

FIELD STUDIES MINOR (B.SC.) (18 CREDITS)

Offered by: Science (Faculty of Science)

Degree: Bachelor of Science

Program credit weight: 18

Program Description

Students participating in any one of the field study semesters, i.e., the Africa Field Study Semester, the Barbados Field Study Semester, the Barbados Interdisciplinary Tropical Studies (BITS) Field Study Semester, McGill Arctic Field Study Semester, or the Panama Field Study Semester may complete the 18-credit Minor in Field Studies.

The Minor consists of the 15 credits of a field study semester plus three additional complementary credits chosen by the student in consultation with their departmental adviser and/or the Field Study Minor adviser.

For students in the B.Sc. Liberal Program, the Field Studies Minor can serve as the breadth component.

Program descriptions for each of the field study semesters are provided below.

Note: The field study semesters are not degree programs. Credits may be counted toward McGill degrees with the permission of program advisers. Students who complete a field study semester may consult the Field Study Minor adviser about completing the Minor program as part of their McGill degree.

Note: For information about Fall 2025 and Winter 2026 course offerings, please check back on May 8, 2025. Until then, the "Terms offered" field will appear blank for most courses while the class schedule is being finalized.

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Africa Field Study Semester (15 credits)

The Africa Field Study Semester (AFSS) is run through McGill's Canadian Field Study in Africa Program (CFSIA).

The AFSS provides one term of integrated field study in East Africa, with emphasis on environmental conservation, culture change, and sustainable development. Students investigate challenges of sustaining biological diversity and social justice in African environments subject to cultural change, economic development, and environmental stress. Cultural and ecological variation is examined in highland, montane, rangeland, desert, riverine, salt- and fresh-water lake, coastal, and urban settings.

Africa Field Study Semester - Required Courses

6 credits

Students select one course titled "Research in Society and Development in Africa" and one course titled "Research in Ecology and Development in Africa" from the courses below.

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
ANTH 451	Research in Society and Development in Africa.	3
BIOL 451	Research in Ecology and Development in Africa.	3
GEOG 451	Research in Society and Development in Africa.	3

Africa Field Study Semester - Complementary Courses

9 credits from:

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
ANTH 411	Primate Studies and Conservation.	3
ANTH 416	Environment/Development: Africa.	3
BIOL 428	Biological Diversity in Africa.	3
BIOL 429	East African Ecology.	3
GEOG 404	Environmental Management 2.	3
GEOG 408	Geography of Development.	3
GEOG 423	Dilemmas of Development.	3
HIST 498	Independent Research.	3
NUTR 404	Nutrition Field Studies in East Africa.	3
REDM 405	Natural History of East Africa.	3
WILD 420	Ornithology.	3

¹ Courses are offered on a rotational basis, at least 3 credits annually.

Barbados Field Study Semester (15 credits)

The Barbados Field Study Semester (BFSS) offers a unique opportunity to study at McGill University's campus in the tropics, the Bellairs Research Institute in Barbados. The focus of this field study semester is the study of sustainability science, with emphasis on the Caribbean, which includes: a different climate and culture, field research, and conducting an applied research project. Project work is conducted with local partners and focuses on sustainability in Barbados.

Barbados Field Study Semester - Required Courses

15 credits

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
ATOC 341	Caribbean Climate and Weather.	3
BIOL 343	Biodiversity in the Caribbean.	3
FSCI 444	Barbados Research Project.	6
GEOG 340	Sustainability in the Caribbean.	3

Barbados Interdisciplinary Tropical Studies Field Semester (15 credits)

The Barbados Interdisciplinary Tropical Studies (BITS) Field Semester is an activity-filled, hands-on experience for students with an interest in international studies with a Caribbean flavour. The focus is on sustainable agri-food, nutrition, and energy production on a tropical island with a tourist-based economy. It is offered annually (in the Summer). It consists of two 2-hour orientation sessions conducted on the Macdonald campus and at the Bellairs Research Institute in Barbados, followed by three 3-credit and one 6-credit project courses at Bellairs Research Institute. This program integrates intensive course work with group project work and contributes to the formation of professionals with planning, managing, decision-making, and communication skills. The program addresses a global need for experienced professionals capable of interacting with various levels of government, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. BITS welcomes applications from senior undergraduate students from across the University.

Barbados Interdisciplinary Tropical Studies Field Semester - Required Courses

15 credits

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Course	Title	Credits
AEBI 421	Tropical Horticultural Ecology.	3
AEBI 423	Sustainable Land Use.	3
AEBI 425	Tropical Energy and Food.	3
AEBI 427	Barbados Interdisciplinary Project.	6

Panama Field Study Semester (15 credits)

This program is offered in Panama with the support of the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI).

Hands-on experience is gained through research projects organized around multidisciplinary environmental issues. The nature of these projects will centre on practical environmental problems/questions important for Panama. Students will form teams that will work with Panamanian institutions (NGO, governmental, or research).

There is a one- or two-day period of transition and 13 weeks of course attendance in Panama. Field trips will be integrated into each of the courses offered.

Panama Field Study Semester - Required Courses

9 credits

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Course	Title	Credits
BIOL 553	Neotropical Environments.	3
ENVR 451	Research in Panama.	6

Panama Field Study Semester - Complementary Courses

6 credits

Complementary courses change from year to year. Students will register for the 6 credits offered the Winter of their participation in the field study semester.

First Winter semester complementary courses:

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Course	Title	Credits
AGRI 550	Sustained Tropical Agriculture.	3
GEOG 498	Humans in Tropical Environments.	3

Second Winter semester complementary courses:

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
GEOG 404	Environmental Management 2.	3
HIST 510	Environmental History of Latin America (Field).	3

McGill Arctic Field Study Semester

Required Courses (15 credits)

9 credits

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
ATOC 373	Arctic Climate and Climate Change.	3
EPSC 373	Arctic Geology.	3
GEOG 373	Arctic Geomorphology.	3

and 6 credits from

Expand allContract all

Course	Title	Credits
ATOC 473	Arctic Field Research.	6
EPSC 473	Arctic Field Research.	6
GEOG 473	Arctic Field Research.	6

Minor Field Studies - Complementary Course

In consultation with their departmental adviser and/or the Field Study Minor adviser, students who have completed one of the field study semesters described above may select a 3-credit complementary course to complete the requirements for the Minor and ask for it to be added to their academic records.