ENVS 202  
Senior Thesis and Project Important Information

1. REQUIREMENT and ROLE
   The catalog states: "Senior Project and Thesis. Senior level project or thesis under faculty direction." As the concluding element in the environmental studies curriculum, the senior project or thesis provides the student with an element of depth to complement breadth.

2. CONCEPT
   ➢ a "capstone" to each student's individualized major
   ➢ builds on previous courses
   ➢ develops critical thinking and problem solving skills
   ➢ is at a senior level
   ➢ has a scholarly component
   ➢ has a focal study question
   ➢ has a final material product
   ➢ has a final material product

3. EMPHASIS
   ✔ Research
     Independent inquiry
     Tests hypothesis or answers study question
     Generates new knowledge
     Extensive literature review
   ✔ Project
     "Hands on" activity
     Completion of task
     Experiential learning
     Extensive literature review

   Note: An internship can form the foundation or template for a project or research. Internships emphasize structured skill development in organizations combined with experiential learning. The internship can also be completed as a different senior capstone option alongside a 200-level course that is not ENVS 201.

4. ENTRY
   To begin work on your ENVS 202 research and/or project, you must pass ENVS-201, attaining a B grade or better for the RESEARCH PROPOSAL or the PROJECT PROPOSAL. If you pass ENVS-201, but receive a grade of B- or lower for the proposal, meet with the ENVS 202 Coordinator to determine what changes in the proposal are necessary in order to be acceptable for approval. In most cases this will involve revising the proposal, having it endorsed by at least two advisor/evaluators, and then approved by the ENVS 202 Coordinator.

5. THE PROPOSAL
   The RESEARCH PROPOSAL presents the plan for research, demonstrating the proposed research is likely to succeed. The methodology selected for testing hypotheses and/or addressing study questions, including frameworks of analyses, shall be derived and documented from literature in an appropriate field. An extensive literature review will place the proposed research in the context of previous work.

   The PROJECT PROPOSAL presents the proposed activity demonstrating how the project goals are to be achieved. The methodologies for completing the specific project goals shall be derived from literature or documented practice and/or overseen by supervisors who are experts in the field. An extensive literature review will place the project goals and methods in an appropriate context. The ENVS 202 final product will be described in detail. The proposal may also include personal learning goals; if so, the methodologies to meet these goals and the means to evaluate the successfulness of meeting the goals will be clearly detailed.

6. SUPERVISION
   Enrollment in ENVS 202 requires two "ADVISOR/EVALUATORS" who provide advice during the research or project, and evaluate the work done for ENVS 202, including all final theses, documents, and/or other materials. Typically, one of the evaluators serves as the principal advisor for the student throughout ENVS 202. At least one evaluator must be an Environmental Program faculty member. It is the student's responsibility to obtain evaluator signatures on Evaluator Agreement forms, before commencing work on their research or project.
The advisor/evaluators are part of each ENVS 202 student's team, working together toward a successfully complete senior work. To ensure success, you should meet on a frequent and regular basis with your advisor/evaluators during all phases, from planning and proposal creation, through the work and analysis phases, to the preparation of conclusions and final products.

7. **FINAL PRODUCT**

All ENVS 202 students must complete a material final product including a **WRITTEN DOCUMENT** containing at least the following sections. A final product shall place the work done in a context provided by the literature review.

- a. title page
- b. abstract
- c. introduction
- d. literature review
- e. methods/procedures used
- f. results and outcomes
- g. discussion and conclusions
- h. recommendations

For students doing **research** the final product shall be in a thesis format acceptable to the two evaluators.

For students doing a **project** the character of the final product is detailed in the project proposal, and includes at least the written document described above.

8. **EVALUATION and GRADE**

Each evaluator submits a completed evaluation form to the ENVS 202 Coordinator (currently Kit Anderson) who determines the final grade based upon the evaluations. **Note:** There are separate forms for theses, projects, and creative arts projects.

9. **CHANGES**

Major changes in ENVS 202 topic or approach must be

- accompanied by a revised or new **RESEARCH PROPOSAL or PROJECT PROPOSAL**
- be endorsed by at least two advisor/evaluators prior to approval
- approved by the ENVS 202 Coordinator

10. **DEFINITIONS**

The following definitions reflect the different aspects of independent work done during ENVS 202. Note that all work done for ENVS 202 requires a component of scholarship, including at least the use of an accepted and documented methodology, and the placing of the work done in the context of a scholarly body of literature. Be aware that individual faculty members may define these terms somewhat differently.

**Research:** The testing of an hypothesis or, in some cases, the answering of a question, by a methodology acceptable within the natural or social sciences, the humanities, or technological and professional disciplines. An outcome of research is new knowledge. Example: testing the degree of social acceptance of animal and plant rights.

**Project:** Goal-based work usually seeking to create a material product or outcome. Examples: drafting proposed legislation restricting clear-cutting in Vermont; creating a suite of place-based essays.

**Internship:** An activity wherein skill or knowledge one has recently learned is put to use in a practical setting. Example: designing and implementing environmental educational programs for a local park district. Internships per se cannot fulfill ENVS 202 requirements. However, if there is a suitable project or research component, an internship can be the basis for an ENVS 202 activity. [Credits for internships can be attained directly via ENVS191 and/or ENVS 291.]
**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **THEESIS CREDIT AGREEMENT**
  Students will need to demonstrate to the Thesis Course Coordinator that academic progress has been made regarding a student’s thesis work according to the following guidelines:
  - 1 credit: the student has gone beyond the requirements of ENVS 201. This might include a site-plan for a project, preliminary data collection or piloting, or lecture preparation in the case of an STS.
  - 2 credits: the student has undertaken all of the preliminary research and has completed the data collection phase (or equivalent) of their work.
  - 3 credits: the student completes their thesis research or project, binds a final thesis and submits it to evaluators for grading.

  Once a student has registered for a total of six credits, the student will have to have all aspects, as described above, completed by the end of that semester. If a student does not complete this work, the student will have to dis-enroll from the appropriate number of credits and then add it to the semester in which the thesis is completed.

  You may spread the required 6.0 credits through two or more semesters and/or the summer session, according to the rules above. Grades of SP (“satisfactory progress”) will be given for each enrollment until your final work is graded; then all the SP's will be removed and replaced with your final grade.

- **EVALUATOR SIGNATURE FORMS**
  Before commencing work on your ENVS 202 project or thesis you must have a completed evaluator signature form on file. These are to be submitted to the ENVS 202 Coordinator.

- **HUMAN SUBJECT, VERTEBRATE ANIMAL, AND BIOHAZARDS REVIEW**
  Before commencing work on your ENVS 202 project or thesis you must have an approved Protocol Cover Sheet and attachments on file. These are to be submitted to the ENVS 202 Coordinator. If you change your topic you must submit a new Protocol Cover Sheet and attachments. If your work involves human subjects or vertebrate animals, you must design the work to qualify as "Exempt" according to Federal Law and University Policy. This will be determined by your ENVS 201 instructor and the ENVS 202 Coordinator.

- **FUNDS**
  Limited matching money (up to $250) is available from the Environmental Program Enrichment Fund to pay for part of your ENVS 202 expenses. Forms are available in the front office. Submit them to the Environmental Program Director.

- **DEADLINES**
  Program deadlines for submission of ENVS 202 drafts are:
  - First completed draft: ➔ NOV 1st (Fall Semester) ❳ APR 1st (Spring Semester)
  - Final draft for grading: ➔ DEC 1st (Fall Semester) ❳ MAY 1st (Spring Semester)

  Note that your evaluators may require earlier dates. DO NOT submit bound copies for evaluation until your evaluators agree your work is acceptable to bind!! When submitting copies for evaluation include evaluation forms, with the top part completed by you. It is your responsibility to see that the completed evaluations get to the ENVS 202 Coordinator -- by Tuesday of exam week if you are finishing at the end of the semester. You will not graduate if evaluations are missing. One copy of your final copy is to be presented to the ENVS 202 Coordinator for filing at The Bittersweet.

- **HONORS**
  Environmental Program Honors is described in a separate sheet. College or school honors vary immensely in process and planning required. If you are interested in college/school honors seek guidelines from your college/school office. Be sure you understand what is expected of you. In some instances you must begin your planning over a year before you anticipate receiving honors. Students receiving Program, College or School honors will have their ENVS 202 enrollments changed to ENVS-203 (Honors) or another suitable Honors course number.

- **HELP SESSIONS**
  ENVS 202 help sessions are offered once weekly each semester to support you in at any stage of your work. Check the Schedule of Courses for times and locations.