

# ENV @MU

Newsletter from the Misericordia University  
Environmental Studies Program



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### Year in Review: 2021

We celebrate our new Environmental Studies program by reflecting on how it came to be.

### Course Highlights

In January 2021, we'll be kicking off some of the brand new courses that are part of our new major. Learn about what's in store for ENV 100 (Environment and Society) and BIO 315 (Invasive Species)!

### Sustainability Corner

On December 2 and 3, the MU Sustainability Committee is sponsoring a Fair Trade event!

## Hello from the Program Director



By Linda Auker, Ph.D., C.S.E.

Dear reader,

It is hard to believe we've already reached the month of December! I can remember the beginning of 2021, when groups of faculty in Misericordia's College of Arts and Sciences got together to begin planning for the courses that would be part of our curriculum. And now, in Spring 2022, we'll be offering the first of these courses to our new majors and minors, as well as other interested students!

Our focus in December is reflecting and celebrating our commitment towards preparing students for solving environmental issues! I always welcome questions about the program. You can contact me at [lauker@misericordia.edu](mailto:lauker@misericordia.edu). Happy reading! I hope you all have a restful holiday season, and a very happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. See you in 2022!

## Spring '22 Course Highlights

**BIO 315, or Invasive Species**, is taught by Dr. Linda Auker (Biology/Environmental Studies). In this course, students will examine historical and current research on invasive species. Using case studies, peer-reviewed literature, and classic books such as Charles Elton's *The Ecology of Invasions by Animals and Plants*, they will learn: what it means to be "invasive", the biological traits of invasive species, invasion ecology, and how invasive species have been managed. Students will complete a project on the biology and ecology of an invasive species of interest.

**ENV 100, or Environment and Society**, is taught by Dr. Cosima Wiese (Biology) and Dr. Brian Carson (History). This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to Environmental Studies, required for Environmental Studies majors and minors. It combines scientific and humanistic perspectives and experiential learning in order to explore the relationship between environment and society.

Want to know more about ENV courses? Check out catalog descriptions at: <https://bit.ly/3pdFkGz>.

## Sustainability Corner

The Sustainability Committee at Misericordia invites you to a Fair Trade Holiday Sale Dec 2 and Dec 3 from 11:00am-1:00pm in Banks Student Life Center!

## Year in Review

One of the many things that stands out about a Misericordia education is the dedication our faculty, staff, and students have in upholding the Critical Concerns of the Sisters of Mercy, who founded Misericordia University. The Critical Concerns for the Earth is stated as follows: "We believe in the need for sustainability of life, supporting both a lifestyle and legislation that acknowledges everyone's right to water and the need to address climate change." This means that the Environmental Studies program has an important place in a Mercy education.

In 2020, Dr. Melanie Shepherd (Philosophy) and Dr. Cosima Wiese (Biology) learned that they won a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) to establish a new Environmental Studies major and minor at Misericordia. In Spring 2021, the planning took off as faculty from the humanities and sciences worked together in designing the curriculum for our courses. We established four sequence courses (ENV 100, ENV 200, ENV 300, and ENV 400), in addition to several electives supported by the expertise held by our current faculty, which ranges from history of the American West, to ethics, to community ecology.

In Fall 2021, I was honored to take on the mantle of Program Director of the new program. As a marine ecologist who studies invasive species, I have firsthand experience at seeing the impacts of global change on both economic and ecological concerns, and it is clear to me that future problem-solvers will need an understanding of policy, history, and ethics, on top of a solid scientific background. This fall we were able to introduce ENV programming, collaborating with Fine Arts and the Art Gallery, in addition to hosting informational luncheons to faculty and students.

It's been a very busy year, but I am looking forward to launching our first iteration of ENV 100 this spring and welcoming our current and new majors and minors into the program! I want to send special thanks to Dr. Shepherd, Dr. Wiese, as well as Dr. Allan Austin, Dr. Brian Carso, Dr. Beth Haas, Dr. Matt Nickel, Dr. Ryan Watson, and Dr. Laine Little for the roles they played in planning and programming this year. Here's to a fantastic and uplifting 2022 for all!