DOCTORAL PROGRAM

The Ph.D. in Geography and Environmental Science and Policy is an interdisciplinary degree program which requires incoming students to designate either Geography or Environmental Science and Policy as their area of emphasis (track) in their application for admission. The program requires a total of 90 credit hours beyond the bachelor’s degree, or 60 hours past the masters degree. 

The ESP track of the Ph.D. is designed to draw on the interdisciplinary strengths of the ESP&P faculty and to educate our students to respond to rapid changes in knowledge production and application. Our course offerings emphasize the human-environment interaction. Through our commitment to quality interdisciplinary teaching, combined with cutting-edge research and hands-on learning opportunities, the ESP track of the Ph.D. is dedicated to ensuring that students are well prepared for careers in academia, as well as the private and public sectors.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are two main sources for graduate support in the Department of Geography, Environment, and Planning: graduate teaching assistants and research assistants.

Graduate assistantships are awarded annually. Students are usually given a contract for up to three years as a graduate assistant. However a fourth year is likely when a student is considered to be in good standing by his or her committee. If a student would like to be considered for a graduate assistantship, s/he should send a letter of application to the ESP Graduate Program Coordinator early in the semester prior to the semester for consideration.

Research assistants are students who are hired to assist faculty with grant-funded projects. Usually one or two students per semester are hired by individual faculty to complete computer analysis, map drafting, field work, or laboratory analysis. Students should contact individual faculty to see if they have any opportunities.

There are also sources of financial support students can receive from the University in the forms of fellowships, scholarships, grants, work study, and loans. For more information, students are advised to contact the Graduate School at www.grad.usf.edu (813) 974-8800, or the Office of Financial Aid at (813) 974-4700.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, POLICY, AND PLANNING FACULTY

Philip Reeder, Chair of Environmental Science and Policy
Water Resources, Hydrology, Environmental Contamination, Latin America, Middle East

Ambe Njoh, Director of Urban and Regional Planning
Research Methods and Quantitative Analysis, Urban Planning Theory & History, Sustainable Development Planning, Citizen Participation in Public Infrastructure Development, Planning in Developing Regions

Robin Jones, Director of Community Initiative Program
Urban Studies, Community Development, Public Policy

Jennifer Collings, Graduate Coordinator of Environmental Science and Policy
Tropical Climatology, Hurricane Activity, Weather Related Hazards

Kamal Alsharif
Water Resources, Environmental Policy, Middle East

Fenda Akiwumi
Resource Policy & Management, Africa, Gender & Water

Joni Downs
GIScience, Spatial Analysis & Modeling; Wildlife and Forest Ecology

Mark Hafen
Water Quality & Conservation, Cultural Ecology, Marine & Coastal Geography

Connie Mizak
Air Pollution, Human Health, Climate Change & Environmental Policy

Elizabeth Strom
Urban Issues, Government & Politics, Arts & Culture

Graham Tobin
Natural Hazards, Water Resources Management & Policy, Environmental Contaminators

Philip van Beynen
Karst, Climate Change Geomorphology, Human-Environment Interactions, Environmental Indices

Laurie Walker, Director of the USF Botanical Gardens
Botany, Environmental Science

Environmental Science and Policy
Department of Geography, Environment, and Planning
4202 East Fowler Avenue. NES 107
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The University of South Florida is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award degrees at the baccalaureate, master’s, specialist and doctoral levels, including the Doctor of Medicine.
The Environmental Science, Policy and Planning Division (ESP & P) of the Department of Geography, Environment and Planning (GEP) provides student access and encourages success in an engaged, and interdisciplinary, learner-centered environment, by providing a rigorous education and stimulating environment for undergraduate, graduate certificate, masters and doctoral students. The program strives to be a leader in high-quality teaching and research specifically related to natural and urban environments. Through a multidisciplinary approach to both research and teaching, the program provides unique insights into the challenges facing the environment and society. This uniqueness comes from the incorporation of both science and policy investigation into these challenges. The program strives to continually develop its strengths and to build bridges with faculty from USF, as well as those at national and international institutions. Program strengths include: water resources, wildlife ecology, karst and wetland environments, meteorology and climatology, environmental sustainability, environmental policy, and urban and regional planning. Through these endeavors, the program is integral to the university’s increasing focus on scientific discovery, including the generation, dissemination, and translation of new knowledge across disciplines and to design and build sustainable, healthy communities. Embracing innovation and supporting scholarly engagement to better build a community of learners with significant and sustainable university-community partnerships and collaborations is a hallmark of the program. Future efforts will focus on continuing to promote initiatives for public and private partnerships, community engagement and increasing the knowledge and expertise of urban and regional planners in local communities, the state of Florida, the nation and the world. Our graduates emerge from our programs with the knowledge and skill sets to be competitive in his or her arena of expertise and with the potential to become leaders in their fields.

RESEARCH AND TEACHING THEMES

Water Resources: Water resource policy and management in developing countries with a focus on West Africa; the political ecology of resource exploitation; gender and water use; watershed management; nonpoint source pollution; domestic water policy; stormwater management; Middle East water issues; water scarcity; hydro-politics; urban water management; establishing environmental benchmarks by using data envelopment analysis; karst water resources.

Wildlife Ecology: Methods of spatial analysis and modeling broadly applied to wildlife and forest ecology research, such as animal tracking and suitability analysis; biogeography; Florida ecosystems.

Karst and Wetland Environments: The geomorphology, hydrology, water resources and soils geography of karst terrains and wetland environments; karst environments pertaining to paleoclimate changes; human disturbance of karst environments and wetlands; the use of environmental indices in the study of karst landscapes; sustainability issues related to karst landscapes and wetlands; the geoarchaeology of karst landscapes; destruction of urban wetlands; urban wetland mitigation.

Meteorology and Climatology: The interaction between large scale climatic patterns such as the El Nino – Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and the Madden – Julian Oscillation and seasonal patterns of tropical cyclone activity in multiple oceanic basins; environmental factors influencing the inter-annual variation of hurricane numbers in the Northeast Pacific; relationships between hurricane numbers in the Atlantic versus those in part of the Northeast Pacific Ocean basin; sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean as related to Atlantic hurricane activity; social factors and behavior related to hurricane evacuation.

Environmental Sustainability: Global sustainability; the impact of urban runoff on natural systems; environmental and human health impacts of air pollution; the effects of air toxics on community health; the integration of environmental science, policy and sustainability; the impact of religious belief systems on environmental policy and sustainability; privatization and sustainability in developing countries; urban landscaping and sustainability; Florida native plants, invasive species and sustainability.

Environmental Policy: Water resource and environmental policy and management in developing countries; domestic and stormwater management policy; Middle East water management, policy and scarcity; urban water management; policies related to urban runoff; environmental science, policy and sustainability integration; the impact of religious belief systems on environmental policy; privatization, sustainability and environmental policy in developing countries.

Urban and Regional Planning: Research methods and quantitative analysis issues in urban and regional planning; information and communication technologies in planning; transportation policy and planning; political economy of water and sanitation systems; sustainable development theory and practice; arts, culture and urban development in US cities; Planning issues and mortgage foreclosures in Florida; university engagement in urban communities.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Undergraduate Program

Admission to the program follows University guidelines. Students begin fulfilling the Geography B.A. program requirements in their junior year and must seek advice from the Geography undergraduate advisor before commencing. For more information on admission requirements for the University of South Florida, please contact the Office of Admissions at (813) 974-3350.

Graduate Programs

• Background Requirement. Students wishing to gain admittance into the graduate programs must have a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent from an approved college or university. Typically, the department’s students have baccalaureate degrees in Geography. However, students with degrees in other disciplines are encouraged to apply. Those students admitted without a degree in Geography will be required to audit selected undergraduate geography courses as determined by the Graduate Coordinator. If a student has taken a course similar to one of these courses, the requirement may be waived.

• Grade Point and Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Requirements. Students must have a minimum grade point of 3.0 (on the 4 point scale) for the last 60 credits taken as a student and take the GRE exam.

• Letter of Intent. A letter of intent to pursue graduate studies must be submitted to the department prior to admittance. The letter should outline the applicant’s specific academic interests and goals.

• Letters of recommendation. At least two letters of recommendation must be submitted to the department prior to admittance. Prospective students should solicit the letters of recommendation from sources who are familiar with the applicant’s academic/work history and performance.