Spring 2027 Course Descriptions – Environmental Studies

EVST 1101 – Intro to Environment Stu

This course offers students a critical and rigorous introduction to the field of environmental studies. Rather than treating the environment as a fixed backdrop, students will examine it as a site of ongoing inquiry and contestation, drawing on scientific, ecological, and sociological perspectives alongside critical political economy. Central to the course is an examination of the organizations and actors — corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit institutions — that both safeguard and, at times, imperil environmental well-being. Students will engage with key environmental concepts, including ecology, urbanization, energy, and climate change, in conversation with foundational social concepts such as justice, power, structure, ideology, class, race, and gender. Particular attention will be paid to how social institutions, including the economy, labor, and neoliberal governance, shape and reinforce unequal environmental outcomes. The course concludes with a sustained examination of environmental justice, environmental racism, and climate justice, situating these issues within pressing global and local debates.

EVST 1810 – Animals in Humans Societies

Open only to EVST majors/minors until 11/16/26. Optional 20-hour service learning component EVST 1890-01. This course explores the surprising, complicated, and diverse roles animals play in human societies, past and present, and around the world. We'll explore topics like pet-keeping, zoos, and animals in sport; dive into our food systems; contemplate mascots, cryptids like the sasquatch, and the rise of capybara cafés. We'll dig into how these relationships shape culture, ethics, and the environment.

EVST 1890 – Service Learning: EVST 1810

Optional 20-hour service learning component for EVST 1810-01. Course counts towards the NTC Public Service requirement. For more information on the service-learning project for this class, visit https://cps.tulane.edu/academics/service-learning-course

EVST 3010 – Food System Leadership

Food systems shape what we eat and influence economies, communities, cultures, health, and the environment. In this course, students examine how food moves from production to consumption and explore questions of food security, equity, sustainability, and resilience.

As communities face growing challenges related to climate change, resource constraints, agricultural production, and unequal access to food, understanding how food systems function is increasingly important. Through interdisciplinary discussion, collaborative projects, and engagement with academic, industry, grassroots, and community perspectives, students investigate conventional and alternative approaches to food systems. Students develop the ability to analyze complex systems, engage diverse perspectives, and evaluate strategies for addressing real-world challenges.

EVST 3310 – Approaches to Environ Studies

This course introduces students from a wide range of academic backgrounds to the economic principles, empirical methods, and policy tools used to analyze today's most pressing environmental and energy challenges. The course is designed to make environmental and energy policy analysis accessible to students with diverse interests and levels of quantitative preparation by emphasizing intuition, real-world applications, and policy relevance before progressively introducing more rigorous analytical and empirical frameworks. Students examine topics such as climate change, pollution, renewable and fossil energy, cost-benefit analysis, externalities, sustainability, and environmental regulation in both U.S. and international contexts. The course also provides an introduction to modern empirical research methods through influential research in environmental and energy economics. By the end of the course, students will have developed the conceptual and analytical foundations needed to critically evaluate environmental policy and understand how researchers design evidence-based solutions to complex environmental problems.

EVST 3500 – Climate Fact/Climate Fiction

How did we come to understand climate change? How has climate change changed the way we understand ourselves? This course will proceed on two parallel tracks. The first will chart the history and the politics of climate change: early discoveries by 19th-century chemists; major scientific breakthroughs during the 1950s; the emergence of global warming as a political issue in the 1980s; and the political paralysis of the present day. We will alternate our historical investigations with the reading of fiction. After beginning with ancient stories of climate anxiety, we'll read a series of novels: dystopias, works of advocacy, surrealism, and realism—fiction that explores the personal and psychic transformations wrought by climate change. Students will develop a foundational understanding of what climate change is doing to the planet, and what it is doing to our lives: to our dreams, our futures, our souls.

EVST 3570 – Mississippi River Colloquium

You could say the American nation was born of the Mississippi River: colonists were drawn west, into a watershed forbidden by the British crown. In the centuries since, this river has shaped ideas of "nature" and "nationhood," even as those ideas have shaped how we perceive the river. This seminar will trace that entangled history by considering how geologists, historians, engineers, novelists, musicians, and journalists have "written" the river. How did they "read" the river, and how did it inform their writing? What does their writing tell us about our present ecological and political crises? New Orleans, at the river's mouth, anchors the course, as the place where the nation's oldest myths about the Mississippi meet its most urgent present-day stakes.

EVST 3610 – Environmental Journalism

How do you write about environmental themes with clarity, inventiveness, and originality? Students in this course will research, write, and revise a reported story on a subject of their choice. To prepare for this assignment, we'll conduct close readings of exemplary reportage, with emphasis on writing about the existential crises facing southern Louisiana, New Orleans, and Tulane itself. You will receive a thorough introduction to the craft of writing nonfiction: choosing a subject, conducting archival research, interviewing sources, structuring a narrative, drawing connections between your story and broader themes, fact-checking and revising. We will examine the distinctions between advocacy and storytelling, and confront the challenges of chronicling humanity's relationship to the natural world. How do you balance a clear explanation of complex subjects with powerful storytelling? How do you accommodate imaginative leaps, surprise, despair, the uncanny? You will develop a strong foundation in the history and scope of environmental literature. And you will become a better writer.

EVST 3890 – Service Learning: EVST 3922

Mandatory 20-hour service learning component for EVST 3933-01. Course counts towards the NTC Public Service requirement. For more information on the service-learning project for this class, visit https://cps.tulane.edu/academics/service-learning-course

EVST 3930 – Environmental Law and Policy

No prior knowledge of law or political science is required. This exciting new offering draws on expertise in the Tulane School of Law to introduce undergraduates to critical issues of environmental law in the US. Students will develop their ability to read, interpret, and apply both statutes and judicial decisions, and will cultivate an appreciation for how law shapes environmental decision-making at a federal, state, and local level. This course will provide an overview of major federal environmental statutes, including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Students will apply these laws to contemporary challenges involving natural resource management, energy production, pollution control, climate mitigation/adaptation, and environmental justice. Finally, students will examine how individuals, corporations, and communities have used these legal and political frameworks to address environmental harm amid competing interests.

EVST 3933 – Urban Gardening

Urban Gardening is part of the interdisciplinary studies program where we bring together Philosophy and Environmental Studies. We will discuss the ethical reasons for home gardening, specifically in an urban setting. We will explore different perspectives on gardening. As we learn the many practical details of how to create and maintain a garden, we will also discover how it can be an important part of ethical living. The course will consist of lectures and discussions, both in-person and online, on Tuesdays. Thursdays will be a gardening day, putting our knowledge to use as we help to cultivate and grow gardens across New Orleans. This course is also a part of service-learning, and each week you will have the opportunity to glean insights about how gardening can impact multiple facets of city life as we serve our community.

EVST 4210 – Environmental and Social Justice in New Orleans

What does it mean to have the right to a clean, healthy, and safe environment, and who gets left behind when that right is denied? Explore the intersection of environmental and social justice as we explore how historical discrimination, politics, and industry shape contemporary environmental experiences in New Orleans. From coastal erosion and toxic industries, together we will learn how people are fighting for a more equitable and sustainable future.

EVST 4410 – Senior Seminar in Environmental Studies

This seminar is about climate policy design and the politics associated with it. After gaining grounding in sociological and political science theory, we move on to discuss different policy options for tackling the "wicked problem" of climate change. The focus is primarily on the United States, though international applications will also be considered.

EVST 4890 – Service Learning: 4210

Mandatory 40-hour service learning component EVST 4210. For more information on the service-learning project for this class, visit https://cps.tulane.edu/academics/service-learning-course For more information on how to complete the service learning core requirement: https://cps.tulane.edu/public-service-requirement