

Honours Thesis Opportunity ENSC 502

Professor Diana Córdoba (<https://www.queensu.ca/devs/cordoba-diana>) is looking for one to two students to join a project investigating how Black agroecologies and ancestral land practices can be made visible within Colombian land use planning. The student(s) will have the opportunity to shape their undergraduate thesis (ENSC 502) around their interests and those of the supervisor.

Project Overview

The SSHRC-funded project 'Beyond the Plantation: Making Black Geographies Visible in Colombian Land Use Planning' challenges colonial and post-colonial approaches to state-led territorial planning in Colombia by developing land use planning tools that centre Black geographies. The research focuses on the Alto Cauca region of southwest Colombia, where Black communities inhabit ancestral territories threatened by the continuous expansion of sugar cane plantations. These communities have developed agroforestry-based production systems known as "traditional farms," which play a vital role in cultural reproduction, ecosystem services, and food security — yet remain largely unprotected by the state and face mounting pressures from agribusiness expansion and urban sprawl.

The thesis may involve a combination of:

- Literature review and theoretical analysis of Black geographies, critical planning, and/or agrarian studies
- Qualitative data analysis using existing interview or documentary materials
- Participatory mapping analysis or introductory GIS work
- Contributions to the development of planning frameworks or policy recommendation

Funding

A stipend of \$1,800 will be provided to each student.

Requirements

Interest in agrifood system transformation, planning and rural development, marginalized communities.

Basic knowledge and interest in qualitative methodologies

You meet the program requirements for ENSC 502 (see below)

Preferred Qualifications

- Coursework or demonstrated interest in social sciences, sustainability, rural issues and environmental governance
- Fluency or working knowledge of Spanish (an asset, but not required)

How to Apply

Please send a copy of your unofficial Queen's transcripts and the name of an academic reference to:
diana.cordoba@queensu.ca

Application Deadline: Open until filled

Thesis Start Date: September 2026

ENS 502 – Honours Thesis Requirements

This is an interdisciplinary research project related to environmental sustainability, with supervision and training in appropriate research methods by faculty members of the School of Environmental Studies. The course includes supervised research including a research proposal, a seminar and a final thesis and oral defence.

Requirements: Prerequisite Open to students in the final year of an Honours Program in any discipline, and with permission of the instructor of the course and of the Department of the student's Degree Plan.

Workload Expectations. Because the course is worth 12.0 units, students are normally expected to devote approximately 40% of their academic time to ENSC-502 over the fall and winter terms.