

MINOR

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES AND SUSTAINABLE TRANSFORMATIONS



This 15EC interdisciplinary minor offers you the tools, knowledge, and skills needed to understand and address current environmental issues. The minor combines insights from environmental philosophy and critical social sciences to meet real-world sustainability challenges.

What is this Minor About?

This minor helps you to identify social, environmental, and climate injustices and to think creatively about how to promote a more equitable and environmentally conscious society. It introduces a variety of conceptual lenses, including **climate justice**, **environmental ethics**, **science and technology studies** (including 'action-based' research), **agroecology**, **decoloniality**, **biocultural conservation**, **field philosophy**, and **historical studies** to examine the values central to a just and sustainable future. You will learn to identify plural values that promote diverse, equitable, sustainable, and inclusive guidelines for research and innovation, and the responsible design of technology. You will also have the opportunity to consider what this means in the context of their own disciplinary training.

We address questions such as:

- What are the values central to a just and sustainable future?
- How do technology and science influence our

understanding of sustainability?

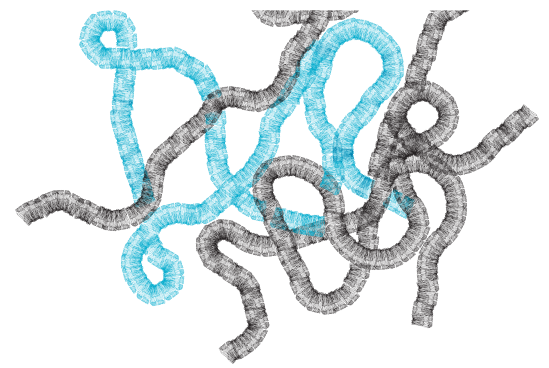
- What are the ethical issues raised by environmental policies and technologies?
- How can we consume and live more sustainably?

Content

After a one-week introduction unit, the core of the minor consists of three Study Units that last each two weeks. Each study unit is structured around three study moments: **foundations**, **critical examination**, and **solutions**, each moment being focused on the topics covered in the unit. The **political**, **technological**, and **scientific** dimensions of these topics will also be discussed in each unit. The goal is to better understand the context, identify problems, and reflect on solutions to leading sustainability challenges of our time.

Introduction Unit

Introductory concepts and skills are presented to set up key concepts, challenges and skills for addressing environmental values and sustainable transformations.



*"Overall I think this is
by far the most
interactive and
informative course I've
ever had"
(EVST student, 2024)*

1. Climate Unit

This unit is about climate justice and climate ethics. Climate change presents complex challenges at the intersection of technological innovations and ethical values. From a technical perspective, addressing climate change requires novel solutions in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and carbon capture technologies. On the other hand, the ethical dimension of climate change revolves around issues of environmental justice, intergenerational equity, and the responsibility of developed nations towards vulnerable populations and future generations. What would be a fair response to mitigate and adapt to climate change, given its global effects and implications for humans, non-humans, and ecosystems?

2. Consumption and Food Unit

This unit is about sustainable consumption and food justice. Where is your food coming from? What is the origin of materials that were used to build your smartphone? Plastics and other forms of waste are implicated in daily practices of food consumption, bodily care and hygiene, and provide a vantage point for critical reflection. We will examine industrial agricultural systems, and alternatives posed by local communities, grassroots movements, and social movements. We will discuss agroecology and the potential to restore nature and to decommodify, decolonize and transform our food system. We will also examine the ethics of daily habits, carbon footprints, and social responsibility of corporations.

3. Conservation Unit

This unit is about biodiversity, linguistic and cultural diversity conservation, and ecosystem services. How important are nature and other species for the prosperity of human societies? Can the benefits from nature be estimated in monetary terms? What human-

nature relationships and practices are relevant for decisions affecting nature? How would the consideration of multiple values with respect to nature affect technological design? What role does language and culture play in our valuing nature?

Teaching Activities and Assessment

In addition to lectures and interactive workshop sessions, the teaching activities of this minor include skills sessions to prepare for the assignments, a field trip to apply the concepts learnt in class, and a serious game session on political and technological measures to address climate change (with the Daybreak game).

The assessments include a reflection on a philosophical walk that helps you engage with a classmate on the topics taught in class, a quiz designed by peers on class content, a self-ethnography food diary to track and reflect on your food consumption practices, a reflection on the outcomes of the serious game on climate change, and the creation of a video (with an open format) to engage more deeply with a topic or issue discussed in class at the end of the quartile.

You can find more information on this minor, as well as the link to register for it, on our website: [UT.ONL/EVST](https://utwente.nl/evst)

MORE INFORMATION

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For more information about this minor and for general information about minors:
www.utwente.nl/minor