



Bard Center for
Environmental Policy

Education for Leadership

Master of Science (M.S.)
Professional Certificate in
Environmental Policy

Master of Science in Environmental Policy

The Bard Center for Environmental Policy (CEP) trains future leaders to craft effective policy by fostering critical thinking on issues concerning both the natural and built environments. The goal of Bard CEP's graduate training is to provide the knowledge and tools necessary to create realistic and effective environmental policies. The program leading to the master of science degree in environmental policy is a two-year curriculum. The first year is spent at Bard engaged in multidisciplinary course work; the second year includes a four- to six-month internship, completion of a master's thesis, and a final semester of instruction on campus.

"Bard CEP allowed me to tailor my studies around my specific interests while giving me a base of knowledge that I continue to draw from."

– Ben Hoen, M.S. '06

Professional Certificate in Environmental Policy

A student may earn a professional certificate in environmental policy after successfully completing the first year of Bard CEP course work. Should the certificate recipient decide to continue toward the master's degree, either immediately or at a later time, second-year course work and all other requirements must be completed within five years.

Distinctive Features

Modular course structure, ensuring thematic cohesion across the curriculum

Integration of natural and social sciences

Professional internships in the United States and abroad

Exceptional faculty, including academic experts and professional practitioners

Close mentoring of student career preparations

Extensive contact with environmental organizations, public agencies, businesses, and international organizations

Curriculum

The Bard CEP curriculum integrates the core disciplines of science, policy, law, and economics into a consistent and comprehensive first year of graduate course work. Through close collaboration with faculty and an innovative program of study, students learn to think across disciplines to understand the complexities of today's environmental problems and challenges. Courses delve simultaneously into curricular themes to provide students with a deep understanding of the issues from multiple perspectives and at the same time highlight linkages and divisions across disciplines. This holistic approach to learning illuminates integral connections between the social world and the physical sciences, and encourages students to incorporate various perspectives and ideologies into their work.

First-Year Course Work

The overall goal of Bard CEP's graduate training is to provide the methods of inquiry, knowledge, and tools necessary to create realistic and effective policies concerning the environment. The first-year courses link natural ecosystems and their functioning to the impact of socioeconomic activities, and to the political, institutional, and legislative processes that address environmental problems. Emphasizing analytical frameworks and basic principles through examples and case studies, the courses are designed to focus on the topic specified in each of the subject themes, or modules, which are highlighted below.

General Concepts in Environmental Policy

Air and Atmosphere

Water and Fisheries

Land, Forests, and Soil

Biological Diversity

Energy and Transportation

Agriculture

Urban Systems

Industrial Ecology

Risk, Toxicology, and Human Health

Internship

The internship constitutes the first semester of the second year of study for the M.S. degree. Students select their internships based on Bard CEP guidelines and their own criteria and needs. Students are expected to work a minimum of 30 hours per week for at least four months at an internship site. Internship selection begins during the late fall of the first year. A database of previous internships, organizations that have requested Bard CEP interns, and other possible locations is given to students during registration and again at the end of the first semester. Although students are off campus during their internship, they are required to submit internship reports via e-mail and work on their master's thesis proposal.

Upon return to classes in January, Bard CEP hosts an informal luncheon and discussion between first- and second-year students. The session provides second-year students the opportunity to report on their internship experience and share advice with first-year students. First-year students take this opportunity to ask questions, learn tips, and develop strategies for securing their own internships.

Master's Thesis

The master's thesis is the student's chance to specialize and to create an original body of work, often linked to some aspect of the internship, with practical applications to environmental policy issues. Bard CEP theses reflect the multifaceted nature of environmental issues while integrating aspects of the natural and social sciences and humanities in the policy-making process. The student is expected to pursue a topic intensively, drawing on and integrating knowledge from the first-year course work and internship, and demonstrate skill in developing and conveying recommended policies and action on a particular issue or problem.

"Every document I had to review during my internship involved applications of the concepts we discussed in class and helped me relate the theoretical to the practical."

—Ananta Neelim, M.S. '08

Students work closely with their advisers during development of the thesis topic. Advisers are chosen on the basis of several criteria, including the student's preference and the interests and availability of the faculty. Graduate theses, which range greatly depending on the student's interest, may fall into such categories as: water policy, wildlife and biodiversity conservation, pollution prevention, regulatory review, land-use planning, environmental justice, preservation of natural resources, economic growth and sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, national environmental agendas, and international environmental policy. For a list of recent thesis topics, see www.bard.edu/cep/curriculum/sample-masters-thesis.php.

M.S. Degree Timeline

Year 1 First-year course work at Bard (*subject to change*)

Environmental Science of Natural and Built Environments
Natural Resource and Environmental Economics
Environmental Law and Policy
Statistics and Econometrics (*fall*)
Geographic Information Systems (*spring*)

Year 2 Internship and final semester of course work at Bard

Fall (off campus):

Internship
Master's thesis proposal submitted to Bard CEP adviser

Spring (subject to change):

Communication Strategies
Capstone Seminar
Master's Thesis Seminar

*"I think we are challenged as mankind has never been
challenged before to prove our maturity and our mastery,
not of nature, but of ourselves."*

– Rachel Carson

Bard CEP Degree Options

Master of Science (M.S.)
Dual M.S. and M.A. in Teaching
Dual M.S. and J.D. with Pace Law School
Peace Corps Master's International (MI) Program
Professional Certificate
3+2 Program with Bard College

Admission Requirements

Application requirements for the M.S. degree and professional certificate program can be found in our catalogue supplement and on our website, www.bard.edu/cep.

Bard Center for Environmental Policy

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