

Environmental Studies Minor

Goal 1: Train Environmental Studies students to have knowledge of the physical environment from a social science perspective

Goal Description:

Environmental Studies students will learn basic skills and competencies relevant to the social, cultural and geographic implications of environmental issues

Providing Department: Environmental Studies Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Objective 1a: Proficiency with Concepts Related to Socio-Economic Dimensions of Environmental Issues

Learning Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency with concepts pertaining to socio-economic dimensions of the environment

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Concepts Related to Socio-Economic Dimensions of Environmental Issues (Objective 1a)

Indicator Description:

Questions pertaining to social and economic dimensions of the environment will be embedded in exams for courses in the minor

Criterion Description:

The average score will be 70% on questions pertaining to social and economic dimensions of the environment

Findings Description:

Students enrolled in GEOG 1300 scored 57% on questions pertaining to social and economic dimensions of the environment. The scores for GEOG 3350 were at 66%, which was on par with the overall exam grades. The scores on such questions incorporated in GEOG 3301 scored 69% on such questions, while students enrolled in GEOG 4356 scored 68%. In both cases (GEOG 3301 and 4356), scores were equivalent to those realized with overall exam grades. There was no way to compare these results, as these types of questions had not before been included in the assessment mechanism.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Objective 1b: Proficiency with Concepts Related to Geographic Dimensions of Environmental Issues

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Concepts Related to Geographic Dimensions of Environmental Issues (Objective 1b)

Indicator Description:

Questions pertaining to geographic dimensions of environmental issues will be embedded in exams for courses in the minor

Criterion Description:

The average score will be 70% on questions pertaining to geographic dimensions of environmental issues

Findings Description:

Students enrolled in GEOG 1300 scored 56% on questions pertaining to geographic dimensions of the environment. The scores for GEOG 3301 were at 69%, which was on par with the overall exam grades. The scores on such questions incorporated in GEOG 3350 & 4356 both scored 67% on such questions. In both cases (GEOG 3301 and 4356), scores were equivalent to those realized with overall exam grades. There was no way to compare these results, as these types of questions had not before been included in the assessment mechanism.

Goal 2: Train students to approach environmental problems and challenges from diverse perspectives

Goal Description:

Environmental Studies students will learn basic skills and competencies relevant to political and economic implications of environmental issues

Providing Department: Environmental Studies Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Objective 2a: Proficiency with Concepts Related to Economic Dimensions of Environmental Issues

Learning Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency with concepts pertaining to economic dimensions of the environment

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Concepts Related to Economic Dimensions of Environmental Issues (Objective 2a)

Indicator Description:

Questions pertaining to economic dimensions of environmental issues will be embedded in exams for courses in the minor

Criterion Description:

The average score will be 70% on questions pertaining to economic dimensions of environmental issues

Findings Description:

Students enrolled in GEOG 1300 scored 53% on questions pertaining to economic dimensions of the environment issues. The scores for GEOG 3301 were at 66%, while those for GEOG 3350 were 63%. For all three classes, the scores were lower than was the case for the overall exam grades. The scores on such questions incorporated in GEOG 4356 scored 69% on such questions, which were equivalent to those realized with overall exam grades. There was no way to compare these results, as these types of questions had not before been included in the assessment mechanism.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Objective 2b: Proficiency with Concepts Related to Dimensions of Environmental Policy

Learning Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency with concepts pertaining to dimensions of environmental policy

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Concepts Related to Dimensions of Environmental Policy (Objective 2b)

Indicator Description:

Questions pertaining to environmental policy will be embedded in exams for courses in the minor

Criterion Description:

The average score will be 70% on questions pertaining to environmental policy

Findings Description:

Students enrolled in GEOG 1300 scored 61% on questions pertaining to environmental policy, which was on par for overall exam grades. The scores for GEOG 3301 were at 69%, also on par with the overall exam grades. The scores on such questions incorporated in GEOG 4356 scored 71% on such questions, also equivalent to those realized with overall exam grades. There was no way to compare these results, as these types of questions had not before been included in the assessment mechanism.

Goal 3: Train students to have a strong foundation in systems thinking

Goal Description:

Students will be able to link physical systems and human/cultural systems, as well as possess sufficient knowledge of human-environment interaction

Providing Department: Environmental Studies Minor

Progress: Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective 3a: Proficiency with Introductory Concepts in Human-Environment Relationships

Performance Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency with introductory concepts pertaining to human-environment relationships

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Embedded questions in exams pertaining to Introductory Concepts in Human-Environmental Interaction

KPI Description:

Questions pertaining to introductory concepts in human-environmental interaction will be embedded in exams for courses in the minor

Target Description:

The average score will be 70% on questions pertaining to introductory concepts of human-environment interaction

Results Description:

Students enrolled in both GEOG 1300 scored 61% on embedded questions pertaining to human-environment interaction and the nature of environmental systems. In the case of GEOG 1300, this was a significant increase from the previous assessment. The scores were still lower than hoped, yet are basically equivalent to the overall scores for exams in the two courses. The scores on such questions incorporated in GEOG 3301 were slightly higher than the previous year. Students enrolled in this courses scored 64%, which was noticeably lower than overall exam scores. Scores in GEOG 3350 were exactly the same - 71%. Students enrolled in GEOG 4356 had never been assessed before, but enrolled students scored 73%, which was above the anticipated result.

Not data were derived from the variety of other advanced courses in geography courses, primarily because this assessment was due before data could be derived. Moreover, this minor program is still relatively new.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

Performance Objective 3b: Students will demonstrate proficiency with advanced concepts pertaining to human-environment relationships

Performance Objective Description:

Students will demonstrate proficiency with advanced concepts pertaining to human-environment relationships

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

Embedded questions in exams pertaining to Advanced Concepts in Human-Environmental Interaction (Objective 3b)

KPI Description:

Questions pertaining to advanced concepts in human-environmental interaction will be embedded in exams for courses in the minor

Target Description:

The average score will be 70% on questions pertaining to advanced concepts of human-environment interaction

Results Description:

Students enrolled in GEOG 1300 scored 55% on embedded questions pertaining to more advanced concepts in human-environment interaction and the nature of environmental systems. This was a slight increase from the previous assessment, and a lower score than was realized across the overall exams. The scores on such questions incorporated in GEOG 3301 were slightly lower than the previous year. Students enrolled scored 69% on such questions. Strangely, student enrolled in this class (GEOG 3301) still scored higher on advanced concepts in the subject area than they did on introductory concepts. As was the case with introductory concepts, students enrolled in GEOG 3350 scored 68% on advanced concepts in this subject area. This was slightly lower than the previous year and a bit lower than that realized with overall exam grades.

Not data could be derived from the variety of other courses, primarily because the results were due before results could get derived. Moreover, the minor program is still relatively new.

New Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

New unit for 2022-23; no previous PCI

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

New unit for 2022-23; no previous PCI

New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Closing Summary:

Going forward, future assessments of the environmental studies program will focus on two areas. The first emphasis will be to ensure that all critical dimensions of this interdisciplinary minor program are being assessed - i.e. we need to judge what subject areas (environmental policy, economic aspects of environmental issues, social dimensions of environmental problems, etc.) need the most improvement. This need will met by assessing a broader array of courses.

The second area of concern is a possible disconnect between the different courses that comprise the program (this is purely based on anecdotal conversions that has yet to be supported by any real evidence). Given the interdisciplinary nature of the program, the environmental studies minor is comprised of courses from multiple program areas. There is some concern that student failure to recognize linkages between the subject

areas may be due to the fact that the different courses may be less linked to one another than they should be. In the future, concerted efforts will be made to enhance collective communication among various departments involved with the operation of the minor.