Environmental Sciences and Humanities

Degree conferred
Master of Science in Environmental Sciences and Humanities

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 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 in Environmental Sciences and Humanities educates a new generation of environmental scientists with a special competence in environmental humanities and ethics for resolving governance challenges in the fields of the environment, sustainability and climate change. The unique competences acquired in this master are integrative and comprehensive knowledge on how to analyse environmental conflicts and to propose ethically sound solutions to environmental challenges.

Profile of the study programme

The master programme *Environmental Sciences and Humanities* educates generalists in environmental sciences with a special competence in the environmental humanities and ethics. All modules consist of course units providing more general overviews or introductions to the fields of studies and allow for specialisations in specific fields of environmental sciences and humanities. The programme is based on an interfaculty and a humanistic approach. Within this highly interdisciplinary setting, students achieve key competences in all fields of the environmental sciences ranging from biology, geosciences to environmental economy and law to a key focus 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 is divided into six modules and the master thesis:

1. The *environmental humanities* module, the speciality of this master programme, 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, 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;
6. The *humanities, theology and education* module extends humanist background to environmental challenges.

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

In conjunction with the courses from the *humanities, theology and education* module 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 other four modules provide the necessary generalist background to understand the basic scientific, economic and legal aspects of the 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 ethical aspects of the chosen field of research.

Skills acquired and career opportunities
Students of this master programme develop and strengthen their capacities of analytical thinking, precise reasoning and detecting the ethical implications of environmental practice. In addition, they acquire general scientific, economic and legal knowledge concerning the environmental challenges of today and specialise in the context of their master thesis. Studying at the multi-lingual University of Fribourg allows to gain language competences in English, French and German. However, most of the courses are taught in English.
The master programme *Environmental Sciences and Humanities* qualifies for further research in the fields of environmental sciences and humanities, especially applied ethics and philosophy. Job opportunities include the fields of environmental administration and public institutions (local, national, regional, and international), urban and regional planning, environmental consulting, sustainable development, and NGOs with a focus on the environment.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

120 ECTS credits, 4 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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