Options for students interested in sustainability

Students interested in studying sustainability can take courses across many departments and programs in Emory College. Courses that engage students with sustainability-related themes can be found in Departments of Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Economics, Environmental Sciences, History, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Political Sciences, Sociology, Spanish and Portuguese, Philosophy, Religion, Middle Eastern and South Asian Studies, Political Sciences, Sociology, Philosophy, Religion and most of the languages departments. Sustainability-related classes can also be found in Emory College programs such as Development Studies, Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS), Italian Studies, Latin American and Caribbean Studies, and Science and Society, among others.

Students interested in a more intensive course of study can choose between two minors:

- **Sustainability** and **Sustainability Sciences**.

**Sustainability Minor**

Students interested in a broad minor, integrating understandings of sustainability in sciences, social sciences, and humanities are encouraged to consider the Sustainability Minor. Requirements are a Foundations course, four courses distributed over the three divisions, an integrative portfolio, and a capstone research project. Sustainability refers to a process in which human societies adapt to live within the earth’s finite limits in ways that:

- Restore healthy ecosystems and reduce harm to water, air, soils, and biodiversity;
- Support secure livelihoods and vibrant local economies and redress poverty and inequality;
- Create resilient cultural, social and natural systems and empowered communities;
- And meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Curricula focused on sustainability foster creativity and an expanded imagination of a thriving social, economic, and environmental world for the current and future generations. Students and faculty involved in the Sustainability Minor recognize that the process of moving toward sustainability involves trade-offs, tensions, and difficult choices. Students apply analytical systems thinking to contemporary global and local problems, practice participatory strategies to resolve those problems, and demonstrate an ethical compass that guides their assessments of alternative solutions. Many kinds of courses from many perspectives help students prepare for the difficult sustainability challenges we face now and in the years to come. The Sustainability Minor expects students to integrate the breadth of sustainability scholarship from the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities with a portfolio exercise and course breadth requirements.

To learn more about this minor, click [here](#).

**Sustainability Sciences Minor**

Students seeking a science-based minor are encouraged to consider the Minor in Sustainability Sciences. Requirements are an Introduction, methods, three courses in the science of sustainability, and a practicum.

Sustainability science was conceived in the late 20th century in order to develop and evaluate theories through empirical analysis about the complex and evolving relationship between people and their environment. For millennia humans have modified their environments in order to support life. These modifications have gradually grown in scale, so that humans have now become a planetary force. Sustainability science was developed in response to the lack of understanding of these complex dynamics of environmental change. Such understanding is necessary because many environmental, economic and social indicators suggest that we may have exceeded the biophysical capacity of our life support system.

The curriculum is designed for students to understand and explore the challenges of sustainability in three crosscutting areas. One is to explicitly integrate across scales of space and time to define and develop solutions to pressing issues from global to local scales. The second is to unite disciplinary approaches to foster a broader and richer exploration of sustainability. The minor will use the different sciences of sustainability (ecological, environmental, social, political and economic) to provide insights into similarities and differences of structural and process complexities inherent in Sustainability Sciences. Finally, the coursework will bridge theory and practice in understanding what determines sustainability in a strongly coupled world of humans and their environment. The courses will link the theoretical and practical by understanding how human institutions, organizations, cultures, technologies link and interact with their biophysical environments.

To learn more about this minor, click [here](#).