In our environmental social science PhD program, you will explore complex social forces shaping how humans interact with the environment. This interdisciplinary degree incorporates planning, anthropology and economics to broaden your view of the factors surrounding environmental practice and facilitate new areas of thought-leadership and innovation for a more sustainable future.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: PHD Environmental Social Science

The PhD program in environmental social science is one of the few doctoral degree programs in the U.S. that draws on the premise that reducing human impacts and developing more sustainable environmental practices is difficult, if not impossible, to achieve without a focus on the social dynamics of environmental issues using critical social science perspectives.

The program is organized around theoretically based conceptual domains:

- culture and the environment
- environmental hazards and vulnerability
- environmental justice
- human environment impacts
- political ecology
- science and technology studies

This is the basis for addressing various topical foci, including urban environments, technologies and their consequences, landscapes, institutions, and health and the environment.

Students work with faculty who have expertise in a broad range of fields including:

- archaeology
- community resources
- cultural and medical anthropology
- demography
- environmental history
- geographic information systems
The program trains students to move into teaching and research positions or to assume leadership roles in government, industry or nongovernmental organizations.

Coursework for the degree is focused on developing real-world skills and a solid grasp of complex social science approaches to environmental issues. Students work closely with their committee to develop a curriculum appropriate to their chosen interests and career goals.

At a Glance

- **College/School:** The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- **Location:** Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

84 credit hours, a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, a prospectus and a dissertation

Students entering with a master's degree in a related field may be granted up to 30 credit hours toward the 84 credit hour total required for the doctorate degree program. This leaves 30 credit hours of coursework, 12 credit hours of research credit and 12 hours of dissertation credit (54 credit hours total) to be earned post-admission.

Students entering without a master's degree must earn an additional 30 hours of graduate credit, produce a research portfolio which is formally evaluated by a faculty committee and present that research in a public forum before continuing on in the later stage of the doctorate degree program.

All students must maintain a 3.20 average GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in their courses and complete degree requirements per the program's satisfactory progress policy.

Admission Requirements
Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited institution. Undergraduate coursework in the social sciences (e.g., geography, political science, sociology, anthropology, planning or history) is not a prerequisite for admission but is generally advisable. Students may be admitted without such a background and may be required to acquire knowledge of the social sciences in a manner to be specified at the time of admission.

Applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 hours of their first bachelor's degree program, or applicants must have a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in an applicable master's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. official transcripts
3. personal statement outlining educational and professional goals
4. current curriculum vitae or resume
5. GRE scores
6. three letters of recommendation
7. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency.

Applicants may submit an optional scholarly writing sample, not to exceed 20 to 30 double-spaced pages, to be included in the application materials.

Application Deadlines
Fall

Global Opportunities
PLuS Alliance
Global Experience
Global Degree

Career Opportunities