

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY STUDIES

---

## STEWARDSHIP MATTERS

Environmental & Sustainability Studies (ESS) is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary concentration that offers students the opportunity to explore and critically examine issues related to the environments we share with other humans and with other species. Students will have the opportunity to consider the scientific, social, cultural, cognitive, intellectual, and spiritual dimensions of human ecological relationships to the natural world and how these relationships affect the well-being of human, non-human, and shared communities alike. In addition, students develop the tools to form, evaluate, and act upon environmental questions at the local, national, and global levels.

## PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the ESS program is to bring together faculty and students to explore human-environment relationships. Environmental degradation produced by human activity poses an existential threat to humans and other-than-humans. Communities around the world are creating alternative social, political, economic, and ethical structures and worldviews to transition to a just and sustainable future. The Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program prepares students to become part of this transformation.

Students who choose a concentration in Environmental and Sustainability Studies will:

1. Understand the critical urgency of threats to our ecological communities and systems,
2. Deepen their understanding of the connections between individual and community well-being and the integrity of the places we inhabit,
3. Deconstruct systems of privilege and power to examine how they threaten natural systems and environments,
4. Explore the rich variety of existing practices and perspectives that represent sustainable alternatives to dominant socio-economic structures,
5. Focus on the interconnected socio-cultural, economic, political, and ethical systems that lead to environmental degradation and/or environmental sustainability,
6. Explore sustainable alternatives to human ecology and communities,
7. Reflect on the meaning of being human in a more-than-human world, and
8. Engage in community stewardship projects and/or creative expression that combines environmental theory and practice.

Students are required to take a total of five courses. At least one course must be at the 200 level and at least one course must be at the 300 or 400 level. Students may take a maximum of two courses from any one academic department.

Every student will take at least one course that incorporates an action or creative component. Criteria for meeting the action or creative component include:

- Design alternatives

- Engage in community service and environmental action (i.e.: policy brief, internship, volunteer, service learning)
- Produce creative work (i.e.: writing, visual or musical piece, performance, PR, video/podcast)

Students are encouraged to broaden their environmental understanding by:

- Fulfilling their NSP LASC requirements with courses listed in the Environmental Science major, or
- Taking CH-106 or BI-117, or
- Taking any of these courses as electives.

Environmental and Sustainability Studies is an interdisciplinary program drawing from the faculty of all departments at Worcester State University. For more information, students may contact the Director of Environmental and Sustainability Studies:

Matthew Ortoleva  
 Director of Environmental and Sustainability Studies  
 Associate Professor of English