

## The Environmental Studies Social Science Contract

*This document describes the contract requirements and provides a set of guidelines and a timetable for developing a successful contract for the ES Social Sciences major.*

**Contract Requirements:** Students will complete the ES social science major as described in the St. Olaf College Catalog with an individualized contract tailored to their particular interests. The contract will consist of at least five courses that include analysis of the environment and focus on a *substantive topic* that can be illuminated by the social sciences.

**Examples of substantive topics** studied in the social sciences include environmental law; U.S. environmental policy; international environmental policy; the economy and the environment; culture and the environment; environmental justice; property rights and the environment; and globalization.

**Three of the courses** in the contract may be from those used to satisfy the social science group or social science core requirements (eg. Economics 242; Environmental Studies 232; Environmental Studies 201; Political Science 276; Political Science 220 (Australia) or Sociology/Anthropology 222 (Australia). Additional courses in the contract may be drawn from this list, but we recommend that one or two courses be at an advanced level (level III).

**Students may include** in their contract courses from across the curriculum that do not exclusively focus on the environment but which nonetheless offer the possibility of increased understanding of the substantive topic. Students planning to include these kinds of courses **should discuss this possibility with an ES faculty advisor prior to enrollment**. In these cases, students should be prepared to articulate how the course will contribute to understanding the substantive topic that is the focus of the student's contract major, and how class assignments can be tailored to environmental themes. Students are encouraged to consider Level III classes that offer flexibility in assignments for this part of their contract.

**By the Spring Semester of Sophomore year**, students should meet with an Environmental Studies social science advisor and identify a *substantive topic* as the focus of their Environmental Studies major. Discussions about appropriate courses, sequencing and assignments tailored to the topic should take place at this time.

**By the Spring Semester of Junior year**, students should submit a *contract proposal* detailing their specific interest in the substantive topic which they are investigating as part of their environmental studies major. In two to four pages, the *contract proposal* should include a brief introduction to the *substantive topic*; description of the specific *curriculum* proposed to understand and illuminate the topic; and a description of *analytical methods* by which the substantive topic will be studied. (Examples of analytical methods common to the social sciences include statistical analysis (cross

sectional or time series), economic analysis, game theory, and comparative politics.) When appropriate, the *contract proposal* should include descriptions of particular assignments or projects that link academic work to the topic.

**Failure to adhere** to the suggested timeline could result in contract denial, and the loss of the environmental studies major. Contracts developed according to these guidelines will generally have a better chance of acceptance than those that are not.