

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES, MS

Environment and Resources is a research program offering master's and PhD degrees based on the premise that solutions to environmental challenges require interdisciplinary approaches. Faculty and students are oriented to environmental problems rather than to disciplines. Students are encouraged to explore the specific area that interests them by drawing on the insights and methods of multiple disciplines. The focus is on gaining the knowledge needed to understand the intellectual context of their work and the skills necessary to conduct original research. The program fosters experimentation and innovation, not the mastering of a narrowly defined set of prepackaged competencies. The objective is to produce graduates who are prepared to function comfortably in the complex professional and social communities within which solutions to environmental problems must be found.

The program mandates interdisciplinarity through curriculum requirements, the structure of the student's faculty advisory committee, and the research endeavor. Students are required to take some courses in diverse disciplinary topics and other courses that are intended to strengthen problem-solving skills. A thesis (MS) or a dissertation (PhD) is required of all students. Each student's faculty advisory committee must consist of persons who collectively ensure interdisciplinary support and evaluation. Students can pursue interests over the full range of environmental studies from more of a physical or biological science research project to those emphasizing more of the social sciences or humanities including policy, environmental history, community action, or social justice. Students who feel a need to follow a more structured course of study may also pursue certificates in Culture, History, and Environment or Energy Analysis and Policy. Any bachelor's degree from an accredited institution may be acceptable.