Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability

Masters in Sustainability Graduate Handbook
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1. Introduction to the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability

This section reviews the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability at Hofstra University. It introduces the unique vision of the department and provides a summary of the three undergraduate degrees available in the department. Following this, this section concludes with a description of the focus of the M.A. in Sustainability.

1.1 The Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability at Hofstra University

The Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability at Hofstra University began as the Department of Geology in 1957, when Hofstra began to offer BA and BS degrees in Geology for the first time. Since then the department has graduated hundreds of professional geologists who have gone on to work in a variety of fields from geoscience research, to consulting to education.

In the last decade, as evidence has mounted on the impacts of human activity on the natural environment and critical earth systems, the Department has progressively refocused its efforts to provide not only a strong traditional geology education, but also to expand its degree options to address the human impacts on the Earth. First, the Department added a BS degree in Environmental Resources that focused on the need for strong training in environmental geology. In 2013, the Department incorporated the new Sustainability Studies Program that was started in 2012 at Hofstra University, further expanding opportunities to study and research the human dimensions of earth and environmental science. This innovative pairing of geology and sustainability studies adds an important anthropogenic perspective to the traditional geology curriculum and provides a multidisciplinary natural science grounding in earth systems to our sustainability studies curriculum.

The Department compliments its innovative curriculum with a very strong record of placing students in jobs on Long Island and throughout the country and the world. We place strong emphasis on field experiences and one-on-one research with an academic advisor. For more information about the Department please see: http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/HCLAS/Geology/

1.2 The M.A. In Sustainability

Sustainability is often defined as using resources wisely now to ensure the quality of life for future generations. The M.A. in Sustainability program at Hofstra delves deeper into the concepts of sustainability and asks students to seek different ways of analyzing and
achieving sustainability in different settings. This program also takes a balanced approach in trying to understand how to make developed countries more sustainable while also addressing the real-world sustainability crisis that exists in the developing world. The Master of Arts Program in Sustainability integrates environmental, economic, social, philosophical, and ethical themes of sustainability. The program is designed to give students real-world, hands-on experiences solving sustainability problems.

Students may attend full- or part-time and either a thesis or internship is required of all students to complete the M.A. degree program.

2. Admission Requirements

Applicants must hold a bachelor’s degree in a discipline that will allow them to study some aspect of the field of sustainability at an advanced level and have an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or equivalent. To apply, please send a letter explaining your interests in sustainability studies and qualifications to the graduate director, Dr. Robert Brinkmann at Robert.brinkmann@hofstra.edu. This letter should review your relevant achievements and academic preparation. It should include your academic and career goals in the area of sustainability and how the degree will help you achieve the goals. In addition, the letter should (preferably) identify the faculty member(s) (see list at the end of this document) who would share your areas of interest and who might serve as a faculty mentor for your area of study and research.

Students also need to submit three letters of recommendation. The letters of recommendation should be from persons familiar with your achievements, abilities, and performance. It is required that at least one of these letters be from someone familiar with your academic performance. Official undergraduate academic transcripts are also required.

For more information and to apply online visit this Website: http://www.hofstra.edu/Academics/grad/grad_apply.html

Students must also follow all rules and regulations for admissions of Hofstra University. These can be found here: http://bulletin.hofstra.edu/content.php?catoid=76&navoid=7072

International students will find the Department a welcoming place. We are very interested in international issues and global sustainable development. International students can find information about visas and other requirements on the Hofstra University Website here: https://www.hofstra.edu/academics/grad/grad_internat_welcome.html

Application materials are accepted at any time. However, students are encouraged to apply by February 28th for Fall admission and by October 15th for Spring admission. Students can begin their studies during any semester, but we encourage students to start
in the Fall as that is when introductory courses are offered and when most financial aid is distributed.

3. General Information and Overview of Procedures

General guidelines for the M.A. program follow:

1. It is the responsibility of the student to be acquainted with all requirements and regulations of the University and the Department.

2. New students must attend a new student orientation at the start of the semester.

3. Students receiving scholarships and other financial support must take a minimum of 9 credit hours per semester.

4. Graduate students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 in all courses. In addition, students must attain a 3.0 in all required core courses. No grade below a “C” will be accepted toward a graduate degree but all grades will be counted in computing the overall grade point average.

5. Thesis students must complete 6 hours of thesis credits and internship students must complete 6 hours of internship credits.

6. A grade of incomplete may be awarded at the discretion of the faculty member only when the student is otherwise earning a passing grade and only if the incomplete is due to circumstances beyond the control of the student or instructor. Students are advised to complete a written contract for completing work to satisfy the course requirement and remove the incomplete grade. The contract should include a description of the work to be completed and the date by which the work is to be submitted. The instructor will specify a default grade based on work completed by the end of the semester. If the work required to satisfy the incomplete is not submitted by the contract deadline, the incomplete grade will be changed to the default grade.

4. Advising

The Director of Sustainability Studies will appoint a faculty member as an initial advisor (major professor) for each student accepted into the M.A. program in Sustainability. The advisor will advise the student in selecting appropriate courses and overall program planning in consultation with the Director of Sustainability. A student is encouraged to change his/her advisor if academic interests become more closely aligned with the interests of another faculty member if that faculty member can accommodate the student. All changes in advisors must be approved by the Director of Sustainability.
Guidelines for advising are:

1. Each student will select, or be provided with, a major professor, who will also serve as the student’s Supervisory Committee Chair and Academic Advisor.

2. The major professor should be a faculty member on the list at the end of this document and with whom the student is willing to work. The major professor should be willing to give thoughtful direction with respect to the selection of courses and for directing a thesis or internship. Students with a particular interest in mind but unsure of which faculty member to approach should consult with the Director of Sustainability Studies.

3. Each student, in consultation with his or her selected major professor, must select two additional members to complete the Supervisory Committee. At least one of the members of the Supervisory Committee must be a faculty member in the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability. It is in the student’s best interest to consider potential committee members early by seeking out faculty who work in areas relating to their interests.

4. A completed Supervisory Committee Appointment Form must be signed by all members of the Committee and submitted to the Director of Sustainability Studies for approval. Students may change committee members by submitting a Change of Supervisory Committee form for approval.

5. Thesis students are expected to present a research proposal to their Thesis Committee shortly before or after the completion of 18 credit hours. The Committee will be given two weeks to review the written proposal after which the Committee will meet with the student to discuss the proposal. This meeting must take place at least one semester before the semester in which the student plans to graduate.

6. Internship students should meet with their committee before the start of their internship to discuss expectations for the final internship presentation to the Committee.

7. Graduate Student Supervisory Committee Expectations of Conduct: There are rarely any problems with supervisory committees. However, the following expectations will be followed by all participants involved in a Thesis or Internship Committee including student, advisor (major professor), and committee members:

   a. Regular communication of research between the student and committee members.
   b. If major changes occur to the proposed study, the student in consultation with his or her advisor is responsible to call a committee meeting to discuss the changes.
   c. If concerns arise either with regards to what can be considered major changes between committee members or other matters pertaining to the pursuit of the
proposed study, these will be resolved by the Director of Sustainability Studies or the Chair of the Department if the student’s advisor is the Director.

5. Degree Requirements: Coursework

The MA in Sustainability requires 30 semester hours of coursework. As part of these 30 hours, students must complete 6 semester hours of internship or 6 semester hours of thesis credits.

**Required Core Courses (9 hours)**
- SBLY 201 Sustainable Development 3 s.h.
- SBLY 206 Sustainability Theory and Practice 3 s.h.
- GEOL 251 Readings 3 s.h.

In addition:
- SBLY 340 Sustainability Internship 6 s.h.
- Or
- SBLY 301 Sustainability Thesis 6 s.h.

Students can take either the thesis or the internship for credit. Only six hours of one of these courses counts for the degree. Students must take SBLY 201 and 206 before or concurrently with SBLY 340 and 301.

**Electives**
15 hours of graduate courses from the Departments of Biology; Computer Science; Community Health; Engineering; Geology Environment, and Sustainability; Management; Philosophy; Public Health; or Sociology with the approval of the advisor. Other courses may count with the approval of the Graduate Director. Up to 6 hours of undergraduate upper level (100 or above) courses may be counted with the approval of the Director of Sustainability Studies.

6. Degree Requirements: Thesis and Internship Requirements

Thesis option:

1. The student must complete a thesis proposal as outlined above in consultation with their advisor and committee.

2. When the thesis is complete, the thesis must be defended by the end of the semester of graduation. The defense is scheduled and organized by the student’s advisor. The defense, which must include a presentation of the research, must be
advertised in the Department and on the Department’s web and social media pages at least one week before the defense.

3. A copy of the thesis must be available in the Department for review at least one week prior to the defense.

Internship option:

The Internship provides an opportunity for the student to explore real-world work with a host institution. The student must complete the following requirements for the Internship:

1. A Work Plan. The Work Plan should include a review of the work to be completed at the host institution. The student’s advisor and advisory committee is responsible for ensuring that the Internship has appropriate rigor and duration for 6 academic credit hours (minimum of 28 hours off campus per credit hour). It is expected that the Work Plan will include a statement as to the significance of the Internship to applied issues in sustainability. It should include a literature review.

2. Internship Report. Like the thesis, the Internship Report is submitted to the Committee for evaluation and must be defended by the end of the semester of graduation. The defense is scheduled and organized by the student’s advisor. The defense, which must include a presentation of the internship work, must be advertised in the Department and the Department’s web and social media pages at least one week before the defense.

3. A copy of the Internship Report must be available in the Department for review at least one week prior to the defense.

7. Financial Support

For information about Hofstra University Financial Aid or Loan Packages, see: Financial Aid http://www.hofstra.edu/sfs/FinancialAid/index.html. There are also a number of Hofstra University scholarships available. You can find out about them here: https://www.hofstra.edu/academics/grad/grad_fa_scholarships.html.

The Department does have a number of partial scholarships available through the support of the University and the National Center for Suburban Studies. Please send a letter stating your interest in a scholarship along with your application letter to Dr. Brinkmann. Include a resume.

8. Faculty and Affiliated Offices

Students are encouraged to select a mentor from the list of faculty in the Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability or from the list of Affiliated Faculty in other academic departments. Your faculty mentor will help you select the appropriate electives
to reach your goals and assist you with developing a thesis or with finding a suitable internship. Note: at least one committee member must be from the list of core faculty.

Core Faculty

**J. Bret Bennington (Chair), Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability:** paleoecology, conservation paleobiology, glacial geomorphology, geologic history of Long Island, coastal sedimentology

**Robert Brinkmann (Graduate Director and Director of Sustainability Studies), Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability:** environmental change, karst and sinkholes, water, pollution, sustainability management

**E. Christa Farmer, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability:** paleoclimatology, paleoceanography, climate change, trace metals in soils and sediments

**Sandra Garren, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability:** environmental policy, environmental management, energy management, greenhouse gas management, geoscience/geographic information systems (GIS)

**Antonios Marsellos, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability:** structural geology, mineralogy, geochemistry, remote sensing, geographic information systems (GIS)

**David O’Connor, Department of Geology, Environment, and Sustainability:** international sustainability, benchmarking, sustainability and economics

Affiliated Faculty

**Ralph Acampora, Department of Philosophy:** Ethics, animals, embodiment

**Alan Bailin, Hofstra Library:** research methods, research strategies, critical assessment of research, thesis preparation

**Kevin Bisceglia, Department of Chemistry:** environmental and analytical chemistry, water quality, chemical cycling in the built environment, sewage epidemiology

**Cynthia Bogard, Department of Sociology:** environmental policy, education, sociology

**Meena Bose, Department of Political Science:** presidential studies, executive politics, leadership and governance policy making, American politics

**Russell Burke, Department of Biology:** wildlife, ecology, urban, reptiles, mammals
Daniel Devine, Department of Art: fine arts, sculpture, sustainability in art, environmental sculpture, earth art, social art

Christopher Eliot, Department of Philosophy: philosophy of ecology and conservation biology, history of ecology and environmentalism, scientific reasoning, environmental ethics and aesthetics, urban ecology/ornithology

Martine Hackett, Health Sciences: public health, health promotion, childhood obesity, community based participatory research methods, environmental justice

Jessica Holzer, Health Professions: transportation, cycling, equity, community health, advocacy

Margaret Hunter, Department of Civil Engineering: environmental engineering, environmental chemistry, organic pollutants, pesticides, soil and water quality

Zilkia Janer, Department of Geography and Global Studies: food culture

Javier Izquierdo, Department of Biology: renewable energy, waste management, agriculture

Katrina Fischer Kuh, Department of Law: climate law, regulating individual behaviors, clean water act, endangered species act, environmental review

Linda Longmire, Department of Geography and Global Studies: environmental politics, ecofeminism, sustainability and political theory, environmental racism

Greg Maney, Department of Sociology: funding and community-based research; community organizing, social movements, and sustainability; social inequalities and sustainability; human rights and sustainability

Cheryl Mwaria, Department of Anthropology: health, Africa and the African Diaspora, women, ethics, indigenous practices

Christopher Niedt, Department of Sociology: suburbs, housing, redevelopment, labor, equity

Ying Qiu, Department of Geography and Global Studies: economic geography, environmental sustainability, eco-efficiency, green growth, sustainability indicators

Steve Raciti, Department of Biology: urban ecology, plant and soil biology, forest ecology, biogeochemistry, global environmental change

Ron Sarno, Department of Biology: urban ecology, conservation, behavior
**Charles Smith, Department of Management:** organizational strategies for sustainability; social/technical innovations for sustainability; ethics, corporate responsibility/accountability; and consciousness/spirituality and activism

**Geri Solomon, Hofstra Library:** preservation, history, research

**Mary Anne Trasciatti, Department of Rhetoric:** advocacy, communication, community activism, public memory

**Kathleen Wallace, Department of Philosophy:** ethics, weak and strong sustainability concepts, environmentalism

**Jason Williams, Department of Biology:** marine biology, invertebrate zoology, parasitology

**Affiliated Offices**

National Center for Suburban Studies
Hofstra Library
Hofstra Museum
Hofstra Special Collections
Hofstra Cultural Center.