As a student in biology, society, and environment (BSE) you’ll go a step further than the typical biology major’s education. While you’ll receive comprehensive training in biology, you’ll also apply your knowledge of biology to topics like philosophy, sociology, geography, history, and more. The BSE major allows you a level of flexibility and variety by offering areas of specialization and thematic focuses.

Possible specializations include human biology, plant biology and ecology, and microbial genetics. Thematic focuses include ethics in health care, health policy, science and social change, and more. You can choose from these areas or forge your own path within the BSE program. You’ll be able to work closely with faculty and advisers to find courses that will help you develop expertise necessary for your future plans.

The College of Liberal Arts Advantage: More Than a Major

When you study Biology, Society, and Environment at the University of Minnesota, you gain the added advantage of a College of Liberal Arts education. At CLA, the liberal arts mean you get more than just a degree in one major or another; it means you will be exposed to different areas of study, to different ways of thinking and learning. In fact, the liberal arts teach you how to learn—how to ask the right questions, how to problem solve, and how to innovate. The liberal arts highlight the complexities of our world, because here at CLA you will study not just, say, politics or art but also where politics and art intersect, where science and ethics intersect, where economics and the environment intersect.
Meet Our Students

Student Experiences

Internships: Gain Valuable Experience in the Twin Cities and Beyond

Did you know? CLA Career Services has its very own internship reflection course! Students taking an internship can use this course to reflect on ways that their work experience is preparing them for successful careers - and receive credit for the work.

Learning Abroad Options in Biology, Society, & Environment: Prepare to Lead in a Global Economy

Firsthand learning through experiences in diverse parts of the world is an invaluable ingredient in the formation of an educated person in our globalizing world. Study abroad is designed to provide you with these experiences. Whether your area of emphasis is in the health sciences, environmental studies, policy, or some combination, studying abroad can enrich your educational experiences. You will understand your own cultural area better for having shared in and with another. Study abroad will help you understand how science and society intersect not only in the US but around the globe.

Learn more about study abroad for Biology, Society, & Environment majors.

Student Organizations: Find Friends and Grow as a Leader

- The Biology, Society, and Environment Club
- Biology Without Borders
- Marine Biology Club

Undergraduate Research: Turn Curiosity into New Knowledge

Many of our students participate in ongoing research projects with University faculty or work with a faculty mentor to develop a project of their own. GES faculty enjoy working with undergraduates, but your opportunities are not limited to GES faculty. Talk with your instructors, advisors, and your peers to identify any University faculty member working in an area that interests you! Our students work with social
scientists and historians, and they conduct scientific research in laboratories and in the field. Whether within CLA or at the Medical School, CFANS, CBS, the Institute on the Environment, or the Population Center, there are important questions waiting for you!

Meet Our Faculty

Meet Our Alumni

CLA Graduates: Successful Careers and Purposeful Lives

CLA graduates succeed in many different careers — law, health care, medicine, business, government, teaching, advertising, arts and entertainment, international relations, and more — precisely because they understand how to navigate a complex and interconnected world. As our alumni explain below, “Being a good employee means being curious, and continuing to evolve, and learn, and educate yourself, and I can think of no stronger foundation for doing that than a liberal arts education.

“An education in the liberal arts is a springboard to lifelong career success”

-- Dean John Coleman
You might also explore

- Biology
- Environmental Sciences, Policy and Management
- Geography
- Plant and Microbial Biology
- Sociology
- Urban Studies

Associated Careers

Agronomists, Animal Scientists, Biologists, Bio-Technologists, Ecologists, Genetic Engineers, Lab Technicians, Medical Librarians, Microbiologists, Toxicologists

Admission Information

FRESHMAN: Admission Information

TRANSFER STUDENTS: Requirements for the College of Liberal Arts

Beyond admission, if you have questions about transferring, the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) has transfer advisors to help. Please feel free to contact them about any of the topics below!

- Course plans before transferring
- Estimated time to graduation
- Career preparation in CLA
- Getting ready for orientation, if admitted
- Connecting with major/minor departments