

# ENVIRONMENTAL CONVERSATIONS

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[wp.stolaf.edu/admissions/environmental-conversations](https://wp.stolaf.edu/admissions/environmental-conversations) (<https://wp.stolaf.edu/admissions/environmental-conversations>)

Environmental Conversations ("EnCon") is a learning community organized around regular elective and required courses, open to incoming first-year students, and focused on questions of environmental policy, science, and values. Through courses and co-curricular opportunities, EnCon prepares students to think about moral, scientific, and practical dimensions of human relationships with the rest of nature. EnCon is a three course sequence. In the fall and spring, students complete two regular requirements of the first-year curriculum: Religion 121 and Writing 111. EnCon sections of these courses focus specifically on environmental themes. In the Interim, students take ENVST 137 Introduction to Environmental Studies. EnCon students engage in student-led sustainability initiatives, and learn about environmental questions and opportunities facing the college - from the student-run farm "StoGrow," to the college wind turbine. They become part of a larger community of students who seek to think clearly and responsibly about environmental policy, sustainability, and "the moral ecology of everyday life."

## Intended Learning Outcomes for the Program

### Admission to the Program

Students apply to EnCon after they are admitted to the college. Each year about 38 first-year students are admitted to the program. In the fall and spring this cohort divides in two different sections of 19 students each to take Religion 121 or Writing 111. In the Interim, they come together as a cohort to take ENVST 137. EnCon is open to students of all interests, and provides an appropriate foundation for any major at the college.

## Course Equivalents for General Education Requirements

By successfully completing EnCon, students fulfill the following GE requirements:

Biblical and Theological Studies - Bible (BTS-B)

First-Year Writing (FYW)

Integrated Scientific Topics (IST)

## Courses

REL 121 Bible in Culture and Community

Typical section topics for Religion 121 are:

"Land, Food, and Justice in Biblical Tradition"

"The Bible and the Idea of Nature"

WRIT 111 First-Year Writing

Typical section topics for Writing 111 are:

"Doing Democracy: The Politics of Food"

"Nature's Mysteries: Insights, Impacts and Inspirations in the Backyard"

"The Nature of Nature Writing"

ENVST 137 Introduction to Environmental Studies

## Faculty

**Director, 2016-2017**

**David Booth**

Associate Professor of Religion  
history of theology; philosophy and psychology of religion; feminist theology; theology and sexuality

**Mark Allister**

Professor of English and Environmental Studies  
American literature; environmentalism; popular music; men's studies; American studies

**Seth I. Binder**

Assistant Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies  
environmental and natural resource economics and policy; development economics; applied microeconomics; environmental economics

**Juliet Patterson**

Visiting Assistant Professor of English  
creative writing; contemporary American poetics; hybrid literature; environmental literature