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 at the University of Minnesota. The BSE curriculum provides students with a strong foundation in the biological sciences complemented by courses that focus, not only on historical, ethical, social, political, legal, and environmental aspects of the biological sciences, but also 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.

Special permission must be obtained if a student wishes to complete a 2cr Senior Project with a non-CLA course or a course that falls outside of the regular BSE curriculum.

**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, statement of purpose for graduate school, or an annotated bibliography of 5-8 references).

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/)

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 25 pp and 20 references)
2. When the regular course is designed around multiple smaller projects (e.g., 4 x 5pp papers), the instructor assigns 1-3 additional papers and may require a brief synthetic assignment.
3. A combination of written and other work, such as an oral presentation of work, a poster to submit to a professional conference, a grant or fellowship application, an annotated bibliography, creative project, etc.
For the Student

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]:

1. **Registering for BSE Core/Theme course**: Student should register for the approved CLA course during the regular registration period.
2. **Forms Required**: 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* and complete a *BSE Certification of Alternative Registration (CAR) Form*.
3. **Completing the SFC**: The student should 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). The SFC must be signed by the Course Instructor, by the Advisor or Coordinator of the Instructor’s department, and by the student. Student must submit a legible copy of the SFC to the BSE advisor within one week of registering for the course (with CAR Form, see below).
4. **Registering for Directed Study course**: The student submits the SFC to CLA Student Services (49 Johnston) to obtain a permission number so that they can register for the directed research/study course.
5. **Completing the CAR Form**: The student must complete the CAR Form with the instructor and obtain instructor’s approval/signature.
6. **Submitting Forms to BSE Advisor**: Original CAR 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. Signatures required: Senior Project Supervisor (course instructor), student, BSE advisor’s initials.

For the Faculty

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 (CLA) and a Certification of Alternative Registration for BSE Senior Project (CAR) 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.
4. Submit grade to Registrar. Thank you for agreeing to supervise a BSE student’s senior project!

Questions? Contact the 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

*Students should use the geogadv@umn.edu advising email when contacting BSE advisor.