

What would I study in the Sustainable Development minor?

The [Sustainable Development minor](#) is offered for students to augment their education with critical interdisciplinary skills and knowledge needed to address the urgent and complex challenges of sustainable development. Five courses are required for the minor and students will take courses within the following framework:

- I. EESC 2330 Science for Sustainable Development
- II. SDEV 2300 Challenges of Sustainable Development
- III. One course from Analysis & Solutions to Complex Problems Requirement Area
- IV. Second course from Analysis & Solutions to Complex Problems Requirement Area
- V. One course from Skills/Actions Requirement Area

What courses should I take?

I. EESC 2330 Science for Sustainable Development

Offered in fall only. The course provides students with the natural science basis to appreciate co-dependencies of natural and human systems, which are central to understanding sustainable development. After completing the course, students should be able to incorporate scientific approaches into their research or policy decisions and be able to use scientific methods of data analysis. The semester will highlight the climate system and solutions from both physical and ecological perspectives; water resources; food production and the cycling of nutrients; and the role of biodiversity in sustainable development. The course emphasizes key scientific concepts such as uncertainty, experimental versus observational approaches, prediction and predictability, the use of models and other essential methodological aspects.

II. SDEV 2300 Challenges of Sustainable Development

Offered in spring only. This course provides an introduction to the field of sustainable development, drawing primarily from social science and policy studies. It offers a critical examination of the concept of sustainable development, showing how factors like economics, population, culture, politics and inequality complicate its goals. Students will learn how different social science disciplines (political science, demography, economics, geography, history, law, and sociology) approach challenges of sustainable development across a variety of topics (fisheries, climate change, air pollution, consumption, energy, conservation, and water management). The course provides students with some of the fundamental concepts, vocabulary, and analytical tools to pursue and think critically about sustainable development.



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III. Analysis and Solutions to Complex Problems (two courses)

Coursework in Water, Energy, Food, Public Health, Climate Change, Natural Disasters and Urbanization allow students to develop an expertise in critical thematic areas of sustainable development.

IV. Skills/Actions (one course)

These courses equip students with theoretical foundations and practical skills that are in demand in the public, private and nonprofit sectors, as well as in graduate education programs.

Who can answer my questions?

Students are encouraged to contact program administrators in one of their first few semesters at Columbia to discuss requirements. Peer-advising is offered by the [Student Union for Sustainable Development](#), an organization of sustainable development majors and concentrators. Once students declare, they have access to multiple resources, including staff advisors at the Climate School and the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, the Climate School's [professional development opportunities](#) and Columbia's [Center for Career Education](#).

Students enrolled in the Sustainable Development program administered through the Climate School confer their degrees from Columbia College or the School of General Studies. Students should complement the advising provided by the Undergraduate Program Office at the Climate School regarding majors and minors with guidance from their advising deans in Columbia College and the School of General Studies.

Program Administrator

Sylvia Montijo

Associate Director, Undergraduate Programs

sm4084@columbia.edu