GRADUATE PROGRAMS

WHY GEOGRAPHY AT UW?

Our outstanding Graduate Program attracts a diversity of national and international students who engage in original field research and are regularly awarded prestigious grants and fellowships to fund their research and writing. They subsequently take up teaching and research positions in the academy as well as in the public and private sectors at the international, national, and regional levels. The Department is committed to providing funding for new and continuing students throughout their graduate studies with teaching and research assistantships.

OVERVIEW

We offer both an MA and PhD in Geography, as well as a Master of Geographic Information Systems for Sustainability Management Program. To apply to this MGIS program, select “Geographic Information Systems” in the online application form—not “Geography MA” or “Geography Ph.D”.

Our MA and PhD programs are fashioned at the intersection of several broad research specialties. Following the work of the faculty, graduate students are encouraged to think outside the box of any particular ‘adjectival’ subfield of human geography. Nevertheless, our programs draw on expertise in the following key areas:

**Critical Development and Global Health**: Integrated program of study addressing political-economic, social, environmental, and global health dimensions of development in both urban and rural realms. Students may specialize in Latin America, Africa, China, Russia, South Asia, or on the challenges facing poor communities in rich countries. Students study theoretical perspectives and case study materials addressing the ways in which political, economic and social processes relate to the geographical dynamics shaping development and health, including the intersections of these processes with gender, sexuality, ethnic and race relations, and class structures. They also examine the health effects and environmental consequences of development, and the developmental experiences of inequality, dispossession and exploitation that account for poor health outcomes.

**Economic Geography**: Particular concentrations include: globalization, neoliberalism, regional economic development and underdevelopment, with an emphasis on the United States, Latin America, Russia, Canada, East Asia; cross-border regionalism; location theory; labor markets; labor migration (including migrant worker mistreatment and rights); resource distribution; technological change; the relationship between geoeconomics and geopolitics; and the economic lessons of the global justice movement.

**Geographic Information Systems**: Concepts, techniques and software/hardware tools involved in computer-assisted cartography and geographic information system design, use and social meaning. Particular emphasis is on participatory and critical GIS, analytical methods and their use in practical circumstances, including recent innovations in Web 2.0 and neo-geo mapping online. Research may include analytical cartography, geographic information representation, map error analysis, social construction of GIS technology, spatial database design, data management approaches and systems configurations, urban applications, geographic knowledge structures, transportation, environmental analysis, natural resources, user cognition and user interface design, sustainability science, spatial model coupling to GIS, and collaborative spatial decision making.

**Society and Environment**: Examination, analysis and interpretation of the complex inter-relationships between social dynamics and environments. The areas of focus include cultural and political ecology, health and the environment, global environmental modeling and GIS methods and applications. Research themes primarily involve questions of scale in analyzing social and environmental change at the local, regional, and
global levels, and on analyzing, understanding and explaining the interactions among ecological processes, environmental transformation, and social processes and transformations in affluent and impoverished societies. Related aspects of medical geography include such topics as the ties between global environmental change and the (re)emergence and spread of contagious disease, as well as how political, social, environmental, and biological factors come together to both create and structure health vulnerability and risk management.

_Urban, Social and Political Geography:_ Emphasis is on both the theory and empirical investigation of the geography of power, the biopolitics and governance of population and movement, both in terms of global relations and local patterns of policing and social activism. Particular emphasis is given to the relation of social, political and economic structure to spatial organization and social justice, and on issues of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, inequality, health and disease, policing, power and social justice as they have been theorized in critical social theories. Attention is also paid to how political-economic geographies combine in relations of dominance, governance and resistance at a range of scales, from the urban to the regional to the transnational.

**EXPLORE**

Find out how to apply to the UW Geography Graduate Program, or the requirements for our masters and Ph.D. programs by exploring our graduate section.

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