023, or permission of the instructor.

**ENVS-3033. Nonprofit Management (BUSI 3023)**

The course introduces students to the specific issues that arise in managing nonprofit organizations. Topics covered include strategic planning, accountability, board governance, financial planning, fund raising, and human resources.

**ENVS- 3053. Campus Sustainability**

The course examines the practices of environmental auditing as they apply to a university campus. Topics include alternative audit designs, the role of audits in changing institutional and individual behaviour, and the contributions of social sciences to university audits. Students' projects will involve carrying out components of a university wide environmental audit.

**ENVS-3103. Political Parties and Elections in Canada (POLS)**

Canada's major national parties are examined in regard to their historical evolution, internal structure, ideological orientation, and public image and reputation. Trends in voting behaviour are discussed, as are the implications of voting patterns in Canada. Distinctive provincial political parties (such as the Parti Quebecois) are also considered.

**ENVS-3123. The Canadian Constitution: Federalism (POLS)**

This course will focus on the manner in which the evolution of constitutional law has shaped the Canadian federal system. The course will proceed primarily by means of class discussion of leading constitutional decisions and by student presentations.

**ENVS-3203. Science, Technology and Nature (STS)**

In this seminar, students will be asked to question the boundary between culture and nature. Although we will explore how humans have made and remade the "natural" world, often with technologies of almost unimaginable power, we will also consider how natural forces - the sun, the soil, horses, rivers, germs, insects, even gravity - shape our built environments.

**ENVS-3213. Media and Politics in Canada (COPP 3033, POLS)**

This course will examine the role of media in Canadian politics and government. It will examine the effect of media on policy agenda setting and public opinion, and how political elites seek to use media to advance political goals. Prerequisite: POLS 1013, or permission of the instructor.

**ENVS-3323. Hunter-Gatherers in the Modern World (ANTH)**

This course begins by exploring the definitions of hunter-gatherers and by examining what sets them apart from other peoples. Early evolutionary views of hunter-gatherers are contrasted with current research on the diverse economic foundations of hunter-gatherer societies. The course covers questions of identity, property rights, gender, modes of production, and distribution of resources, drawing upon examples from various geographical areas. Prerequisite: ANTH 1013.

**ENVS-3333. Environmental Economics (ECON 3323)**

An examination of the relationship between the ecological system, economics, and institutions. Topics covered may include such issues as technological choice, steady state economics, limits to growth, the adequacy of the market mechanism, world food supplies,

the economics of conservation, and alternative futures.

#### **ENVS-3523. Environmental Ethics (RELG)**

This course considers uses and abuses of the environment that are raising religious and ethical issues of importance to its integrity. Subjects to be covered include concepts and assumptions about the environment, the rights of nature, anthropocentrism and biocentrism as bases of conflicting values about nature and environment, developing an ethic of respect regarding the environment, and reflection upon the formulation of policy, laws, and regulations.

#### **ENVS-3723. Human Ecology (ANTH)**

Since its beginning, anthropology has been interested in the relationship between people and the geographical setting where cultures develop. The history of the discipline is full of contrasting examples in which nature and culture are used, within different conceptual and methodological frames, to explain cultural change, social structure, cultural development, and landscape history, among other topics. The main objective of this course is to explore such different approaches using examples from different biogeographical regions. Prerequisite: None.

#### **ENVS-4003. Capstone Seminar**

This is a required course for the Major in Environment & Society which is designed to integrate the entire program of study. The seminar will focus on developing a multidisciplinary understanding of a selection of environmental issues as determined by student and faculty interests. Issues considered will include ecological damage, social origins, and alternative approaches to addressing problems. Prerequisites: ENVS 3013 and ENVS 3023 or permission of the instructor.

#### **ENVS-4006. Work-Study Project**

This is a course in experiential learning for students in the final year of their Major in ENVS. Students will work with a non-profit organization which is actively involved in addressing environmental problems. Each student's activities will be designed under the direction of a faculty supervisor in consultation with the student and the work-place mentor. Enrolment is subject to the approval of the Coordinator of the Environment and Society program.

*NOTE: Not all courses listed are offered each year. Please consult with the Department Chair for more information about current and planned course offerings.*