Colgate Environmental Studies

How exactly does this program work?

Environmental Studies is an interdisciplinary program within the Division of University Studies. The program depends upon the generous contributions from faculty in other departments. The program is administered by a director (Dr. Tim McCay) with guidance from a steering committee: Bob Turner, Beth Parks, Frank Frey, Jason Kawall, April Baptiste, Paul Pinet, Chris Henke, and Adam Burnett. Invaluable help is provided by our Program Assistant, Theresa Evans, and Administrative Assistants, Sarah Marcellus and Linda Rauscher. The Environmental Studies Program administers five majors: Environmental Biology, Environmental Economics, Environmental Geography, Environmental Geology, and Environmental Studies. Department-affiliated majors are administered jointly with departments. Additionally, students may also minor in Environmental Studies.

Spring 2012 ENST Course Offerings

Courses offered in spring 2012 that can be used to satisfy requirements of majors or the minor in the Environmental Studies Program (see course offerings booklet for details).

- ARTS 201 Digital Studio
- ARTS 211 Drawing I
- ARTS 211 Video Art I
- ARTS 241 Photography I
- ARTS 251 Printmaking I
- BIOL 103 Topics in Adaptation
- BIOL 211 Ecol, Ecol Diversity
- BIOL 212 Molecules, Cells, Genes
- BIOL 220 Biostatistics
- BIOL 330 Conservation Biology
- BIOL 333 Microbiology
- BIOL 335 Limnology
- BIOL 355 Adv Topics
- BIOL 355 Adv Topics
- CORE 120 Earth Resources
- CHEM 102 General Chemistry
- CHEM 157 Intro to Economics
- ECON 251 Intermed. Microecon.
- ECON 252 Intermed. Macrocon.
- ECON 275 Applied Econometrics
- ECON 428 Resource & Env Econ
- ENGL 204 Native Amer Writers
- ENST 321 Global Environ. Justice
- ENST 333 Environ Health-Africa
- ENST 344 America’s Public Lands
- ENST 390 Com-based Study Environ
- ENST 490 Env Studies
- ENST 111 Global Shift
- GEOL 101 Env Geology
- GEOL 111 Global Shift
- GEOL 121 Human Impact on Environ
- GEOL 135 Oceanography
- GEOL 190 Evolution of Earth
- GEOL 202 Petrology
- GEOL 205 Climate & Society
- GEOL 241 Cartography
- GEOL 245 Geographic Info Syst
- GEOL 254 Research Question & Proposal
- GEOL 321 Gender, Justice, Environ
- GEOL 322 Ecologies of the City
- GEOL 325 Water Resources Society
- GEOL 326 Environ Hazards
- GEOL 332 Weather & Climate
- GEOL 401 Senior Seminar
- GEOL 415 Paleontology Mar. Life
- GEOG 111 Global Shift
- GEOG 121 Human Impact on Environ
- GEOG 131 Physical Geography
- GEOG 205 Climate & Society
- GEOG 241 Cartography
- GEOG 245 Geographic Info Syst
- GEOG 254 Research Question & Proposal
- GEOG 321 Gender, Justice, Environ
- GEOG 322 Ecologies of the City
- GEOG 325 Water Resources Society
- GEOG 326 Environ Hazards
- GEOG 332 Weather & Climate
- GEOG 401 Senior Seminar
- GEOG 415 Paleontology Mar. Life
- GEOG 430 Acid Rain Seminar
- GEOG 111 Global Shift
- GEOG 121 Human Impact on Environ
- GEOG 131 Physical Geography
- GEOG 205 Climate & Society
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- GEOG 326 Environ Hazards
- GEOG 332 Weather & Climate
- GEOG 401 Senior Seminar
- GEOG 415 Paleontology Mar. Life
- GEOG 430 Acid Rain Seminar
Message from the ENST Director

Learning About “Your Place”

Prof. Tim McCay
Director of the Environmental Studies Program and Associate Professor of Biology

“In the end we will only conserve what we love. We will only love what we understand. We will only understand what we are taught.” Baba Dioum

I was fortunate to attend the recent meeting of the Association for Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education along with John Pumilio, our Sustainability Coordinator, and five students. My attention there was primarily aimed at better understanding the role of community-based environmental education, something that we have emphasized quite strongly in our new curriculum. I found that we are not alone in our efforts to place students in local communities to engage in real environmental predicaments. Many speakers at this conference emphasized that community-based study of environmental issues helps foster what social scientists call a “sense of place.” This refers to the connection people have with a place and the special meaning attributed to it.

People have little motivation to conserve things they do not understand. And environmental studies, because it is interdisciplinary, provides a nice context in which to learn about the environment and all of the ways people interact with it. What is the natural (geological and biological) history of a place? How have people affected this place and how have they been affected by it themselves? How has it steered human culture? What obligations do we have to this place? All of these questions and others form material in courses of the Environmental Studies Program at Colgate. And, lest we think about this all too narrowly, let me point out that place is scalable. The house in which you were born, your home town, and Earth are all places to which you might feel connected.

For tens of thousands of years people avoided doing much harm to their environment in part because of the lack of capacity to do so. We now have the technological tools and sheer numbers to do significant harm, including long-term damage to the natural systems that will support ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. We must therefore choose not to do damage, and thankfully this is our prerogative. Only when we know our environment in a profound sense, we will be motivated to care for it well. This is the challenge we face in environmental studies.

All environmental studies majors and minors at Colgate take ENST 390, Community-based Study of Environmental Issues, a capstone experience in our program. This course toggles between a focus on campus sustainability issues, as it has had this term, and a focus off-campus. Next semester, Professors Klepeis and Scull in the Geography Department will teach the course. They will work with various community partners toward better understanding, and improving, the environment of Upstate New York.

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) 2011 in Pittsburgh, PA

A Student’s Perspective

Carolyn Fox
Colgate Class of 2012

This past fall break I attended the 2011 Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Conference and Expo (AASHE). Day one consisted of a Student Summit where pairs of students presented both successes and obstacles of various green initiatives they have implemented on campus. The presenters were eager to help interested students find ways to adopt these projects at their own campuses. It became a unique networking opportunity in which everyone shared the same goal of promoting sustainability and bounced ideas off each other on how to further the cause.

One session that particularly fascinated me was by University of Pittsburgh students who created a pamphlet for freshmen orientation that includes information about sustainability of local restaurants, energy saved from various activities, and locations for recycling on campus. Additionally, students from Bentley University shared a one-day mini sustainability course that they incorporated into their freshmen seminars. This is a great sign, as people do not typically associate business schools with environmental awareness.

The most memorable event at the conference was the Opening Keynote given by Majora Carter. Known for catalyzing a shift toward sustainability while simultaneously creating jobs in the south Bronx, her speech was eloquent and the audience was packed with 5,000 listeners. One of her most intriguing projects is the rooftop garden that removes carbon from urban settings without disrupting people on the ground.

Overall, I was quite impressed by the wealth of ideas presented by both students and professors. To anyone granted the opportunity to attend AASHE in the future I would absolutely recommend you take advantage of it. I learned an incredible amount in three days and would say that this is one of the most eye-opening experiences I’ve had at Colgate.

“Everyone shared the same goal of promoting sustainability,”
-Carolyn Fox ‘12
Meet Janine Oliver

Career Advisor and COVE Team Advisor

I grew up in New Jersey, the "Garden State." (Don't laugh.) After earning an AB from Princeton University, I worked as a special education teacher, a ropes course facilitator, and a youth and family therapist. I arrived at Colgate from the University of New Hampshire, where I earned an MA in counseling. I am currently in my first semester of work at Colgate at Career Services and the COVE. My specialty advising areas at Career Services include: non-profit, environmental/green careers, finance, psychology, and undecided.

Did I always know what I wanted to do? Well, yes and no. When I was five, I wanted to be a doctor, an artist, and a ballerina (concurrently). Throughout elementary school, I wanted to be an architect, because that's what my grandfather had done. When I got to high school, I excelled at math, so I wanted to be an engineer (which is a whole other story in itself). We each get our career ideas from the world around us. Early ideas come from what we see in books or on TV, from what our family and friends tell us, and from the professionals we interact with in the community (our doctors, teachers, police officers, etc.).

Most people do not grow up with clear ideas about what environmental professionals do, making searching for (or even being able to identify) environmental jobs feel like a daunting task. As a career advisor, my job is to help you approach that task. I work with students at every stage of the process: from those who don't know where to start, to those who need help developing resumes and cover letters that best represent their experiences and skills, to those who know what their dream job is and want help getting there.

Today, I offer you a few bits of advice:

Get involved: Involvement and leadership on campus helps build transferable skills that employers want to see. There are at least a dozen different opportunities to take part in green initiatives on campus. At the COVE, I advise the teams with an environmental focus (Hamilton Outdoor Group, Green Gates, Green Earth Gang, and Clean Water Coalition) and would be happy to help you get involved in one of them.

Partner with Career Services: We help with resumes, cover letters, and interview prep. We direct you to resources to learn about your job field and to find job postings. We help get you connected with faculty, staff, and alumni who will speak to you about their experience in the field.

Do your career "homework"?: Get educated about your career path. Within the field you want to go into, read about companies, stay up to date on current events, go see speakers on campus, and do informational interviews with alumni. Practice talking about the skills, interests, and values that make you a perfect fit for your dream job.

Build a network: ENST and Career Services can both help you get in touch with alumni who have built successful careers. These alumni really WANT to talk to you.

Don't panic: You may or may not get your dream job right out of college. Career paths are seldom linear and most people experience some disappointment along the way. Keep breathing and you'll get there.

I hope to have the opportunity to meet you all! If you are interested in getting involved in a COVE team, you can email me at jeoliver@colgate.edu. If you'd like to see me at Career Services, stop into Spear House to make an appointment or call 7380.

Jenna Taylor
Colgate Class of 2013

Although Green Summit initiatives vary each year, one thing remains constant: the energy. Students, faculty, staff, and community members are given a chance to voice their opinions about sustainability at this event. In this, all the attendees generate a focused and passionate atmosphere by engaging in active dialogue. This sparks involvement and awareness concerning environmental issues. Last spring when I was asked to plan the eleventh annual Green Summit, I knew I had high expectations to meet.

The Green Summit is an annual event that takes action on initiatives to reduce Colgate's environmental footprint and to address our social responsibility as an institution. It is a collaborative environmental think tank to improve Colgate sustainability. At the summit participants split up into break-out groups, each of which brainstorms and formulates an action plan to address one of the initiatives with action by the end of the year. This year there were nine groups, some of them were brand new ideas to apply to the Hamilton community, while others built off of previously existing environmental clubs. The new initiatives this year are Hydraulic Fracturing Awareness, Environmental Education to 2nd grade students at Madison Central School, and Bagless in Hamilton (which plans to reduce the use of plastic bags). The existing groups were built off the Composting Club, Campus Recycling, Shapna Coffee, and Green Thumbs, among a few others.

This year’s Green Summit took place on Thursday, October 20th. I worked with three other leaders on campus, Laura Isanuk, Eric Spencer, and Sarah Ellis, to organize the summit. We planned to emphasize the long-term commitments of attending the summit by holding the leaders of each initiative accountable for sitting through realistic goals for their group, delegating tasks, and scheduling follow-up meetings. By the end of the evening, each group announced what they were excited to achieve at the end of the year. Overall, with approximately 60 people in attendance and nine differing environmental initiatives, the Green Summit turned out to be a great success.

The Green Summit is an event where simple ideas transform into campus-wide efforts. For instance, the Colgate Compost initiative was officially born at the Green Summit. Composting now has its own club, and has achieved so many successes, such as getting Frank and the Coop to compost all of their post-consumer waste! One leader this year came up to me after the event explaining how it enabled his club to garner participants and reach for higher goals. The Green Summit has sparked the beginning of environmental change in Hamilton this year.

Colgate’s Sustainability Office has joined the 21st century.

Follow us today!

- TWITTER: colgatesustainability
- FACEBOOK: Colgate University Sustainability
As many of you are probably unaware of the compost program here at Colgate, here is an update as to what we have been working on recently! The 2011-2012 school year marks an important change in Colgate’s history: the Sustainability Office hired two composting interns, Becca Atkinson (‘14) and Laura Isanuk (‘12), to maintain the accumulating compost pile near Tyler’s Field. The site was originally created Spring of 2011, as part of an effort led by the Compost Club to start a composting program in connection with the dining halls on campus. Currently, we are receiving daily deliveries (thanks to Buildings and Grounds!) of pre-consumer waste from Frank Dining Hall. The interns manage the site 2-3 days a week, which involves covering the food waste with animal bedding (donated by the Biology and Psychology departments) and leaves and grass clippings (also brought by B&G). The stench can be a bit disgusting at times, but luckily last week we received a huge amount leaves from Buildings and Grounds, which has managed to completely mask the smell.

Last week, the various green groups on campus hosted the Green Summit, a bi-annual event that brings students together to organize projects and initiatives that actively make change on campus. Because the Compost Club is currently working closely with Sodexo staff in Frank, and already have a system in place, we decided to think up a more manageable goal for this initiative (hopefully) gets passed, we will begin composting a bit of the food that is normally thrown away.

Members of the club are residents of Boulder, CO, Seattle, WA, San Francisco, CA, and other places where composting is considered a norm and a ritual. As members of the Compost Club, we see a composting program at Colgate as a necessary sustainability effort. As Colgate is currently planning for its Reforestation Project, the Compost Club has decided that the compost we are currently creating will be going to the Project once it has fully broken down. We are currently discussing where we want to see this pile in the future, both in terms of physical location and size, as well as who or what this pile will be benefiting. Possibilities include: the garden, selling the compost we create, and other options. Next year, we plan to expand to post-consumer operations in Frank, and eventually to pre/post-consumer operations in the Coop. Since we are learning as we go, we are trying to make these decisions slowly so that we fully comprehend what we are doing before we bite off more than we can compost.

Reserving a Zipcar can be done several ways – phone, online, or through Android or iPhone mobile applications. Any student age 18 and over can take part. Members age 18-20 can use two Zipcars that are on campus. Members age 21 and over also have access to thousands of Zipcars around the world.

"There is no downside. There is only an upside because not only does it provide access to students, there is no cost to the university," said Restrepo. He added that Zipcar will help improve Colgate’s growing sustainability efforts by reducing the overall number of vehicles on campus; approximately 15-20 personally owned vehicles are expected to be eliminated from campus roads through use of the program.

Another goal is to provide a way for students to explore the surrounding area, and to allow them to take a break from the bustle of Colgate life, even if it is for a few hours at a time. Restrepo, who handed out information at the O’Connor Campus Center where the two zipcars were parked, said a substantial amount of students signed up during the hour of the launch, though he was unable to disclose an exact number.

The two Zipcars currently available for use on campus are a 2011 Honda Insight Hybrid and a 2012 Ford Focus, both of which are Smart Way fuel-efficient vehicles. Initial student opinion about the program was positive.

"Zipcars are great for campus because they allow transportation for those who can’t bring cars to campus, and because they give international students the opportunity to drive in the United States,” said James Speight ’14.