Leiden University College

Our Majors

Universiteit Leiden

Leiden University College
The Hague

Earth, Energy and Sustainability (BSc)

How do we manage Earth's fragile environment in the face of significant changes to climate and society? This grand question is the essence of the Earth, Energy, and Sustainability (BSc) major at LUC. You'll examine the science of sustainability through a range of courses in the natural and social sciences, and be poised to contribute to key policy debates concerning the future of our planet. In addition to learning about the theoretical and technical foundations of ecological, Earth, and social sciences, students are exposed to hands-on learning experiences in the classroom, field, and laboratory.

This major may be right for you if you're interested in questions like:

- How can we mitigate climate change, and limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius?
- How do we sustainably manage water resources to both conserve ecosystems and provide hydropower?
- How is the climate change impacting food systems?
- How does biodiversity loss relate to biofuel production?
- How is food production linked to soil erosion and land degradation?

What does the future hold?

This major prepares you to start your career in a highly dynamic and fast-moving field of sustainability, whether in government, corporate, or NGOs. Some examples of where our students have gone:

Further studies

- Earth and Environmental Sciences, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- MSc Energy and Climate Science, Utrecht University, The Netherlands
- MSc Biodiversity, Conservation and Management, Oxford University, UK
- LLM Global Environment & Climate Change Law, University of Edinburgh

Careers

- Climate and water analyst in government
- Environmental Consultant
- Social sustainability director of NGO

"I strongly believe sustainability challenges are the most critical issues of our time, and the EES major gave me a solid foundation to understand and help solve these problems. EES allows you to explore a range of areas in the sustainability field while simultaneously focusing on the topics and methods that interest you most. For example, I especially liked the energy-related courses in EES, which led me to specialize in sustainable energy for my master's program."

Anya Al-Salem | USA

	Core tracks Earth, Energy and Sustainability (EES)			
	Ecosystem Health	**Earth System Science**	**Energy & Resource Management**	**Urban Environments**
	Core courses			
100-level	Environmental Science	Earth System Science	Energy & Resource Management	Cities, Sustainability, and the Built nvironment
200-level Example Methodology course: Field Methods: Managing Water and Biodiversity	Conservation Biology	• Climate Change • Natural Disasters	• Alternative Energy Strategies • Social and Gender Analysis for Sustainability • Life Cycle Assessment	Urban Water Management
300-level Example Methodology course: Advanced Geographic Information Systems	Ecosystem Services	• Climate Change Modeling • Hydropower and River Dynamics • River and Watershed Management	• Decision Analysis for Energy Systems • Equity and Justice in Food System Transformations	• Urban Ecology • Wasted Cities
400-level	**Capstone thesis**			

* *These are the core courses in this major. You will follow courses in any of these tracks and can also combine them with courses in joint tracks (e.g. Environmental Governance, Health and Environment, Global Health), a minor, international exchange and more.*

Governance, Economics & Development (BSc)

Disparities in prosperity within and across societies are pressing concerns. However, people often overlook that much of this inequality stems from human choices—societies evolve differently over time, and these differences shape the quality of life.

This major equips students with rigorous analytical tools to study these dynamics and assess how governance can either foster or hinder development and prosperity. Beyond empirical analysis, it also explores the philosophical foundations of these critical conversations, integrating insights from Anthropology, Philosophy, Development Studies, Economics, Political Science, Public Policy, and Data Science.

This major may be right for you if you're interested in questions like:

- Why do some nations achieve sustained economic growth while others struggle with persistent poverty?
- What is driving the rise of populist movements across the West, and how do they impact economic prosperity and global stability?
- How can we design civic, nongovernmental, or business organisations to better achieve their goals and contribute to societal improvement?
- How do historical and cultural factors influence a society's approach to inequality and prosperity?

What does the future hold?

Some examples of further studies and career paths pursued by our graduates:

Further studies

- MA Public Policy at University College London, UK
- MPhil Development Studies at Oxford University, UK
- PhD Candidate in Political Science, University of California, USA

Careers

- Policy analysis and advisory roles
- NGOs and humanitarian agencies
- Social entrepreneurship
- Think tanks and policy institutes
- Academic research and teaching
- Data analysis for public and private sector
- Political consulting

"I chose this major because I have always been fascinated with macro structures and the differential outcomes of various groups, societies and nations throughout time. This major challenges me to think rigorously about the issues involved in governance, involved in political and economic choices, and how these impact the development of different nations."

Kevin de Wit | Brazil

	Core tracks Governance, Economics & Development (GED)					
	Institutional Analysis	**Policy Science**	**Philosophy, Politics & Economics**	**International Development**	**Comparative Politics and Political Economy**	**Economics**
	Core courses					
100-level	Institutions of Governance & Development				Intro to Comparative Politics	Principles of Economics
200-level Example Methodology course: Foundations of Research Design	Decision-making Processes	• Intro to Public Policy • Politics of the Policy Process: Housing Matters	• Foundational Debates in Governance, Economics & Development • Politics Through Literature	Politics & Development of Africa	• Party Systems in the Age of Polarisation • Political Economy of Natural Resources	• Micro-economics • Game Theory
300-level Example Methodology course: Advanced Quantitative Research Methods	Institutions in Time	• Public Policy Analysis: Anticorruption • Public Policy Analysis: Data Driven Governance and Policy-making	• The Dissident Mind • History of Economic Thought	Human Security	Advanced Political Economy	• Behavioral Economics • Economics of Migration • International Economics • Macro-economics
400-level	**Capstone thesis**					

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Culture, History & Society (BA)

Humans are fascinating: we have infinite ways to imagine, organize and express ourselves. To get at people's ideas, politics, and hopes, CHS invites you to study – and shape – the world. Our courses guide students in understanding the historical processes, cultural expressions and societal formations that define reality as we know it. CHS is anchored in the fields of history, sociology, cultural studies, art history, literature, philosophy and anthropology, allowing students to diagnose and examine analytically the deepest questions of the human sciences. Practically, you will also explore your creative capacities to express what you learn inside and outside the classroom, in site visits, podcasts, videos, and art interventions.

This major may be right for you if you're interested in questions like:

- When people move, sometimes forced, what does belonging mean?
- Can a meme, a song, a novel or a mural change the world more than politicians' negotiating, policies or the law?
- Who decides what makes it into museums, a monument and history books?
- With AI, deepfakes, and endless algorithms, how do we know what's real, what's fake, and why this distinction matters?

What does the future hold?

CHS graduates develop capacities to excel in academia, the cultural sector, governmental & non-governmental institutions.

Further studies

- MA Arts and Politics, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK
- MA Management of Cultural Diversity, Tilburg University, The Netherlands
- MA Sociology, University of Cambridge, UK
- MA Cultural Heritage and Sustainability, Uppsala University, Sweden

Careers

- Cultural Heritage Programme Advisor
- Journalist
- Museum Curator
- Policy & Advocacy Sectors

"Doing CHS is like getting a superpower. You learn to read the world in layers – together, separately, through absences and gaps, through its big performances and quiet, powerful murmurs. Does this sound abstract? It isn't, because the lens you develop will then inform everything you do. It sets you up to being able to actively engage in many different things. And those you meet – whether for jobs, at other universities, or in everyday interactions – take notice of this."

Selma Piukovici-Karadag | Romania

	Core tracks Culture, History & Society (CHS)		
	Cultural Expressions	**Historical Processes**	**Social Forms**
	Core courses		
100-level	What is Culture?	Birth of the Modern World	Social Theory in Everyday Life
200-level Example Methodology course: Cultural and Visual Analysis	• Infrastructure, Art & Culture • Cultural Translation	• History of Science and Empires • Postcolonial Representations	• Anthropology of Difference • Paradoxes of Citizenship
300-level	• Black British Literature • Politics of Cultural Memory • Political Iconology: Art and Diversity in the Dutch Republic	• Asia in Global History: From Colonialism to the Post-cold War • Faking the Past: Forgery, History and Propaganda • Writing in Place: Landscape and Power in the Netherlands	• The Digital Form of Social Life • The Languages of Waste
400-level	**Capstone thesis**		

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International Justice (BA)

The International Justice major explores challenges to justice and the rule of law in a globalizing and pluralistic society. These include the protection of human rights, climate justice, ending impunity for war crimes and economic and political integration.
While international law and institutions serve as the starting point for many key issues, the International Justice major focuses also on national and regional legal orders as well as relevant transnational and local norms and actors. Moreover, the major analyzes how norms, laws and institutions operate in practice through comparative and interdisciplinary approaches that combine legal research with socio-legal and other approaches from the social sciences.

This major may be right for you if you're interested in questions like:

- How can powerful states and non-state actors be effectively constrained?
- How can a society transition out of protracted conflict and move towards sustainable peace?
- Who is liable if a fully autonomous weapon (e.g. a drone) commits a war crime?

What does the future hold?

Students who completed this major have embarked on careers in policy, advocacy, and research (e.g. at (inter-) governmental organizations, development agencies, think tanks and NGOs) as well as in legal practice. For Dutch-speaking students, it is possible to add courses from the Dutch Law programme at Leiden's law school.

Further studies

- LLM in International Law at University of Oxford, UK
- PhD in Law of the Sea at Arctic University, Norway
- LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, Switzerland

Careers

- International Legal Advisor
- Human Rights Officer
- Regulatory Affairs Manager
- Lawyer

"The most rewarding part of following the International Justice major has been being taught about law and politics by lecturers who are renowned to be specialists in their respective fields. Visiting their current or previous jobs at international courts or international organisations has clearly added a new dimension to the way I approach my coursework. I also had a great opportunity to assist in a project through a research clinic, which was conducted for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands."

Frenkchris Sinay | Indonesia

	Core tracks International Justice (IJ)		
	International Law	**Human Rights and Society**	**Statehood and Integration**
	Core courses		
100-level	Principles of Public International Law	Introduction to Socio-legal Studies	Sovereignty & Statehood
200-level Example Methodology course: Advocacy and Litigation	• International Dispute Settlement • International Environmental Law • International Humanitarian Law	• International & Regional Human Rights • Law, Culture and Society • Human Rights, Law & Philosophy	• Structure and Functioning of the EU • Constitutions and Constitutionalism
300-level	• Law of the Sea • International Criminal Law • Digital Technology and International Law	• Making Human Rights Work • Transitional Justice • Ethics, Health & Society: Emerging Responsibilities • The Digital Form of Social Life	• Comparative Legal & Economic Integration • Cooperation, Conflict & Negotiation • EU Foreign Relations Law
400-level	**Capstone thesis**		

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World Politics (BA)

The World Politics major examines the big ideas and the powerful forces – political, military, economic, social and cultural – that shape the world at every level, from the global to the regional and local. In our courses we pay particular attention to how governments interact with each other, and how states interact with non-state actors, including multinational corporations, NGOs, protest movements, diasporas and terrorist networks. While we focus on political conflict as one of the key drivers of these interactions, e.g. wars and insurgencies, we also give you the tools to explore how to better understand them and to find solutions for cooperation.

This major may be right for you if you're interested in questions like:

- Why do governments go to war?
- How is foreign policy made and how does diplomacy work in practice?
- What does the rise of China or Russia's war in Ukraine mean for the international order?
- What lessons can be learned from the failed peacebuilding efforts in Afghanistan?
- What can international and regional organizations do to facilitate cooperation on key governance issues, such as global warming, mass migration or reparation demands by former colonies?

What does the future hold?

Some examples of further studies and career paths pursued by our graduates:

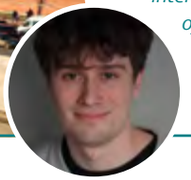
Graduate Studies

- MA EU International Relations and Diplomacy Studies, College d'Europe, Belgium
- MPhil Global and Area Studies, Oxford University, UK
- MA International Security, Sciences Po, France
- MA Global Thought, Columbia University, USA

Careers

- Policy Advisor
- Diplomat
- Political Journalist & International Correspondent
- Public Relations Manager

"I picked World Politics because I wanted to deepen my understanding of the complex processes which underpin change and decision-making today. Fundamentally, World Politics encompasses insights from a range of disciplines to enable students to have a well rounded, holistic understanding of global challenges. I have found World Politics to be highly practical whilst rooted in theory. I hope to pursue a career in international relations, either for the ministry of foreign affairs, or for international organisation such as the United Nations."



Leon Nightingale | UK

	Core tracks World Politics (WP)			
	International Relations & Diplomacy	**Global & Transnational Politics**	**Peace & Conflict Studies**	**Digital Politics & the Media**
	Core courses			
100-level	Introduction to International Relations and Diplomacy	Introduction to Globalisation and Transnational Politics	Introduction to Peace and Conflict Studies	Digital Politics
200-level Example Methodology course: Political Research Design	• Foreign Policy and Diplomacy • Nations and Nationalism • An American Century? US Foreign Relations from 1898 to the Present	• Regional Trends: Political Islam in the Middle East • International and Regional Organisations in World Politics	• Ethics of Contemporary Warfare • Conflict and Democracy	• Media and Conflict: Critical Perspectives • Political Cinema • Essentials of Journalism
300-level	• Regional Trends: Russia in World Politics • The International Politics of Climate Change • Regional Trends: The Rise of China • Asia in Global History: From Colonialism to the Post-Cold War Era	• Researching Radicalisation & Counter-Extremism • Regional Trends: The EU in World Politics • Religion in World Politics	• Designing Policy Interventions: Peace-building, Development and Public Health • Regional Trends: African History and Politics • The Lusophone South Atlantic • Cooperation, Conflict and Negotiation	• Investigative Journalism • Multimedia Journalism • Video Journalism • Fundamentals of AI
400-level	**Capstone thesis**			

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About our programme

At Leiden University College you study Liberal Arts & Sciences: a broad, flexible and interdisciplinary curriculum where there is room for free choice and gradual specialization in a field of your choosing, your major, around a centreal theme: Global Challenges.

The purpose of this brochure is to give a more in-depth glimpse into our majors and the possibilities they provide.
The brochure is not exhaustive; there are electives not shown, as well as co-convened (shared) tracks. For a full overview of all possibilities, we kindly refer you to our website.

If you have any questions, we'll be happy to help you

universiteitleiden.nl/luc-majors

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Academic year 2026-2027

This brochure has been compiled with the utmost care; nevertheless it is possible that information may have become outdated or changed. The information in this brochure is not binding.