

Gettysburg College Environmental Studies Senior Seminar

Area-Based Conservation: Protecting Land and Sea



[Natasha Gownaris](#) (Tasha), faculty in the Environmental Studies Department at Gettysburg College, is seeking community partners for her senior seminar course “Area-Based Conservation” during the Spring 2023 semester. The Environmental Studies Department requires that all majors complete a capstone project. Most of our students meet this requirement through a senior seminar in the fall or spring semester of their senior year. Seminar topics vary across faculty and semesters, but all are required to be interdisciplinary. For example, in Area-Based Conservation, we cover topics like the conservation benefits of protected areas, indigenous and local land management, and the economics of area-based conservation.

What skills and interests are common among Environmental Studies majors?

Given the interdisciplinary nature of our major (with faculty in the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities), our students’ interests range from [environmental journalism, to environmental policy, to wildlife ecology](#). All majors are required to complete a set of core courses that provide a foundation in interdisciplinary thinking (Ecology, Earth Systems Science, Environmental Humanities, GIS) prior to choosing a concentration. Our students have experience with field and lab work, data analysis (GIS, R, SPSS), and science communication.

What are some examples of past student projects in this course?

Student projects are highly varied and are shaped by discussions with community partners. For example, the last time this seminar was taught, student projects ranged from [using app-derived data to identify off-trail hiking “hotspots” at Michaux State Forest](#) to using visitor surveys and GIS to [examine sea level rise and public perceptions of climate change at a National Estuarine Research Reserve](#). Students generally work in groups of 2-4, but this can vary.

What is the timeline for student projects?

Students start thinking about their projects immediately, as all of their work takes place during one semester. Initial project ideas are due by the second week of classes (Feb 1, 2023) and proposals are due by the third week of classes (Feb 8). Work continues throughout the semester, culminating in public presentations on the Friday of the last week of classes (May 3).

How can I express interest as a community partner?

If you are interested in collaborating with the Environmental Studies Department during the Spring 2023 semester (or in future semesters), please let Tasha know [by filling out this brief Google Form](#). Tasha will then reach out to set up an initial meeting.

Thank you! Please feel free to contact Tasha at ngownari@gettysburg.edu with questions.