MAJOR REQUIREMENTS & TRACKS

On This Page:
- Geography Major Requirements
- Program Overview
- Geography Track Descriptions
- Miscellaneous Information

GEOGRAPHY MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Geography is an open major—there are no prerequisites or special admissions requirements:

GEOG 315: Explanation and Understanding in Geography (5 credits)

Methods: (317, 326, 425, 426) or other courses approved by petition to the undergraduate program coordinator (5 credits).

Breadth: One course from each of the four tracks: Cities, Citizenship, and Migration; Environment, Economy, and Sustainability; GIS, Mapping, and Society; and Globalization, Health, and Development (20 credits).

Depth: Four courses in one of the four tracks listed below, at least two of which must be 400-level (20 credits).

Two electives: Two Geography courses at the 200 level and above (10 credits).

Total required: 60 credits

THE GEOGRAPHY BA IS AWARDED UPON COMPLETION OF:

a) a minimum of 180 credits, with a GPA of 2.0 or above (final 45 credits must be earned in residence), and an aggregate departmental GPA of 2.5 across all geography courses
b) completion of all General Education requirements for the College of Arts & Sciences
c) completion of all Geography major requirements
d) submission of graduation application by the start of the third week of the quarter you intend to graduate

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Geographers address some of the world's most urgent challenges, including globalization, economic inequality, world hunger and agricultural development, global health and health care, the social control of public spaces, immigration, gender inequality, and what it means to be a citizen in the 21st century. Answers to such questions are complex and partial, and these issues are not “fixable” by one-dimensional solutions. Geography's contribution to these public issues and solutions is spatial analysis and accountability to place. We study the locations of things and people and the processes that brought them there. In all of our work we hold ourselves accountable to the things and the people in our community.

In Geography classes you will learn how to conduct interviews, use statistical and demographic analysis, and interpret data in order to construct models, maps, and other tools for understanding. In addition to providing our students with the analytical tools and habits of mind to assess these problems, we also encourage our
students to combine classroom study with internships, community service, apprenticeships, and independent research to develop an integrated learning experience. This learning experience not only provides students with critical and analytical skills, but also offers a sense of hope that these daunting problems can be solved and that individuals can make a difference.

GEOGRAPHY TRACK DESCRIPTIONS

The major is organized into four tracks. Students majoring in geography select one of the four tracks to specialize in by taking four upper-division courses, at least two of which must be at the 400-level.

CITIES, CITIZENSHIP AND MIGRATION TRACK:

Why do people move, and where do they go? What are the constraints and opportunities for migrants as they settle and integrate in new cities and new nations? How are cities formed and what are the forces that impact their economic and cultural development? The courses in this track focus on themes of urbanization and human movement, emphasizing the importance of labor and housing, as well as cultural processes and historical forms of discrimination that shape where people live and work. Students in this track will develop an understanding of the intersections of power and place as they pertain to migration and immigrant life, citizenship and belonging, and the production of urban space.

ENVIRONMENT, ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABILITY TRACK:

The courses in this track study the reciprocal and often contradictory forces of economic activity, environmental policy, and sustainability. Using such key geographic concepts as scale, place and location, these courses analyze relations between such complex processes as: land use, labor markets, corporate location, international trade, energy policy & consumption, environmental regulatory policy, resource use and food systems.

GLOBALIZATION, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT TRACK:

How does globalization shape life and death around the planet? How can development initiatives address global health disparities? Providing geographical answers to such questions, this track traces the extraordinarily uneven effects of global trade, global finance, and market-led development on food systems, health and the geography of impoverishment. By putting global health challenges in a global socio-economic context, the track simultaneously highlights how social movements and social organizing can make a difference, including differences in formal policies effecting human well-being directly as well as innovations in the ethics of care. Courses in the track provide frequent opportunities for service learning as part of the goal of helping students engage with real world challenges. All our classes also approach these themes through a geographical lens: charting global-local relations and the links between nature, society and political-economy in particular places. This geographical approach in turn enables us to explore how nutrition, health, and development are intertwined with other processes ranging from the personal experiences of migrant farm workers, to urban and regional redevelopment, to global financial reforms. Specific questions that frame our classes include: What are the links between life and debt (GEOG 123)? How have sixty years of development increased in-country inequality (Geog 230)? How do global disease etiologies reflect other global interconnections (Geog 280)? How does agricultural modernization relate to hunger (Geog 371)? And what are the implications for food security, health security and developmental security when they are re-framed in terms of geopolitics and the global security challenges of international relations (Geog 375)?

GIS, MAPPING, AND SOCIETY TRACK:

In the courses that comprise the GIS, Mapping and Society track, students learn to use GIS, web-based geospatial applications, and database management systems for problem solving in relation to a diverse range of societal concerns, such as those within the other Geography tracks. Students learn a range of analytical and critical methods for cartographic representation, spatial analysis, geovisualization, and database management. Further, students learn about the politics, ethics and values of mapping and geospatial technologies, and integrate their social and technical skills to undertake projects with research partners in the region.
MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Transfer students are required to complete a minimum of 24 upper-division (300- and 400-level) credits in Geography in residence at the University of Washington.

Individual Geography course grades must be 2.0 or above in order to count toward the major requirements; the overall cumulative GPA in Geography courses counted toward the major must be 2.50 or above.

Students are encouraged to take appropriate elective courses outside the Department of Geography in fields that support their concentration. Such courses appropriate to various concentrations will be available on lists supplied by Geography advisers, or may be recommended by a faculty member. Students should be aware that 300- and 400-level courses in other departments are likely to have prerequisites. With the exception of STAT 311, courses taken in other departments do NOT count toward the required 60 GEOG credits.

The department offers an Honors program for students. Students may also participate in the Interdisciplinary Honors Program or complete both programs to earn a degree with College Honors. Please visit the University Honors Program website for more information.

A combined total of 5 credits of Internship (GEOG 496) and Independent Study (GEOG 499) may be counted towards the required 60 Geography credits.

No single course may be counted toward more than one degree requirement.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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