

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PROPOSAL TO CREATE A CONCENTRATION IN LITERATURE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The English Department proposes a Concentration in Literature and the Environment (ENLE) within the major in response to strong student interest and drawing on the increasing breadth and depth of the English faculty's research and teaching. The Concentration will support ongoing efforts across the College to develop a broader Environmental Humanities major.

Rationale: The English faculty's work in Literature and the Environment has expanded significantly in recent years, and along with it, student demand for courses focused on Literature and the Environment. The proposed Concentration will provide an organized curriculum, scaffolded learning opportunities, and an intellectual community for these enthusiastic and passionate learners, enriching their work in upper-level courses and honors theses. The Concentration will prepare students for pathways beyond Colby including fellowships and graduate programs in Literature and the Environment and in Environmental Humanities, as well as job opportunities that value literary and interdisciplinary humanities-based training, including employment in non-profits, communications, education, journalism, and museums.

Consultation: This proposal reflects feedback from colleagues across the College, including many who have been involved in the development of the Environmental Humanities and Environmental Sciences (e.g., the Center for the Arts and Humanities, the EH Faculty Seminar, and faculty in Chemistry, Environmental Studies, Philosophy, and WGSS). Based on this feedback, we have defined the Concentration's learning objectives and scaffolded learning opportunities; clarified the relationship between studies of Literature and the Environment and the broader fields of Environmental Humanities as well as Environmental Studies; determined how to advise students on selecting required coursework outside the major; streamlined the structure of the Concentration to facilitate students' double-majoring in other programs and departments; and confirmed that the Concentration will support students in interdisciplinary programs that draw on our department's course offerings.

Learning Goals: In the ENLE concentration students will

- Examine the ways environmental inequities have been produced, sustained, and contested in Anglophone literature and other narrative forms.
- Analyze histories of environmental writing, including representations of human-environment relations and their intersection with colonial histories.
- Assess the history, etymology, and use of core concepts that structure apprehension of the natural world, including for example "nature," "culture," "environment," and "ecology."
- Develop writing skills to clearly and effectively communicate developments in environmental sciences to a wider audience.
- Foster a sense of collective but differentiated planetary responsibility.