Environmental Studies is an interdisciplinary field that explores the interconnection between humans and the natural environment. Modern environmental issues reflect the complex interactions of natural and social systems at global and local scales, and the resulting impacts on the Earth have led many to ask whether humankind has entered into a new epoch in the planet’s history, one in which humans are now a key driver in the change of Earth systems.

The Environmental Studies program fosters the critical, integrative thinking required to better understand the complexities of this human-nature relationship and the resultant scales of impact, and to assess and develop solutions that meet intergenerational human needs without compromising the natural systems upon which humans depend.

The Environmental Studies program offers an undergraduate minor in Environmental Studies and several interdisciplinary courses for students interested in broadening their understanding of environmental issues. These courses often are team-taught by faculty from various areas of study.

**Minor**

- Minor in Environmental Studies (ga.rice.edu/programs-study/departments-programs/natural-sciences/environmental-studies/environmental-studies-minor)

Environmental Studies does not currently offer an academic program at the graduate level.

**Director**

Dominic Boyer

**Environmental Studies Minor Advisor**

Dominic Boyer

**ENST Steering Committee**

Jim Blackburn
Dominic Boyer
Richard Johnson
Jeff Kripal
Elizabeth Long
Julia Morgan
Timothy Morton
Evan Siemann
Albert Pope

For Rice University degree-granting programs:

To view the list of official course offerings, please see Rice’s Course Catalog (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/ISWKSCAT.cat?p_action=cata)

To view the most recent semester’s course schedule, please see Rice’s Course Schedule (https://courses.rice.edu/admweb/ISWKSCAT.cat)

**Environmental Studies (ENST)**

**ENST 100 - ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SOCIETY**

**Short Title:** ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & SOCIETY  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture  
**Distribution Group:** Distribution Group II  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** This introductory course in environmental studies helps students to better understand the complex interrelationship between human cultures and their social and physical environments. Lectures and assignments draw upon the methods and expertise of architecture, the humanities and the social sciences. This is a core course of Rice’s Environmental Studies minor. Cross-list: ARCH 105.

**ENST 101 - THE EARTH**

**Short Title:** THE EARTH  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture  
**Distribution Group:** Distribution Group III  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Enrollment limited to students with a class of Freshman, Junior, Sophomore or Senior. Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** Study of the nature of the Earth and its processes. Cross-list: ESCI 101.

**ENST 102 - HISTORY OF THE EARTH AND LIFE**

**Short Title:** HISTORY OF THE EARTH & LIFE  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture  
**Distribution Group:** Distribution Group III  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** Study of earth’s systems over the past 4.6 billion years. Topics include evolution of life, continents, ocean basins and climate. Cross-list: ESCI 102.

**ENST 113 - ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS SEMINAR**

**Short Title:** ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS SEMINAR  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Distribution Group:** Distribution Group III  
**Credit Hour:** 1  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Lower-Level  
**Description:** Discussion of environmental crises. Topics vary annually. Cross-list: EBIO 113, ESCI 113. Repeatable for Credit.
ENST 114 - NATURAL DISASTER SEMINAR  
Short Title: NATURAL DISASTER SEMINAR  
Department: Environmental Studies  
Grade Mode: Standard Letter  
Course Type: Seminar  
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III  
Credit Hour: 1  
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.  
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level  
Description: Seminar topics vary by term. Cross-list: ESCI 114. Repeatable for Credit.

ENST 117 - FRESHMAN SEMINAR IN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE RESEARCH  
Short Title: FRESHMAN ENVIRONMENTAL SEMINAR  
Department: Environmental Studies  
Grade Mode: Standard Letter  
Course Type: Seminar  
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III  
Credit Hour: 1  
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.  
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level  
Description: A 7-week seminar course to introduce freshmen perspective environmental science researches to the excitement of research at Rice and in the broader Houston area, and to provide context with which to think about facts presented in textbooks. Small groups will meet weekly with a graduate student or postdoctoral researcher to explore a published research article by a local team of researchers, gaining background information about the subject and exposure to the research techniques. In the final session, the group will tour the lab that produced the feature article. Additional tours and activities TBA. All first year non-transfer students are eligible to enroll in ENST 117 regardless of AP credit. This course meets in the second half of the semester and features research in the Environmental Science Major.

ENST 201 - THE SCIENCE BEHIND EARTH GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
Short Title: SCIENCE BEHIND GLOBAL WARMING  
Department: Environmental Studies  
Grade Mode: Standard Letter  
Course Type: Lecture  
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III  
Credit Hours: 3  
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.  
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level  
Description: The course will introduce the students to the science behind last century Earth global warming in the context of the past records of global Earth climate variability and forecast of Earth climate in the next century. Cross-list: ESCI 201.

ENST 202 - CULTURE, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT: AN INTRODUCTION TO ENERGY HUMANITIES  
Short Title: CULTURE ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT  
Department: Environmental Studies  
Grade Mode: Standard Letter  
Course Type: Lecture  
Distribution Group: Distribution Group Group III  
Credit Hours: 3  
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.  
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level  
Description: Humanity faces extraordinary challenges in an era of climate change and energy transition. These challenges are not only technological but also questions of value, power, behavior, and understanding. This course draws upon new research across the arts, humanities and social sciences to help students better understand the cultural and social dimensions of our current patterns of energy use, their environmental impacts, and the possibility of new energy futures. Intended for both STEM majors and humanities and social science students. Cross-list: HUMA 202.

ENST 204 - ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: THE DESIGN & PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY AGRICULTURE  
Short Title: COMMUNITY GARDEN  
Department: Environmental Studies  
Grade Mode: Standard Letter  
Course Type: Lecture/Laboratory  
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III  
Credit Hour: 1  
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.  
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level  
Description: The course introduces the fundamentals of community garden design and practice. Responsibilities will center on developing and improving the Rice Community Garden. A strong emphasis will be on learning and applying ecological principles to the practice of community agriculture. Class has required meetings outside of regular class time. Cross-list: EBIO 204. Repeatable for Credit.

ENST 265 - GREEN WORLDS: SCIENCE FICTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
Short Title: SCI FI AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
Department: Environmental Studies  
Grade Mode: Standard Letter  
Course Type: Seminar  
Credit Hours: 1-3  
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.  
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level  
Description: Examines the ways that science fiction has expressed and challenged ideas about nature, culture, society and politics and imagined alternative 'green' worlds. Will focus on authors such as Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler and Paolo Bacigalupi: films such as "Wall-E" and "Avatar": and accessible secondary criticism. Cross-list: ENGL 269.
ENST 281 - ENGINEERING SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
Short Title: ENGRG SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Lower-Level
Description: Students will work in teams to develop sustainable solutions for energy or environmental problems affecting our Houston and Rice communities. Emphasis will be placed on the integration of engineering fundamentals with societal issues, environmental and safety considerations, sustainability and professional communications. Prerequisites: introductory engineering courses, or permission of instructor. Cross-list: CHBE 281.

ENST 302 - ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES: RICE INTO THE FUTURE
Short Title: ENVIRON ISSUES: RICE IN FUTURE
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Laboratory
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: Students use the campus as a laboratory for learning about sustainability through group projects to reduce Rice's environmental impact or resolve environmental issues. Cross-list: SOCI 304.

ENST 307 - ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Short Title: ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course explores the physical principles of energy use and its impacts on Earth's environment and climate. Topics will include energy mechanics, climate change, and the environmental impacts and future prospects of various fossil fuel and alternative energy sources. Cross-list: CEVE 307, ESCI 307. Recommended Prerequisite(s): MATH 101 and PHYS 101 or PHYS 111.

ENST 313 - SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
Short Title: CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAIN DESIGN
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course will explore sustainable design from initial sustainable facility concepts and team organizations, to enlisting community support and process assessment. The course will develop into details about sustainable design, lessons learned, processes and outcomes. Space is limited and registration does not guarantee a space in this course. The final course roster is formulated on the first day class by the individual instructor. Cross-list: ARCH 313. Graduate/Undergraduate Equivalency: ENST 613. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for ENST 313 and ENST 613.

ENST 315 - ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Short Title: ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): (BIOS 201 or BIOC 201) and (BIOS 202 or EBI0 202)
Description: An overview of environmental health issues including discussion of epidemiologic methods, illnesses caused or exacerbated by environmental exposures, and the role of research in driving effective policies to protect and promote public health. The class includes numerous guest lectures by area experts (physicians, researchers, community activists, policymakers and others); a bus tour featuring disproportionately affected neighborhoods as well as cutting-edge “green” initiatives; original student research projects; and an opportunity to address the Houston City Council. The dynamic between research and action, i.e., “making a difference,” is stressed. FORMERLY ENST 314.

ENST 316 - ENVIRONMENTAL FILM
Short Title: ENVIRONMENTAL FILM
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: Explores the ways film represents the environment and environmental issues (food, water, energy, waste, environmental justice, sustainability), and both expresses and shapes environmental values. We will view and analyze a variety of genres, as well as reading supplementary material. Cross-list: SOCI 316.

ENST 321 - CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY: THE HIGH PERFORMANCE BUILDING
Short Title: SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: The project-based seminar will provide a means by which all those with an interest in the building science entailed in the design of commercial, institutional, and residential structures can investigate common issues, obtain information, discuss local strategies, and otherwise address subjects relating to building or campus performance over its lifecycle. To develop an approach of taking an existing Rice University building an optimizing its use via "repositioning" or redesign the class will create an interdisciplinary forum where students of architecture, engineering (structural, mechanical, etc.), and human sciences will potentially collaborate with professional building consultants, materials manufactures, contractors, developers, owners, and Rice campus facility managers Cross-list: ARCH 321. Graduate/Undergraduate Equivalency: ENST 621. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for ENST 321 and ENST 621.
ENST 322 - CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY: THE REGENERATIVE REPOSITIONING OF NEW OR EXISING RICE CAMPUS BU
Short Title: CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course will explore application of high performance, sustainable design to specific Rice University campus and facility targets. In partnership with Rice University leadership, the team effort will develop “regenerative redesign” approaches based on investigation of other campuses’ case study. Space is limited and registration does not guarantee a space in this course. The final course roster is formulated on the first day of class by the individual instructor. Cross-list: ARCH 322. Graduate/Undergraduate Equivalency: ENST 622. Mutually Exclusive: Credit cannot be earned for ENST 322 and ENST 622.

ENST 323 - CONSERVATION BIOLOGY
Short Title: CONSERVATION BIOLOGY
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Prerequisite(s): BIOL 201 and EIBIO 202
Description: The course is designed to give students a broad overview of conservation biology. Lecture and discussions will focus on conservation issues such as biodiversity, extinction, management, sustained yield, invasive species and preserve design. Cross-list: EIBIO 323.

ENST 331 - ENVIRONMENTAL POLITICS AND POLICY
Short Title: ENVIRONMENT POLITICS & POLICY
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: The course considers the major issues in the increasingly important public policy area of the environment. It emphasizes the American experience, but also considers certain international aspects of these issues. Cross-list: POLI 331.

ENST 332 - THE SOCIAL LIFE OF CLEAN ENERGY
Short Title: SOCIAL LIFE OF CLEAN ENERGY
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Seminar
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course considers the phenomenon of renewable energy, using a social scientific approach to analyze the various forces and interests involved in the development of renewable energy projects (such as hydropower, solar and wind) in both the global North and South. No prerequisites required. Cross-list: ANTH 332.

ENST 340 - GLOBAL BIOGEOCHEMICAL CYCLES
Short Title: GLOBAL BIOGEOCHEMICAL CYCLES
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture/Laboratory
Distribution Group: Distribution Group III
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course introduces students to the coupled nature of the biosphere, atmosphere and hydrosphere using as focal points elemental cycles such as those of carbon and nitrogen. This is a writing-intensive class, and will include 3 required Saturday field trips. Cross-list: EBIOL 340, ESCRI 340.

ENST 350 - ENVIRONMENTAL INTERNSHIP
Short Title: ENVIRONMENTAL INTERNSHIP
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Internship/Practicum
Credit Hours: 1-6
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: Provides enrollment credit for approved internships with environmental organizations or agencies. Students must seek approval prior to beginning the internship. Weekly progress reports and a final paper are required. Instructor Permission Required.

ENST 357 - ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY
Short Title: ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIOLOGY
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Distribution Group: Distribution Group II
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: This course focuses on the foundations of environmental sociology and takes a social and historical approach to examine how humans affect the environment and the environment affects humans. Topics include: agricultural sustainability, resource extraction and climate changes; environmental racism/sexiism; globalization and development; population, and consumption, and environmental movements. Cross-list: SOCI 367.

ENST 368 - LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Short Title: LITERATURE & THE ENVIRONMENT
Department: Environmental Studies
Grade Mode: Standard Letter
Course Type: Lecture
Distribution Group: Distribution Group I
Credit Hours: 3
Restrictions: Graduate level students may not enroll.
Course Level: Undergraduate Upper-Level
Description: A course that asks the question: How does literature express or shape environmental values? In this class we will read American fiction and nonfiction exploring the relationship between human and nonhuman nature. Cross-list: ENGL 368.
### ENST 379 - LAB MODULE IN AQUATIC ECOLOGY WITH SCUBA
**Short Title:** LAB MOD AQ ECOLOGY WITH SCUBA  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture/Laboratory  
**Distribution Group:** Distribution Group III  
**Credit Hour:** 1  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** Students will learn some fundamentals of aquatic ecosystems and conduct lab exercises that involve SCUBA-based fieldwork in a nationally recognized freshwater dive site. Course has required meetings outside of regular class time. Prerequisites: LPAP 194 or proof of Open Water Scuba certification from a professional organization (e.g., PADI, NAUI). A course fee ranging from $300 to $535 is associated with the class. Please send all enrollment requests to Mariah McClary, mam22@rice.edu and include the following information: major, year, scuba certification level and issuing professional organization, and a brief statement about why you want to take the course. You will be notified of enrollment decisions by December 5th. Department Permission Required. Cross-list: EBIO 379. Recommended Prerequisite(s): EBIO 213 and LPAP 194.

### ENST 391 - SPECULATIVE FUTURES
**Short Title:** SPECULATIVE FUTURES  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** Drawing from “CliFi,” “Speculative Fiction,” and global anthropological case studies, this course analyzes a series of potential futures as earthly conditions continue to be altered by human activity. Students will develop speculative future models through assessing climate conditions, population displacement, ethics, ecological transformations and human practices and values. Cross-list: ANTH 391.

### ENST 400 - INDEPENDENT STUDY
**Short Title:** INDEPENDENT STUDY  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Independent Study  
**Credit Hours:** 1-6  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level

### ENST 406 - INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL LAW
**Short Title:** INTRO TO ENVIRONMENTAL LAW  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** Introduction to Environmental Law is intended to introduce the student to the methods used by the United States and the international community to regulate and/or allocate air, water and land resources. A key focus of this course will be the emerging area of the law of sustainable development, including the implementation of full price costing, life cycle analysis, carbon cycle analysis, allocation of assimilative capacity and other similar issues. Cross-list: CEVE 406.

### ENST 415 - THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT
**Short Title:** THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Seminar  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** Examines the environmental movement in the U.S. and globally. After a historical overview, we will use a social movement perspective to examine mobilization, organizations and tactics, ideologies and identities, as well as exploring aspects of contemporary environmentalism (e.g. green building and slow flood, wildlife management/biodiversity, sustainable development, environmental justice). Cross-list: SOCI 415.

### ENST 425 - ORGANIC GEOCHEMISTRY
**Short Title:** ORGANIC GEOCHEMISTRY  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Description:** This course covers the organic geochemistry of the natural environment. Topics include: production, transport, decomposition, and storage of organic matter in the marine and terrestrial environments, use of isotopes to track biogeochemical processes and natural and perturbed carbon cycle issues, including past and recent climate shifts. Cross-list: CHEM 425, ESCI 425.

### ENST 437 - ENERGY ECONOMICS
**Short Title:** ENERGY ECONOMICS  
**Department:** Environmental Studies  
**Grade Mode:** Standard Letter  
**Course Type:** Lecture  
**Credit Hours:** 3  
**Restrictions:** Graduate level students may not enroll.  
**Course Level:** Undergraduate Upper-Level  
**Prerequisite(s):** ECON 301 or ECON 370  
**Description:** Discussion of key aspects in the supply and demand of energy. Topics include optimal extraction of depletable resources, transportation, storage, end-use and efficiency, and the relationship between economic activity, energy, and the environment. Cross-list: ECON 437.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Grade Mode</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Short Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENST 477</td>
<td>SPECIAL TOPICS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>SPECIAL TOPICS</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENST 613</td>
<td>CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAINABLE DESIGN</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate/Upper-Level</td>
<td>SUSTAINABLE DESIGN</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENST 621</td>
<td>CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY: THE HIGH PERFORMANCE BUILDING</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>SUSTAINABILITY CASE STUDIES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENST 622</td>
<td>CASE STUDIES IN SUSTAINABILITY: THE REGENERATIVE REPOSITIONING OF NEW OR EXISTING RICE CAMPUS BU</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>REGENERATIVE REPOSITIONING OF NEW OR EXISTING RICE CAMPUS BU</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENST 646</td>
<td>ADVANCED TOPICS IN BIOMEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>ADV BIOMEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY</td>
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Note: Internally, the university uses the following descriptions, codes, and abbreviations for this academic program. The following is a quick reference:

- Course offerings/subject code: ENST
Program Description and Code
• Environmental Studies: ENST

Undergraduate Minor Description and Code
• Minor in Environmental Studies: ENST