AGROECOLOGY, MS

Created in 2007, the Agroecology MS program at UW–Madison trains students to research and analyze agricultural systems within a broader environmental and socioeconomic context. Housed in the Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences, the agroecology program achieves through working with affiliated faculty members from nearly 20 departments across campus.

A typical cohort consists of 8–12 incoming students with diverse backgrounds and undergraduate majors. Agroecology MS students work with faculty on focused projects across a wide range of the traditional departments of the academy. Our core curriculum brings together these students for a multidisciplinary, agroecological analysis of agricultural systems in a broadened context.

The agroecology program is supported by the interdisciplinary agroecology cluster, which hired three faculty members in 2002: Michael Bell in community and environmental sociology, Claudio Gratton in entomology, and Randall Jackson in agronomy. These faculty, all still active in the program, were the catalyst for what is now a group of more than 50 faculty affiliates who advise agroecology students and participate in program governance.

The cluster concept is an innovation of the University of Wisconsin in which a core group of faculty is hired into an interdisciplinary area but have tenure homes in traditional departments.

PROGRAM PATHWAYS

- The public practice pathway trains facilitators to enable broader discussion and negotiation at the interfaces of agriculture and other sectors of society. The goal of this "action-in-society" track is to train analysts to increase understanding about the roles of agricultural systems in multi-functional landscapes, and the public policy that shapes these roles.
- The research pathway addresses the need for continued research and scholarship in order that discussions and negotiations are well informed. Students will have the opportunity to obtain experience in the scholarship of original research, culminating in the writing of a thesis.

ADMISSIONS

ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet the minimum requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/) of the Graduate School as well as the program(s).** Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 15
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English, or whose undergraduate instruction was not exclusively in English, must provide an English proficiency test score earned within two years of the anticipated term of enrollment. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Requirements for Admission policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1241/).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

ADMISSIONS AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Agroecology program accepts applicants from a wide range of undergraduate majors, not limited to the social and natural sciences. Because the admissions process is highly competitive, applicants should have a record of strong grades, agroecology-relevant interests and experience, and a commitment to learning in a multidisciplinary program. The deadline for fall semester applications is indicated above. Inquiries at other times may be considered.

The initial application process is outlined below. Prospective applicants should keep in mind, however, that this document-based application is only the first step in the admissions process. Applicants who are deemed admissible on the merits of these documents must then identify an academic advisor and a plan for funding to be fully admitted. The agroecology program will assist admitted applicants in this endeavor. More information on the process of seeking out funding and an advisor is available in the program's Student Handbook (https://agroecology.wisc.edu/documents/agroecology-handbook/). Applicants who are interested in applying should contact the program administrator.

SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING TO THE UW–MADISON GRADUATE SCHOOL:

- Online application and application fee.
- International degree-seeking applicants must prove English proficiency using the Graduate School's requirements (https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/).
- Three letters of recommendation
  - When completing the online application, submit the names and email addresses of three people who will provide letters of recommendation. They will receive instructions on how to upload their letters.
- Statement of Purpose (submit electronically; one-page)
  a. Describe interests and goals and which UW–Madison faculty members student would like to work with.
  b. Identify which program pathway applicant plans to pursue—Research or Public Practice—and state why applicant is interested

in this option. Knowing applicants' intentions will help the program better understand their academic and career goals.

   c. Indicate if applicant intends to pursue a PhD degree after completing the master's in agroecology. Although funding isn't guaranteed, some fellowships require that students intend to continue at the PhD level.

- Electronically, a curriculum vitae.
- An official copy of transcripts for all undergraduate work (and graduate, if relevant).
  - If recommended for admission, the Graduate School will send an email to the applicant to give directions on how to submit official transcripts.

Frequently asked questions regarding the graduate program are available on the agroecology website (https://agroecology.wisc.edu/apply/).

FUNDING

FUNDING
GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

REQUIREMENTS

MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS
MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

Mode of Instruction Definitions

Accelerated: Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

Evening/Weekend: Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

Face-to-Face: Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW-Madison Campus.

Hybrid: These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

Online: These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

Requirement Detail	
Minimum Credit Requirement	34 credits
Minimum Residence Credit Requirement	16 credits
Minimum Graduate Coursework Requirement	23 credits must be graduate-level coursework. Refer to the Graduate School: Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/). Please refer to Agroecology Learning Plans.
Overall Graduate GPA Requirement	3.00 GPA required. Refer to the Graduate School: Grade Point Average (GPA) Requirement policy: https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203 (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/).
Other Grade Requirements	Students must earn a B or above in all core curriculum coursework.
Assessments and Examinations	The research pathway requires a formal thesis and public defense; the public practice pathway requires a comprehensive report and public presentation.
Language Requirements	No language requirements.

REQUIRED COURSES
Research Pathway [1]

Code	Title	Credits
Core Curriculum		
AGROECOL 720	Agroecology Field Study	1
AGROECOL 701	The Farm as Socio-Environmental Endeavor	3
AGROECOL 702	The Multifunctionality of Agriculture	3
AGROECOL 710	Agroecology Seminar [2]	3
Cross Training Electives		**12**

Students will select courses to fulfill their cross-training electives in the categories below. Per Graduate School requirements, at least 5 of the 12 cross training elective credits must be from UW-Madison courses numbered 700 or above OR UW-Madison courses numbered 300-699 that have the Grad 50% attribute. By time of graduation, the student will have taken courses in:

Ecology	
The following are examples of courses in this category:	
BOTANY/ F&W ECOL/ ZOOLOGY 460	General Ecology
ENVIR ST 506	Modeling and Analysis of Environmental Systems
AGRONOMY/ BOTANY/ SOIL SCI 370	Grassland Ecology

Social Science

The following are examples of courses in this category:

CE SOC or A A E courses on food systems, agricultural technology, the agricultural environment, or agricultural policy

Data Analysis

The following are examples of courses in this category:

Graduate-level GIS, statistics, or qualitative methods course

Agricultural Science

The following are examples of courses in this category:

AGRONOMY 300	Cropping Systems	
SOIL SCI 301	General Soil Science	
Research and Thesis		
AGROECOL 990	Research	12
Total Credits		**34**

[1] These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.
[2] The AGROECOL 710 Agroecology Seminar is offered both fall and spring semester for 1 credit. Students are encouraged to enroll every semester, but must complete at least 3 credits.

Public Practice Pathway [1]

Code	Title	Credits
Core Curriculum		
AGROECOL 720	Agroecology Field Study	1
AGROECOL 701	The Farm as Socio-Environmental Endeavor	3
AGROECOL 702	The Multifunctionality of Agriculture	3
AGROECOL 710	Agroecology Seminar [2]	3
Cross Training Electives		**18**

Students will select courses to fulfill their cross-training electives in each of the four categories below. Per Graduate School requirements, at least 11 of the 18 cross-training elective credits must be UW–Madison courses numbered 700 or above OR UW–Madison courses numbered 300–699 that have the Grad 50% attribute. By time of graduation, the student will have taken courses in:

Ecology

The following are examples of courses in this category:

BOTANY/ F&W ECOL/ ZOOLOGY 460	General Ecology	
ENVIR ST 506	Modeling and Analysis of Environmental Systems	
AGRONOMY/ BOTANY/ SOIL SCI 370	Grassland Ecology	

Social Science

The following are examples of courses in this category:

CE SOC or A A E courses on food systems, agricultural technology, the agricultural environment, or agricultural policy

Community Process

The following are examples of courses in this category:

PUB AFFR/ POLI SCI/ URB R PL 874	Policy-Making Process	
URB R PL/A A E/ REAL EST 520	Community Economic Analysis	
URB R PL 814	Environmental and Alternative Dispute Resolution in Planning	

Agricultural Science

The following are examples of courses in this category:

AGRONOMY 300	Cropping Systems	
SOIL SCI 301	General Soil Science	
Project		
AGROECOL 990	Research	6
Total Credits		**34**

[1] These pathways are internal to the program and represent different curricular paths a student can follow to earn this degree. Pathway names do not appear in the Graduate School admissions application, and they will not appear on the transcript.
[2] The AGROECOL 710 Agroecology Seminar is offered both fall and spring semester for 1 credit. Students are encouraged to enroll every semester, but must complete at least 3 credits.

POLICIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES
PRIOR COURSEWORK
Graduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions
Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/) policy.

Undergraduate Credits Earned at Other Institutions or UW–Madison
Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/) policy.

Credits Earned as a Professional Student at UW-Madison (Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, and Veterinary careers)
Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/) policy.

Credits Earned as a University Special Student at UW–Madison
Refer to the Graduate School: Transfer Credits for Prior Coursework (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1216/) policy.

PROBATION

The status of a student can be one of three options:

1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status.
3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

Refer to the Graduate School: Advisor (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1232/) and Graduate School: Committees (Doctoral/Master's/MFA) (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1201/) policies.

CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

TIME LIMITS

Refer to the Graduate School: Time Limits (https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/) policy.

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/)
    - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/)
- Employee Assistance (http://www.eao.wisc.edu/) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (https://grad.wisc.edu/) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (https://compliance.wisc.edu/) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office Student Assistance and Support (OSAS) (https://osas.wisc.edu/) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)
- Title IX (https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/) (for concerns about discrimination)

We hope and believe that most issues can be resolved through careful communication – see program handbook section about student-advisor relations. If issues arise, several additional paths are possible:

- if the issue involves another student, staff, or faculty member other than advisor, the starting point should be clear presentation of the facts and discussion with your advisor;
- elected student representatives and our student services coordinator may be able to facilitate discussions and/or serve as allies, particularly in presenting issues to faculty;
- the program chair can be an informal resource to resolve student-faculty issues, including finding a new advisor if differences appear to be irreconcilable;
- if the issue involves the program chair, it may be helpful to discuss the issue with a department chair, either the chair of the advisor's department or the chair of the program chair's department;
- the program has an annual listening session and other forums for students to talk with program leaders to identify broad issues affecting multiple students.

On occasion, issues may arise that require a more formal process. The purpose of our Grievance Policy is to make this option clear. For the purposes of this policy, a grievance is a written complaint identifying an alleged violation of a specific university or program policy. An appeal is a request to higher authority that a grievance decision be reversed. The Graduate School is the ultimate arbiter of such grievances and appeals, unless these involve other issues such as hostile and intimidating behavior (https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/), sexual harassment (https://compliance.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/102/2018/01/UW-Madison-Policy-on-Sexual-Harassment-And-Sexual-Violence-January-2018.pdf), or illegal activities (https://uwpd.wisc.edu/about-uwpd/contact-uwpd/). Additional information about reporting the latter problems can be found at central policies and resources (https://kb.wisc.edu/images/group359/97188/Grievance-RelatedResourcesforStudents-draft.docx).

If a student believes it is necessary to file a grievance, the following steps will be used:

1. Write a report describing the basis for the grievance. To the extent feasible, document the circumstances that have given rise to it, what the current situation is, and any options you are aware of that have been or could be pursued.
2. Submit the report to an appropriate responsible party (report recipient). This will be the program chair unless the grievance involves the program chair, in which case it can be submitted to the department chair of the student's advisor, the CALS Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (https://cals.wisc.edu/academics/) or the Dean of Students (https://doso.students.wisc.edu/).
3. Within 15 working days, the report recipient will meet with the student and the person or people named in the grievance to ascertain facts to the extent feasible (this may take place separately or together).
4. Within another 15 working days, the report recipient will propose a resolution to the issue.
5. If recommendations are accepted by all parties, the report recipient will follow up after 30 days to determine if appropriate actions have occurred.
6. If recommendations are not satisfactory to the student, the case may be appealed to the Graduate School as specified by the Graduate

School Appeals Process. (https://grad.wisc.edu/documents/grievances-and-appeals/)

OTHER

All students must have full funding. Please contact the program administrator.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Analyze tradeoffs of different agricultural systems embedded within the greater complexity of socio-ecological systems.
2. Consider and synthesize concepts of systems, ecology, and public process.
3. Learn to engage in careful consideration of the social, economic, and environmental outcomes of different industrial and biological processes.
4. Understand the potential of inclusive participatory processes in research and analysis of agroecological systems.
5. Recognize and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct in their coursework, research, and communications in the field of agroecology.

PEOPLE

Agroecology faculty (https://agroecology.wisc.edu/people/faculty/)