Environmental Humanities

Degree conferred
Philosophiae doctor in scientiis humanis oeculogiae / Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Humanities (PhD)

Commencement of studies
An application for admission may be submitted at any time.

Regulation
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/1Q *(French and German only)*

Application procedure
Candidates with Swiss qualifications
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/Ui3b4
Candidates with foreign qualifications
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/2KPbe

Fribourg profile

Research in the *Environmental Sciences Domain* is based on an interdisciplinary, interfaculty and humanistic approach. The objective of the Environmental Humanities doctoral programme is to scrutinise environmental challenges and methods for resolving problems in the fields of the environment, sustainability and climate change from a humanistic perspective. It therefore places a particular emphasis on ethical issues and the challenges of normative justice.

Content and areas of research
The doctoral programme focusses on an individual research project carried out within three to four years, supervised by the Chair for Environmental Humanities. At the end of their PhD, students must produce a thesis. Research by doctoral students can be part of an ongoing research project in the *Environmental Sciences Domain* or an independent study relevant to the research conducted in the *Environmental Sciences Domain*.
Current research in the *Environmental Sciences Domain* is geared to issues of justice and conceptual questions about the differentiation of responsibilities in dealing with environmental challenges. The overarching objective of this research is to devise ethically viable and interdisciplinary implementable solutions to environmental challenges from a wide range of policy domains, spheres of life and scientific disciplines. The research areas in the *Environmental Sciences Domain* are:

– Environmental justice in an interdisciplinary context
In empirical research on environmental justice, unequal environmental burdens are usually automatically considered as injustices. However, from a normative perspective, this is not necessarily the case. This research field investigates both the appropriate distribution of environmental risks and burdens, as well as the fair differentiation of responsibilities with a view to the implementation of corresponding measures. One particular focus is on measures for climate adaptation, issues concerning climate loss and damage, and implementing geoengineering technologies.

– Institutions for sustainable environmental policy
Implementing environmental protection and climate measures presents a challenge for conventional national governance structures. Environmental challenges are not limited to existing national borders, and their consequences have an impact that reaches far into the future. This area of research investigates the institutional structures aimed at ensuring sustainable, efficient and effective environmental policy. Of particular interest here are, firstly, democratic institutions for more sustainable policy. A second focus lies on the requisite conditions that allow collective actors, such as states, to exercise their environmental responsibilities.

– Ethical decision-making for environmental practice
Where environmental issues are concerned, ethical studies usually deal with the justification of environmental measures, but rarely with the ethical challenges that arise from implementing environmental protection and climate action. This area of research addresses the implementation of environmental or climate measures. The declared objective is to develop tools for analysing and resolving ethical conflicts in environmental practice. Inspired by environmental pragmatism and established practices in clinical and nursing ethics, tools for ethical decision-making are developed and applied to selected case studies.

– Ethics for animals and the environment
In the Anthropocene and a globalised world, animals and the environment are threatened by multiple and severe impacts of the global economy and human interactions with non-human nature. These challenges require addressing the moral and political dimensions of human interactions with animals and the environment. It is essential to explore the duties and responsibilities owed to animals, especially wild animals, and to ecosystems for the services and biodiversity they provide. Issues such as conservation ethics and the moral implications of climate change, habitat destruction on animals, or classical questions about the moral value and significance of non-human nature are among the many topics addressed in this area of research.

Skills acquired
A doctorate in Environmental Humanities further developes your capacity in analytical thinking, precise reasoning and detecting the normative implications of measures for implementing policy or social requirements in environmental practice. In addition, you will acquire in-depth scientific, social and legal knowledge in the context of your research subject. Wherever possible, the research projects are carried out in cooperation with researchers from other disciplines, or with staff from government institutions. In addition, doctoral students can attend lecture series and take part in vocational training courses, publication projects, and national and international conferences. Where possible they will be involved in teaching.

Funding and salary
Doctoral research is financed either through assistant positions in the *Environmental Sciences Domain* or through third-party funding acquired by the supervisor or the doctoral candidate her- or himself. Salaries of employed doctoral candidates correspond to the

standards of the Faculty of Science and Medicine. Vacancies for doctoral candidates are published on the News page of the *Environmental Sciences Domain*.

Supervisors
PhD theses in Environmental Humanities are supervised by Prof. Ivo Wallimann-Helmer.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

No ECTS credits can be earned.

Doctoral school

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Admission

In order to be admitted to a doctorate the candidate must have been awarded an academic **bachelor's and master's degree** or an equivalent qualification from a university recognised by the University of Fribourg.

Before applying for a doctorate the candidate must contact **a professor** who would be willing to supervise the thesis work.

There is **no general right** to be admitted to a doctorate.

The respective conditions of admission for each doctoral study programme are reserved.

Contact

Environmental Sciences and Humanities Institute – UniFR-ESH
Chemin du Musée 4
1700 Fribourg
Prof. Ivo Wallimann-Helmer
environment@unifr.ch
https://studies.unifr.ch/go/en-environmentalsciences

Doc- Postdoc-portal

http://www.unifr.ch/phd