School Overview

No matter where one looks today, it is clear that our society is confronted with great opportunities but also with very complex problems. Health care, crime, environmental degradation, family violence, limited or inadequate child care, poverty, unaffordable housing, urban sprawl, government that at times seems unresponsive and inefficient, conflict that is as local as street gangs and as global as ethnic strife in far-away nations — these and other problems seem so complex that citizens wonder where they can turn for answers. Universities, with their faculty expertise, can be valuable partners in the search for solutions to these problems, and yet the problems are so complex that no single academic department can provide the answers. The School of Social Ecology offers a multidisciplinary perspective on these issues.

The school’s faculty members have won numerous prestigious awards and are committed to high-quality research and teaching, while at the same time making a strong commitment to community outreach and engagement for the betterment of society. This distinctive feature of the school has brought it international acclaim as an innovative leader in combining multiple disciplines in the conduct of research on complex problems.

Undergraduate Areas of Study

**Criminology, Law and Society**

Criminology, Law and Society (CLS) is committed to research and teaching on crime and law in all their ramifications—understanding why we have the laws we have, why the law often results in unintended consequences, who violates the law and why, and how communities respond to crime. Through basic research and inspired teaching, CLS is committed to empowering individuals and promoting equity and justice. Our individual and collective futures depend on it.

Faculty research interests include policing; gang behavior; miscarriages of justice; immigration law; prisoner re-entry issues; corrections and public policy; juvenile justice; access to justice; statistical evidence in the courtroom; and white collar, organized, and hate crimes.

**Psychology and Social Behavior**

The psychology and social behavior curriculum focuses on human behavior in social contexts, and variations in social environments (i.e., the family, school, and the workplace) that affect human behavior over the life span. Course topics include social, developmental, health, clinical, environmental, and cross-cultural psychology. Field study placements are available in mental health and social services agencies, hospitals, schools, community centers, and public and private agencies.

Faculty research interests include the study of human development and adaptation across the life span and in diverse sociocultural contexts; psychosocial and behavioral factors that promote health, prevent disease, and optimize medical treatments; and the application of psychological science to important social problems, such as violence, unemployment, and substance abuse.

**Planning, Policy, and Design**

Cities are the key to both the causes of current global crises and their solutions. The field of urban studies explores the causes, prevalence, and consequences of urban challenges and considers the theory and practice of solving such challenges. Its scope ranges from intimate (the individual ramifications of neighborhood design, for example) to international (the politics and economics of cross-boundary natural resource conflicts).

Courses are offered from four clusters: urban and community development, urban and environmental sustainability, urban and environmental design, and urban governance.

Faculty members hold doctorates in the fields of urban and regional planning, public affairs, sociology, architecture, political science, law, design and behavior studies, economics, environmental science, organizational studies, public health and social psychology, as well as practice credentials from the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

**Social Ecology**

The major in social ecology is a cross-disciplinary program. Courses may be taken from all departments within the School of Social Ecology. Providing an interdisciplinary and diverse educational background. Field study placements may be in any of the four departmental areas.
Field Study
From criminal justice agencies to elementary schools to non-profit agencies to local cities, counties and beyond, Social Ecology students have the opportunity to take what they learn in the classroom out into the community, effectively serving our communities and enhancing the value of their education. The Field Study program is a unique experiential learning program for undergraduates in Social Ecology and a key element of the School’s commitment to training future leaders. The general goal of Field Study is to integrate academic and experiential learning. This approach is based on evidence that learning is maximized when it is active, when students are engaged and when theories and research are informed by their application to “real world” problems. Students have the opportunity to reflect on how to apply what they have learned in the classroom to address societal challenges in a seminar led by ladder rank faculty. At the same time, through field work with one or more of our 225+ community partners, students gain pre-professional experience and develop their resume along with their academic and research skills.

Research Opportunities
High-achieving students have the opportunity to work directly with faculty on research projects. Such experience greatly enriches a student’s education, and provides preparation for advanced studies and for subsequent careers as researchers and scholars, or as informed citizens who understand scientific research, how it is conducted, and its value to society. Whenever possible, faculty include undergraduate students as integral members of research teams, with assignments appropriate to the student’s level of knowledge and skill.

Social Ecology Honors Program
The Social Ecology Honors Program provides the opportunity for selected students to pursue a year of advanced independent study culminating with the completion of a written thesis, and a colloquium presentation of results to peers and faculty. The focus of the program is to foster the development of a student’s analytical and research skills through the pursuit of research under faculty mentorship.

Excellence in Research in Psychology and Social Behavior: Provides opportunities for excellent students to pursue advanced study in research methodology and statistics, work closely with faculty, gain research experience, and prepare for graduate school.

Excellence in Undergraduate Research Award in Honor of Gilbert Geis: Scholarship awarded annually to a criminology, law and society major.

Strauss Scholarship: Awarded to an outstanding junior student who is interested in a career in public service.

Mohan Narasimhan Memorial Scholarship: Awarded annually to an outstanding junior student in criminology, law and society who has demonstrated exceptional academic achievement.

Career Opportunities
Social ecology graduates bring a distinctive and cross-disciplinary perspective to the job market and have entered the following fields, some of which require advanced education:

- Environmental /Resource Management and Planning
- Clinical/Counseling Psychology
- Public Health
- Health and Safety
- Conservation and Natural Resources
- Environmental Health
- Law
- Medicine
- Urban Planning
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Administration
- Criminology
- Probation/Parole
- Corrections
- Law Enforcement
- Private Investigation
- Human Resources
- Health Services
- Program Evaluation and Research
- Mental Health