CAREERS

For the most comprehensive overview of career possibilities for geography majors, see the careers website of the Association of American Geographers. This site tells you what geographers do all day, where they work, how much they earn, and how they prepare themselves for these careers.

Geography graduates offer a genuine understanding of the complex interplay of economic, political, social and environmental forces. They are trained to analyze multi-faceted problems with a range of analytical tools and skills, including statistical analysis, survey design, GIS, working with census data, and working with spreadsheets and relational databases. They are skilled in information retrieval, data management, and synthesizing academic research, and are used to working both in teams and on their own initiative. Such graduates are highly employable in a variety of professions.

Geographers describe and analyze the forces shaping how goods, people and services are spatially distributed. We examine people and their interconnections in an ever-more globalized world. This emphasis translates into many types of career opportunities: location and distribution analysis, mapmaking (GIS) and critical analysis, understanding health and well-being as socially created phenomena, environmental politics and sustainability studies, and an understanding of the roots of (in)equality and power imbalances, to name a few departmental skill sets with which our students graduate.

GEOGRAPHERS OFTEN WORK IN THE FOLLOWING FIELDS:

- Social Services
- Planning (urban, social, economic, environmental, transportation)
- Regional & economic development
- Real estate location analysis
- Geodemographics; market research analysis
- spatial statisticians and data analysts
- logistics and supply chain analysts
- Import/export
- Demography
- Public health
- Environmental justice
- Sustainability
- Non-governmental organizations or social mobilization & community-building
- Resource specialists
- Education
- Geographic Information Systems
- Global justice initiatives

Geographers are most marketable as liberal arts majors able to critically examine social phenomena and their surrounding world. The ability to think, evaluate, and interrogate ideas is consistently referenced by our students as their most meaningful resource gained in the Geography major.

THESE SKILLS INCLUDE THE ABILITIES TO:

- communicate effectively
- think analytically, using complex problem-solving
- expertise in integrating, analyzing, and synthesizing information from a range of sources
- locate sources and differentiate them by reliability
- appreciate context and contingency
• synthesize & interpret information
• display and present arguments and information
• write and speak clearly and directly
• conduct academic research
• summarize information
• apply knowledge of social structures and change processes
• sample, gather, analyze and organize data
• create and use spreadsheets and spatial databases
• plan and complete multifaceted projects
• apply an interdisciplinary perspective
• apply a diversity perspective
• time management
• project management
• visual presentation skills

GEOGRAPHY-SPECIFIC SKILLS:
• create and use maps, graphs, charts and tables
• access and work with US Census data and other large data sets
• understand scale transformations
• think spatially: understanding spatial shapes & patterns
• employ spatial statistics
• transforming representations and images
• understanding spatial associations
• understanding orientation and direction
• understanding clustering and dispersal
• understanding spatial change and spatial spread
• understanding densities and density decay
• understanding locations and places
• understanding the integration of geographic features represented as points, networks, and regions
• understanding proximity and adjacency and their effects
• understanding geopolitical shifts globally and locally
• using geospatial technologies and geovisualization techniques & tools
• understanding globalization: the interconnection between the movement of good and people
• awareness of sustainability issues
• understanding social theory
• recognizing diversity and differences between places

GIS CORE COMPETENCIES

Visit CareerOneStop.org for an interactive model of Geospatial Technology Competencies.