Environmental Humanities and Sustainability Studies

Degree conferred
Master of Science in Environmental Humanities and Sustainability Studies

Languages of study
Study in English, French and German

Commencement of studies
Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies
Ph.D.

Anthropogenic climate change, natural degradation, and loss of biodiversity but also sustainable food and energy production, resource depletion, and waste disposal demand immediate action and governance. The management of these environmental challenges has already caused and will increasingly engender ethical concerns, dilemmas, and conflicts. The master programme «Environmental Humanities and Ethics in Interdisciplinary Contexts» teaches special competences in humanist and ethical approaches to deal with environmental challenges in sustainability, biodiversity and climate governance. The unique competences acquired in this master programme are integrative and comprehensive knowledge on how to analyse environmental conflicts in various contexts to propose ethically sound solutions to environmental challenges.

Profile of the study programme

The master proghramme «Environmental Humanities and Ethics in Interdisciplinary Contexts» educates environmental scientists with a special competence in environmental humanities and ethics. All modules consist of course units providing a general overview or introduction to the fields of studies and allow for specialisation in specific contexts of environmental sciences and humanities. Within this highly interdisciplinary setting, students choose amongst different interdisciplinary contexts at different Faculties where they will deepen their competences, ranging from biology, geosciences to environmental economics and law. A key focus lies on the environmental humanities with a special emphasis on ethical decision-making in environmental practice.

Structure of classes and lectures
All course units of this programme make true interdisciplinarity possible as they are followed in their Faculties and Departments of origin together with students from the respective fields. The programme offers five modules and the master thesis:

1. The *environmental humanities* module consists of courses in the fields of the environmental humanities and in ethics. Examples are courses in environmental ethics, methods of ethical decision-making and courses in environmental history and political ecology.
2. The *geosciences* module deepens knowledge in methods and theory of earth sciences, as well as human and physical geography.
3. The *environmental biology* module extends knowledge in ecology and biological evolution.
4. The *sustainable economy* module provides the necessary background in economic thinking in the context of sustainability.
5. The *environmental law* module focuses on public law at national, European and international levels.

Finally, the master thesis is interdisciplinary, focusing on ethical or humanist aspects of a chosen environmental governance and practice context.

The *environmental humanities* module aims at building in-depth competences in humanist approaches to environmental challenges while a special focus lies on ethics and ethical decision-making. The chosen two other modules provide the necessary generalist background to understand the basic scientific, economic or legal aspects of environmental issues to be governed today. Depending on their prerequisites, students follow more advanced or more basic courses. The master thesis allows a specialisation on the humanist or ethical aspects of the chosen field of research.

Skills acquired and career opportunities
In this master programme, students develop their skills in analytical thinking, precise argumentation and recognising the ethical implications of environmental practice. In addition, they acquire general biological, geoscientific, economic or legal skills to address the environmental challenges of our time, depending on the contexts they have chosen, and specialise further in the context of their master thesis. Studying at the multilingual University of Fribourg enables students to acquire language skills in German, English and French. Most courses are taught in English.
The master programme qualifies students for further research in the environmental sciences and environmental humanities, particularly in applied ethics and philosophy. Career opportunities include environmental administration and public institutions (local, national, regional and international), urban and regional planning, environmental consulting, sustainable development and NGOs with a focus on environmental issues.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

90 ECTS credits, 3 semesters

Curriculum

http://studies.unifr.ch/go/vBvMa

Admission

Master's degree programmes are built on the knowledge and

abilities that were acquired when obtaining a bachelor's degree.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university are admitted to a master's degree programme without any preconditions if they have earned 60 or 90 ECTS credits – depending on the chosen master's degree programme – within the corresponding discipline. However, additional requirements can be required. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg.

Holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss or a foreign university, provided that the bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg, who do not fulfil this condition can be admitted to a master's degree programme with preconditions (which must be successfully completed before starting the master's degree programme) and/or additional requirements (which can be completed during the master's degree programme). The preconditions and/or additional requirements may not exceed 60 ECTS credits in total. The same applies to holders of a bachelor's degree awarded by a Swiss university of applied sciences, according to existing agreements.

The respective conditions of admission for each master's degree programme are reserved.

Alternatives

Also offered as a minor study programme (30 ECTS credits).

Contact

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http://studies.unifr.ch/go/fr-environmentalsciences *(French)*
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/de-environmentalsciences *(German)*