

Environmental Policy & Law is the discipline focused on developing, implementing, analyzing, and enforcing laws, regulations, and policies that govern human interactions with the environment. Students entering this field need to understand environmental science, public policy, legal systems, economics, and stakeholder engagement in order to develop solutions to complex environmental challenges. Environmental policy and law professionals work at the intersection of science, governance, business, and society to protect natural resources, promote sustainability, and ensure environmental compliance. Some of the critical questions that might be addressed with a career in these fields include:

- *How can environmental laws and regulations effectively address climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution?*
- *How should policymakers balance environmental protection with economic development and social equity?*
- *What legal and policy tools are most effective for managing natural resources and protecting public health?*
- *How can governments, businesses, and communities work together to achieve sustainability goals?*
- *What role should environmental justice play in environmental decision-making and regulation?*



Careers

Careers in **Environmental Policy & Law** involve working with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, consulting firms, advocacy groups, and private industry to develop policies, ensure regulatory compliance, evaluate environmental impacts, and advance sustainable environmental governance.

Career	Potential Employers
Policy Analysis and Government	
Environmental Policy Analyst	EPA, State Environmental Agencies, Congressional Committees, Think Tanks
Legislative Policy Advisor	Federal and State Legislatures, Governors' Offices, Advocacy Organizations
Government Affairs Specialist	Local, State, and Federal Governments, Private Industry
Sustainability Policy Specialist	Local Governments, Corporations, Universities, NGOs
Law and Regulation	
Environmental Attorney	Law Firms, Government Agencies, Public Interest Organizations
Environmental Compliance Specialist	Private Industry, Consulting Firms, Regulatory Agencies
Regulatory Affairs Specialist	Utilities, Energy Companies, Manufacturing Firms, Government Agencies
Environmental Permit Coordinator	Consulting Firms, Engineering Firms, State Agencies
Advocacy and Nonprofits	
Environmental Advocate	Environmental NGOs, Community Organizations, National Advocacy Groups
Environmental Justice Coordinator	Nonprofits, Foundations, Local Governments
Conservation Policy Specialist	NGOs, Land Trusts, International Conservation Organizations
Consulting and Applied Policy	
Environmental Consultant	Consulting Firms, Engineering Firms, Private Industry
Sustainability Consultant	Consulting Firms, Corporations, Universities
Education and Communication	
Environmental Policy Researcher	Universities, Think Tanks, Research Institutes
Science and Policy Communicator	Media Organizations, NGOs, Universities
Public Outreach Coordinator	Government Agencies, Community Organizations, Nonprofits

Coursework & Degree Options

The **Environmental Policy & Law** pathway is a natural fit for Environmental Studies majors, though Environmental Science majors interested in policy, regulation, environmental governance, sustainability, or environmental law may also elect to pursue this pathway. Students interested in careers in environmental policy and law may wish to consider these courses to fill elective requirements within the Environmental majors:



4-cr. Science & Technology laboratory courses:

- GEV 4320 – Air Pollution
- GEV 4323 – Watershed Biogeochemistry
- GEV 4363 – GIS for Conservation Management
- GEV 4324 – Wetland Science and Management

3-cr. Science & Technology elective courses:

- GEV 3308 – Environmental Health
- GEV 4511 – Climate Variability



3-credit elective Environmental Policy & Management courses:

- **GEV 4334 – Environmental Law**
- **GEV 4331 – Environmental Policy and Management**
- GEV 3570 – Land Use Planning and Management
- GEV 3580 – Natural Resources and Conservation
- PA 3000 – Overview of the Nonprofit Sector
- PSC 3265 – Global Environmental Politics



3-credit elective Environmental Social Science and Humanities courses:

- GEV 3004 – Geographies of Environmental Justice
- ETH 3650 – Ethics of the Anthropocene
- HIS 2276 – American Environmental History
- PHI 2121 – Environmental Ethics

Degree Options

- Students may wish to consider a **Minor or Double Major in Political Science**.

Notes:

- Many careers in the **Environmental Policy & Law** pathway will be enhanced by or require an advanced degree. Students interested in environmental law should anticipate pursuing a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree following completion of their undergraduate studies and may want to seek out [Pre-Law Advising](#).
- Students interested in environmental policy and law careers should seek opportunities for internships with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, planning agencies, law firms, or consulting firms.
- Many study abroad programs have courses that are relevant to this pathway and may count towards major requirements. Your academic advisor and the Chair of the Department can provide guidance, along with the Office of Education Abroad, about programs and courses that would be a good fit with this pathway.
- There are additional thematic courses offered every semester that can count toward elective requirements that may be relevant to this pathway.

Alumni Spotlight

Sophie Grueterich

B.A. Environmental Studies and Political Science, Class of 2015

Associate Regional Counsel at U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Sophie worked as a paralegal for two years after graduation before pursuing her J.D. at Georgetown. After earning her J.D. in 2020, Sophie started at the EPA as an Honors Attorney Fellow before becoming Assistant Regional Council and then Associate Regional Council.

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To learn more about this and other career pathways, use the QR code, contact your academic advisor, or contact the Chair of the Department of Geography and the Environment for guidance.

The GEV Career Pathways Page:

