Biology, Society, and Environment (BSE)

2 Extra Credit Senior Project Registration Information

Biology, Society and Environment is an interdisciplinary College of Liberal Arts (CLA) major (B.A.) administered by the Department of Geography, Environment, and Society (GES) at the University of Minnesota. The BSE curriculum provides students with a strong foundation in the biological sciences complemented by courses that focus on historical, ethical, social, political, legal, and environmental aspects of the biological sciences, as well as on human health and the environment. Students are encouraged to develop disciplinary and topical breadth and depth through carefully selected BSE courses.

All BSE students must complete a Senior Project and are urged to identify a senior project supervisor with expertise in a field related to the subject of their project.

Students may register for two additional credits and complete additional work while concurrently enrolled in an approved BSE Core or Theme Elective course offered by a CLA department.

Only courses offered by CLA departments\(^1\) are eligible for the 2xcr SP option. Students who wish to work on a senior project with the instructor of a non-CLA course must complete a 3 credit senior project.

**Guidelines for Senior Projects completed via 2 Extra Credit Registration:**

The senior project should be a significant work of high academic quality although there are no strict guidelines. The disciplinary conventions and the expertise of the faculty mentor with whom the student is working are generally accepted. Most senior projects completed through the 2cr option have resulted in 18-30 pages of written work or 12-15 pages, plus a presentation or some other outcome related to student’s goals (e.g., a fellowship application or an annotated bibliography).

Strategies developed by faculty for BSE students completing this option include:

1. When there is a major paper for the course, instructors increase the research project requirements for the major paper (e.g., standard is 15 pages, 10 references; 2cr project becomes 22 pp and 20 references)
2. When the regular course is designed around multiple smaller projects (e.g., four 5pp papers), students complete 2-3 additional papers and require a brief synthetic assignment.
3. A combination of written and other work, such as an oral presentation, a poster to submit to a professional conference, a fellowship application, an annotated bibliography, creative project, etc.

**BSE does require a written component** (2-page minimum). When the additional work is a presentation, creative project, etc. the student should produce a short paper summarizing the project and reflecting on the senior project experience.

- The CLA directed study guidelines may also be helpful when determining the structure and requirements of the Senior Project: [http://www.clacareer.umn.edu/directedstudy/](http://www.clacareer.umn.edu/directedstudy/)

\(^1\) These include courses taught under CLA designators, for example: AFRO, ALL, AMST, Anth, CSCL, Geog, GIS, GLOS, GWSS, Phil, Psy, Soc, URBS, and language department designators. Students wishing to work with the instructors of a BTHX, HSCI, HMED, and PUBH course must register for 3 credit “stand alone” projects.

*Students should use the geogadv@umn.edu advising email when contacting BSE advisor.
For Students
Students are encouraged to contact potential senior project supervisors to discuss their interests and get permission to complete their senior project well in advance of the first day of class. However, students typically register for the 2cr “Senior Project” course during the first several weeks of the semester they enroll in the “parent” course.

Registration Procedure for CLA courses [1]—must be completed by 5th week of classes

1 Register for BSE Core/Theme course (asap!): Student registers for an approved CLA course during the regular registration period. Contact faculty immediately, to indicate your interest.
2 SPP form (SP Planning ½ sheet)—Due 2 weeks before 1st day of classes. Once instructor agrees to be your SP supervisor, complete SPP and submit it to BSE Advising (no signatures needed).
3 SFC & SPA forms: Once the SP Supervisor and student have met to discuss the details of the senior project, describe the project in the CLA Student-Faculty Contract (SFC) and complete a Senior Project Approval (SPA) Form.
4 Complete the SFC by 4th week (some depts have earlier deadlines): The student will register for two (2) credits of directed study (e.g., ANTH4993; GWSS3994) in the CLA department offering the “parent” course (BSE Core or Theme Elective). Course Instructor, an Advisor or Coordinator of the Instructor’s department, and student must sign SFC and student submits to CLA Student Services. Within one week of 2xcr course registration, bring a legible copy of SFC to BSE advisor (with SPA Form; see below).
5 Register for Directed Study course: The student submits the SFC to CLA Student Services (16 Johnston) to obtain a permission number so they can register for the directed research course.
6 Complete the SPA Form: The student must complete the SPA Form with the instructor and obtain instructor’s approval/signature. Make sure all parts completed!
7 Submit BOTH Forms to BSE Advisor by 5th week: Original SPA Form and legible copy of the SFC must be submitted to the BSE advisor within one week of registering for the directed research/study course; deadline is the 5th week of classes.

For Faculty/Instructors
1 Discuss expectations you have of students, assign project responsibilities, and/or co-develop a coherent project structure and timeline with students.
2 Once you and the student have developed a plan for the structure and expectations of the project, complete the appropriate paperwork with the student: a Student-Faculty Contract (SFC) and a Senior Project Approval (SPA) form (see below).
3 Evaluate the work upon completion. Supervisors are encouraged to hold BSE students to a standard of excellence comparable to that expected of an undergraduate student completing advanced work within the supervisor’s discipline or field or of strong multi-disciplinarian.
4 Submit grade to Registrar. Thank you for agreeing to supervise a BSE student’s senior project!

Faculty Questions? Contact BSE Advisor or Director of Undergraduate Studies for BSE:
Dr. Jeanette Simmonds, Undergraduate Advisor for BSE: 612-625-0133; jsimmond@umn.edu*
Dr. Rod Squires, Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for BSE: 612-625-0179; squires@umn.edu

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