

Faculty of Environmental Studies - York Campus

The Bachelor in Environmental Studies

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Faculty of Environmental Studies

Dean:

P. Victor, 355 Lumbers, (416) 736-5284

Associate Deans:

B. Kettel and L. Molot, (416) 736-5252

Undergraduate Programme Director:

R. Rogers, (416) 736-5252

Director, Student Programmes:

Janet Morrison, (416) 736-5252

Student Programmes Office:

352 Lumbers, (416) 736-5252

General Information:

BES Student Programmes Advisor, (416) 736-5252

The Bachelor in Environmental Studies

The York Bachelor in Environmental Studies (BES) Specialized Honours Degree is a four-year, interdisciplinary programme which combines breadth and focus in the field of environmental studies. Members of the Faculty of Environmental Studies (FES) include people from a wide range of backgrounds — from planning to philosophy, economics to education, architecture to anthropology — but all share a commitment to exploring the complex questions and solutions of the human and environmental problems facing the world. If you have a strong interest in understanding these problems and are serious about wanting to play a part in looking for possible, sustainable solutions, then York's BES program is designed for you!

York's BES programme is designed to equip you with knowledge and understanding to deal effectively yet sensitively with complex environmental and social problems arising at the local, national or global level. This broad mission, and our interdisciplinary perspective make York's BES different. We are looking for students who are environmentally and socially committed. At York you will join an interdisciplinary community of teaching faculty, other undergraduates, and graduate students who share this ideal.

Using the four theme areas as a guide (see below for a description of the theme areas), you will develop, in consultation with an advisor, your own Programme Plan which you will update each year. This plan ensures that you meet the requirements of the degree, and that you have the opportunity to pursue your own interests and goals. This self-directed approach to your education is what makes the BES programme so unique.

What the BES programme offers:

- interdisciplinary expertise to understand and solve environmental problems;
- opportunities to develop specific skills and in-depth learning;
- a wide range of courses covering humanities, social sciences and environmental science;
- an outlook that includes local and global, philosophical and applied questions;
- an emphasis on bringing theoretical and practical matters together in the classroom;
- the knowledge and skills needed for environmental careers and graduate studies;
- an atmosphere in which you know that your learning matters.

Theme Areas

Nature, Technology and Society

This theme area is chosen by students who want to gain an understanding of the intricacies of natural systems, stressing the dependence of human society on nature and our impact on it. Here you can examine the impacts of human intervention in the environment, along with the cultural, technological, and economic forces that shape such impacts. Topics in this area include:

- environmental conservation;
- resource management;
- technology and society;
- global ecology;
- environmental thought and ethics;

- environmental writing;
- natural history.

Global Development, Peace and Justice

This theme area involves the study of the relationships among world issues such as global socio-economic development, environmental sustainability, peace and social justice. Topics include:

- global development;
- international development;
- human needs;
- conflict resolution and peace studies;
- sustainable development;
- gender and development;
- human rights and refugee studies.

Environmental Policy and Action

Students in this theme area explore how environmental and social policy are developed and carried out, and how they may be influenced by social movements and advocacy groups, as well as by established interests. Topics include:

- environmental planning and impact studies;
- environmental policy and law;
- environmental politics and organizations;
- social movements and advocacy;
- gender and socio-political change;
- communications and attitude change.

Human Settlement and Population

Students in this theme area study the dynamics of human populations, and the relationships between populations and their natural and cultural environments. Studies focus on how settled environments have evolved as human habitats, the processes by which they are now being managed, and on the problems human settlements -- cities and villages alike -- will face in future. Topics in this area include:

- demography and migration;
- urban management;
- urban and regional planning and design;
- community development;
- gender relations;
- healthy environments;
- native/Canadian relations.

The BES Programme

The four-year BES Specialized Honours Programme combines a structured core of required courses with a wide range of choices in elective courses. In the first two years of the BES programme, students take a series of required courses that introduces them to the range of environmental studies, while building critical, analytic and writing skills. This portion of the programme is highly-structured, with one elective course available each term, in order to give students the foundation upon which to design their own programme to meet their particular area of interest. In the final two years of the programme, by contrast, there is only one required course per term, and the remainder of the courses are electives. These electives can be chosen from either within the Faculty of Environmental Studies, or from other faculties at York which offer courses of related interest.

BES Programme Plan

In order to link the required courses with the chosen elective courses, and to set out a specific research focus, students develop their own Programme Plan. The Programme Plan is an evolving document which is updated at least once per year. Because environmental studies is an interdisciplinary programme which does not limit analytical approaches, nor does it limit the subjects to be studied, the programme plan provides the student with the opportunity to define their interests within the broad field of environmental studies.

The Programme Plan records the required courses the student has taken or still needs to take, as well as outlining a specific research interest which

students develop in the elective part of their programmes. Beginning in the fall of their first year with a Programme Plan Statement, the Programme Plan develops into a record of learning for each student as they move through the programme, culminating in their Senior Honours Work (ENVS 4000 6.0).

Advising and the Programme Plan

To assist students with the development of their own Programme Plan, advising sessions are organized in the required courses of the BES programme. In first year, students develop their Programme Plan Statement and Theme Concentration Statement in the BES Workshop (ENVS 1200 6.0). In second year, the Programme Plan is developed in Methods in Environmental Studies I (ENVS 2010 6.0) and in third year BES students develop their final Programme Plan and Honours Thesis Work Proposal in Methods in Environmental Studies II (ENVS 3011 3.0). Sessions within these required courses are organized to provide students with the opportunity to meet and experience lectures from faculty members in their specific areas of interest. Peer advising will also be organized in small groups sessions to aid students in the development of their Programme Plan.

Enriching your BES Programme

The BES Programme Plan allows you to take advantage of many diverse educational opportunities in addition to your own theme concentration:

- pursue a double major, or a minor, in one of the disciplines in the Faculty of Arts;
- pursue a minor with the Faculty of Fine Arts (specific programmes only) or with the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science (specific programmes only);
- pursue the Certificate in Geographical Information Systems (see the BES Supplementary Calendar for details);
- pursue the Certificate in Refugee and Migration Studies (see the section on Certificate Programmes for details);
- pursue a Concurrent degree programme with the Faculty of Education leading to BES/BEEd degrees (see Faculty of Education listing for details);

Practical Experience in the BES Programme:

You can take advantage of the flexibility in the BES programme to gain practical experience:

- Practicum: you may elect to do 12 weeks or more of practical experience in your field of study, which will then be noted on your transcript;
- Through your honours thesis, engage in relevant paid or volunteer experience that will assist you in your honours thesis work;
- Through directed study, engage in a relevant activity under the supervision of a professor.

Degree Requirements

Programme Credit Requirements

To graduate with the BES Specialized Honours Degree a student must pass courses worth 120 credits (equivalent to 20 full-year courses). At least 60 credits and a maximum of 90 credits shall be in Environmental Studies courses. To remain in the BES programme, an overall grade point average (g.p.a.) of at least 5 (midpoint of the C+ range) must be maintained.

Programme Coherence Requirements

BES students are required to present the following non-credit requirements as part of their programme towards the BES Degree (see also "Journey through the BES Programme" in the BES Supplementary Calendar.)

Programme Plan

At the end of ENVS 1200 6.0 students write a concise statement of their theme concentration in consultation with their advisor. This statement is intended to guide your second year course selection, to indicate your

future programme objectives, and to ensure that the courses you have chosen keep important options open to you. The statement is submitted and approved at the end of the first year of full-time study.

At the end of your second year a more extensive statement of your educational objectives is written. Advising and course selection approval for this Programme Plan takes place in ENVS 2010 6.0, Methods in Environmental Studies I. The Programme Plan ensures that you meet your theme concentration and other requirements of the BES Degree.

Advising for your final Programme Plan, including your Honours Thesis Work proposal will take place in ENVS 3011 3.0, Methods in Environmental Studies II. Both the final Programme Plan and Honours Thesis Work Proposal are approved by your Thesis Supervisor and the Undergraduate Programme Director.

Course Requirements

Courses in the BES programme are chosen according to the following requirements:

(a) General Education:

Following York's philosophy of undergraduate education, study in humanities and the natural sciences is required of all BES students. The BES humanities requirement is normally satisfied by taking one 1000-level course from the Division of Humanities. The BES natural science requirement is normally met by taking ENVS 1500 6.0 Introduction to Science for Environmental Studies.

(b) Required Core Environmental Studies Courses (39 credits):

ENVS 1000 6.0 Approaches to Environmental Studies
 ENVS 1200 6.0 BES Workshop
 ENVS 2000 3.0 Paradigms in Environmental Studies
 ENVS 2010 6.0 Methods in Environmental Studies I
 ENVS 2500 6.0 Applied Environmental Sciences
 ENVS 3000 3.0 Environmental Ethics
 ENVS 3011 3.0 Methods in Environmental Studies II
 ENVS 4000 6.0 Senior Honours Work

(c) Theme Foundation Requirement (6 credits minimum):

two or more of:

ENVS 2100 3.0 Foundations of Nature, Technology and Society;
 ENVS 2200 3.0 Foundations of Human Settlements and Population;
 ENVS 2300 3.0 Foundations of Global Development, Peace and Justice;
 ENVS 2400 3.0 Foundations of Environmental Policy & Action.

(d) Depth Requirement:

18 credits of environmental studies (ENVS) courses at the 3000 or 4000 level. Of these, at least 6 credits of ENVS courses at the 4000-level ENVS courses not including Senior Honours Work, ENVS 4000 6.0. Courses are selected in the context of the Programme Plan.

(e) Breadth Requirement:

24 credits, in addition to the general education requirements, are taken as electives outside of the Faculty. These courses are selected in the context of the Programme Plan.

(f) Elective Courses:

Up to 21 credits taken from any undergraduate Faculty (including FES). Courses are selected in the context of the Programme Plan and with the assistance of an advisor.

(g) Theme Concentration Requirement:

In meeting Theme Foundation, Depth, and Breadth Requirements, students must include at least 27 credits in courses inside or outside of FES (beyond the "foundation" course in the theme) that are relevant to the student's chosen theme concentration. Relevance is established through approval of each student's individualized Programme Plan.

Combined Programmes

A BES student may apply to pursue a Double Major programme or a Major/Minor programme in the Faculty of Arts, or a Major/Minor programme in the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science or the Faculty of Fine Arts. In such cases, application must be made using the application form available through the FES Student Programmes Office, subject to approval by the Undergraduate Programme Director and the other academic unit involved. The details of the requirements for each Double Major or Minor

programme in the Faculties of Arts, Pure and Applied Science and Fine Arts are set by the programme involved. BES students should consult the York University Undergraduate Calendar to determine the general requirements of the Arts, Science, or Fine Arts programme in which they are interested. Further details can be obtained from the department supplementary calendars or the web site (<http://www.yorku.ca>).

The following principles apply to all students in the Faculty of Environmental Studies or the Faculties of Arts, Pure and Applied Science and Fine Arts, who propose to pursue an Honours Double Major programme or an Honours Major/Minor programme between the Faculties of Environmental Studies and Arts, Pure and Applied Science or Fine Arts:

1. All students will have a "home" Faculty; students enrolled in the Faculty of Environmental Studies will receive the BES upon successful completion of their programme; students in the Faculty of Arts will receive the BA; students in the Faculty of Pure and Applied Science will receive the BSc and students in the Faculty of Fine Arts will receive the BFA or BA;
2. All students in these programmes must maintain Honours standing; for Arts and Fine Arts students that will mean a cumulative g.p.a. of 5 over all courses including those in Environmental Studies; for Environmental Studies students that will mean a cumulative g.p.a. of 5 over all courses including those in Arts, Science, or Fine Arts;
3. Students must meet the in-Faculty course requirements of their home Faculty;
4. Students must meet the General Education requirements of their home Faculty;
5. For a Major in Environmental Studies, Arts students require 42 credits in Environmental Studies (36 credits for Linked Interdisciplinary Programmes), including:
 - ENVS 1000 6.0 Approaches to Environmental Studies;
 - 3 credits in the 2000 level "Foundations" series;
 - ENVS 2000 3.0 Paradigms in Environmental Studies;
 - ENVS 2500 6.0 Applied Environmental Sciences;
 - ENVS 3000 3.0 Environmental Ethics;
 - 12 credits at the 4000 level;
 - 9 additional credits at the 3000 or 4000 level;
 - approval of the BES Undergraduate Programme Director for the selection of courses.
6. For a Minor in Environmental Studies, Arts, Pure and Applied Science and Fine Arts students require five full courses (30 credits) in Environmental Studies, including: ENVS 1000 6.0 Approaches to Environmental Studies; ENVS 2000 3.0 Paradigms in Environmental Studies; one half-course (3 credits) in the 2000-level "Foundations" series; ENVS 3000 3.0 Environmental Ethics; 9 additional credits at the 3000-level and 6 credits at the 4000-level. The approval of the Undergraduate Programme Director is required for the selection of courses.

Students in Environmental Studies must meet the established degree requirements of the Major or Minor programme selected in the Faculty of Arts, Pure and Applied Science or Fine Arts. Only seven-course or eight-course major programmes or approved Linked Interdisciplinary Programmes may be selected.

Students should be aware that in order to complete the requirements of the Honours Double Major or Honours Major/Minor programmes it may be necessary to complete more than 20 courses (120 credits).

Application:

For application procedures and forms, please contact the Student Programmes Office, Room 352, Leonard G. Lumbers Building.

Grading and Academic Standards

Refer to the Grades and Grading Schemes section.

Academic Standards

To remain in the BES specialized honours programme, and to graduate upon completion of 120 credits, a cumulative grade point average of 5.0 (midpoint of the C+ range) or higher must be attained.

Academic Programme

A typical syllabus for students pursuing the BES Specialized Honours degree will be:

Year One:

- AS/HUMA 1xxx 9.0 Humanities
- ES/ENVS 1000 6.0 Approaches to Environmental Studies
- ES/ENVS 1200 6.0 BES Workshop
- ES/ENVS 1500 6.0 Introduction to Science for Environmental Studies
- 6 credits - elective

Year Two:

- ES/ENVS 2000 3.0 Paradigms in Environmental Studies
- ES/ENVS 2010 6.0 Methods in Environmental Studies I
- ES/ENVS 2500 6.0 Applied Environmental Sciences
- 6 credits in ES/ENVS theme foundation courses
- 6 credits - breadth
- 6 credits - elective

Year Three:

- ES/ENVS 3000 3.0 Environmental Ethics
- ES/ENVS 3011 3.0 Methods in Environmental Studies II
- 9 credits in theme concentration
- 9 credits - breadth
- 6 credits - elective

Year Four:

- ES/ENVS 4000 6.0 Senior Honours Work
- 9 required credits in theme concentration
- 9 credits - breadth
- 6 credits - elective