Nature, Society and Politics

Degree conferred
Specialized Master of Science in Nature, Society and Politics

Languages of study
Study in English

Commencement of studies
Commencement of studies in the Autumn Semester (September) or in the Spring Semester (February)

Access to further studies
Ph.D.

Tuned to current environmental challenges and social dimensions of environmental change, this specialised Master's programme in Nature, Society and Politics enables students from backgrounds other than geography to understand and assess environmental systems and the relationship between «nature», society and politics. After studying a core module covering conceptual and theoretical basics in both physical and human geography, students explore social science subjects such as political economy and natural resource governance in the specialisation module.

Students have a broad choice of seminars, as well as colloquia and opportunities to practice fieldwork on excursions. Students can also participate in national or international research teams, particularly in the context of their Master's thesis. The Unit of Geography offers cutting edge teaching and mentoring, preparing the students for critical thinking in academia, as well as providing a professional qualification beyond academia.

Profile of the study programme

The Unit of Geography – part of the University of Fribourg Department of Geosciences – offers a specialised Master's degree in Nature, Society and Politics that focuses on current environmental and social problems. This study programme gives students from backgrounds other than geography the means to understand and analyse the socio-environmental issues at stake, such as the consequences of climate change, urban and rural development and change, and extraction of natural resources. The course is partly based on the complementarity between the approaches and methods used in the natural and social sciences.

Throughout the programme, students are taught theoretical and methodological approaches that are required to assess the environmental issues at stake in a critical manner. The aim of this specialised Master's degree is to deepen already acquired knowledge and to hone one's competencies in the chosen field.

At the end of the course, students will have shown that they can apply their knowledge to conduct a research project, and will have learned how to work independently and within an interdisciplinary research team. The award of the degree requires creativity and reflexivity, as well as the ability to communicate ideas and work both in English and in the student's native language.

Integrative, interdisciplinary geography
reflecting the diverse team of around 30 researchers at our Unit of Geography, the specialised Master's course in Nature, Society and Politics is truly integrative and interdisciplinary. Apart from providing integrative training, i.e. with the neighbouring disciplines of the department: Physical Geography and Environmental Sciences, it also gives students the chance to specialise in topics like political ecology, natural resource management and governance (water, land, re-naturation and landscapes). This approach is a great aid to understanding and assessing complex environmental systems, as well as the relationship between nature, society, and politics. During their Master's studies in Fribourg – and especially while working on their Master's thesis – students may be part of research teams and can participate in on-going national and international research projects. The human dimensions of our diverse Department and the drive of the various research groups provide a supportive, quality environment for all students.

Career openings

This programme is intended for motivated students who are interested in pursuing a career in research – e.g. by pursuing a PhD – or in the public or private sector – e.g. in environmental consulting and management, (spatial) planning and development, monitoring, documentation, administration, public institutions (local, cantonal, federal, international), international organisations such as NGOs or...
the UN institutions of sustainable development. The specialised Master's degree does not give access to the teacher education for academic upper secondary schools (DEEM or LDM) of the University of Fribourg.

Studies organisation

Structure of studies

120 ECTS credits, 4 semesters

Curriculum

http://studies.unifr.ch/go/xZPll (French)
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/z3FE1 (German)

Admission

Master's degree programmes are built on the knowledge and abilities that were acquired when obtaining a Bachelor's degree.

Holders of a Bachelor's degree awarded from a Swiss university can be admitted to a Master's degree programme within the corresponding discipline (requires the acquisition of minimum 60 ECTS credits at Bachelor level in the corresponding discipline) without any additional requirements. The same applies to holders of a Bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the Bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg.

Holders of a Bachelor's degree awarded from a Swiss university or holders of a Bachelor's degree awarded by a foreign university, provided that the Bachelor's degree is recognised and considered equivalent by the University of Fribourg, can be admitted to a Master's degree programme within another discipline with prerequisites (must be successfully completed before starting the Master's degree programme) or additional requirements (can be completed during the Master's degree programme). According to existing agreements, holders of a Bachelor's degree awarded from a Swiss university of applied sciences can also be admitted with prerequisites or additional requirements.

The respective conditions of admission for each Master's degree programme are reserved.

Contact

Faculty of Science and Medicine
Department of Geosciences
Dr Luc Braillard, study advisor
geo-scimed@unifr.ch
http://studies.unifr.ch/go/en-geosciences