

Geography

College of Social & Behavioral Sciences

Department of Geography

7 Armstrong Hall • 507-389-2617

Chair: Martin D. Mitchell

Branko M. Colakovic; Donald A. Friend; Cecil S. Keen; Jiyeong Lee; Jose Javier Lopez; Cynthia A. Miller

Geography is the study of natural and cultural features and processes distributed over the earth. It is both a natural science and a social science in that it examines people and their environment and serves as bridge between the physical and cultural worlds. Furthermore, geography seeks to understand and solve the problems of modern society as they pertain to people's use of the earth's resources. The department's courses are especially suitable for students interested in liberal education, teaching, travel management, environmental management, field-work, cartographic and geographic information system analysis, geospatial technologies, and other applied field sciences.

Admission to Major. Students enrolling in 300-400 level courses must be admitted to the program. Admission to major is granted by the department.

Minimum university admission requirements are:

- a minimum of 32 earned semester credit hours.

- a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.00 (C).

Contact the department for application procedures.

GEOGRAPHY BA, BS

STANDARD MAJOR OPTION - 32 credits

Required for Major (Core, 14 credits):

GEOG 101 Introductory Physical Geography (3)

GEOG 103 Introductory Cultural Geography (3)

GEOG 340 United States (3)

GEOG 370 Cartographic Techniques (4)

GEOG 401 Colloquium (1)

Required for Major (Electives, 18 credits):

Choose one cultural-systematic course from the following:

GEOG 425 Economic Geography (3)

GEOG 435 Urban Geography (3)

GEOG 437 Political Geography (3)

GEOG 438 Social Geography (3)

Choose one physical course from the following:

GEOG 217 Weather (3) WITH OPTIONAL

GEOG 218 Weather Lab (1)

GEOG 313 Natural Disasters (3)

GEOG 315 Geomorphology (3)

GEOG 410 Climatic Environments (3)

GEOG 420 Conservation of Natural Resources (3)

Choose one foreign regional course from the following:

GEOG 445 Latin America (3)

GEOG 450 Europe (3)

GEOG 454 Russian Realm (3)

GEOG 456 Africa (3)

GEOG 458 West Pacific Rim (3)

Choose one capstone experience from the following:

GEOG 440 Field Studies (1-4)

GEOG 480 Seminar (3)

GEOG 491 Senior Paper (1-4)

GEOG 497 Internship (1-10)

Choose additional electives (above 100 level):

GEOG Electives

Required for Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree ONLY:

Language (8)

Required Minor. Yes. Any.

PROFESSIONAL MAJOR OPTION - 48 credits

Required for Major (Core, 14 credits):

Same as for Standard Major.

Required for Major (Electives, 18 credits):

Same as for Standard Major.

Required for Major (Additional Electives, 16 credits):

Choose additional electives (above 100 level):

GEOG Electives

Other Electives (6 credits may be taken outside department with department permission)

Required for Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree ONLY:

Language (8)

Required Minor. None.

GIS/PLANT SCIENCE BS

The GIS/Plant Science Degree encompasses the intersecting interests of agriculture, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and Global Positioning Systems technologies along with advanced studies in soils ecology, plant physiology and diseases. The courses are designed to give an applied and advanced theoretical knowledge of these subjects, which are fast becoming critical in sustaining a viable agricultural economy. This program is offered in partnership with Minnesota West Community College. Students should contact the Department of Geography for information regarding admission to this program.

Core (27 credits to be taken at Minnesota West Community College):

Chemistry 2101 (5); Biology 2230 (4); Geography 1100 (3); and Agriculture 1102 (3), 1103 (3), 2202 (3), 2203 (3), and 2212 (3)

36 credits to be taken at MSU:

BIOL 412 Soil Ecology (4)

BIOL 440 Horticulture (4)

BIOL 441 Plant Physiology (4)

BIOL 443 Plant Ecology (4)

BIOL 445 Economic Botany (4)

ENVR 440 Environmental Regulations (3)

GEOG 101 Introduction to Physical Geography (3)

GEOG 370 Cartographic Techniques (4)

GEOG 373 Introduction to GIS (4)

GEOG 420 Conservation of Natural Resources (3)

GEOG 471 Field Mapping (4)

GEOG 473 Geographic Information Systems (4)

GEOGRAPHY MINOR (18 credits)

Required for Minor (Core, 9 credits):

GEOG 101 Introductory Physical Geography (3)

GEOG 103 Introductory Cultural Geography (3)

GEOG 340 United States (3)

Required for Minor (Electives, 9 credits, above 100 level):

GEOG Electives

POLICIES/INFORMATION

GPA Policy. A GPA of 2.0 or higher in a major or minor in geography is required for graduation.

Refer to the College regarding required advising for students on academic probation.

Pass/No Credit Policy. P/N grading will be accepted in the major only for GEOG 401 and 497. All other courses must be taken for letter grades. All courses for a minor must be taken for letter grades.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

GEOG 100 (3) Elements of Geography

An introduction to Geography and its themes of study. The course will familiarize students with where places are located in the world together with the cultural and physical features that pertain. Students will be tasked to think critically and diversely about various cultures and features of the modern world.

F, S
GE-8, 10 CD-Related

GEOG 101 (3) Introductory Physical Geography
Survey of the processes and features of the earth's physical environment, earth-sun relationships, weather, climate, natural vegetation, soil, and landforms. Examines their interrelations and spatial distribution using North America and world-wide examples. Some coverage of human-environmental relations.

F, S
GE-3, 10

GEOG 103 (3) Introductory Cultural Geography
Cultural aspects of interactions between people and their environment focusing on spatial patterns of population, agriculture, politics, language, religion, industrialization, and urbanization. Emphasis is placed on the processes that create the cultural landscape and on management of land and natural resources.

F, S
GE-5, 8 CD-Related

GEOG 210 (3) Landscapes and Places
Introduction to the concepts of landscape and place in a variety of geographical writings. Emphasizes works with strong regional overtones. The interaction between the physical and cultural environments is paramount. Field observation and integrating imagery into original student writing documents is also addressed.

GE-1C, 10

GEOG 217 (3) Weather
An examination of the processes involved in weather formation. Students will be introduced to weather map analysis, simple forecasting and observational techniques, and weather instruments.

F, S

GEOG 218 (1) Weather Laboratory
This course will cover applied aspects of weather, including understanding weather codes, analysis and interpretation of weather maps, basic techniques of forecasting, and familiarity with weather instruments.

F, S

GEOG 299 (1-3) Individual Study
An assignment that is tailored to individual needs of a student. The instructor and the student arrange the type of project for the student, such as a term paper, readings, mapping, field investigation, or computer cartography.

Pre: Consent F, S

GEOG 301 (1) Readings for Honors
An assignment of geographic literature readings that meet the needs of the student. Usually the student provides reviews of articles or books of a geographic nature.

F, S

GEOG 313 (3) Natural Disasters
An examination of the underlying causes of natural disasters occurring over the globe. Focus will be primarily upon weather and climate related disasters. Students will also be exposed to concepts of plate tectonics and how these affect the distribution of earthquakes and volcanism over the planet.

Pre: GEOG 217 ALT-F

GEOG 315 (3) Geomorphology
This course will cover elements of the structure of the earth and the variety of landforms found on the earth's surface, with emphasis upon the processes, both past and present, that act upon the surface to create the landforms now visible. Local field trips.

F

GEOG 340 (3) United States
Students will develop a knowledge of the similarities and contrasts in regional landscapes and cultures of the United States.

F, S

GEOG 341 (3) World Regional Geography
Differences and similarities in the cultural and natural environments by the world's major regions. Useful survey of world geography for education and international relations students.

F, S

GEOG 370 (4) Cartographic Techniques
The lecture material addresses map projections, technology changes in production, basic analysis and depiction of quantitative point, line and areal data. Also, the evaluation of maps and the history of cartography from a European, Oriental, and American Indian perspective is discussed. All maps are drawn using computer assistance.

F, S

GEOG 373 (4) Introduction to Geography Information Systems
The course will be an introduction to the analysis of spatial data using the concept of a geographic information system (GIS). Content of the course will be, to a great extent, based on the NCGIA core curriculum with assignments tailored to the data and software available within the department such as ArcInfo.

Pre: GEOG 370 F, S

GEOG 401 (1) Colloquium
Overview of geographic work, interests, and research by guest speakers.

F

GEOG 409 (1-3) Selected Topics
The instructor will develop a specific course on a geographic topic, such as soils, landforms, water resources, energy, housing, population geography, or some other topic for the class.

F, S

GEOG 410 (3) Climatic Environments
The characteristics of particular climates and understanding the factors that control their spatial distribution.

Pre: GEOG 101, or consent F

GEOG 412 (4) Advanced Weather
Meteorological principles and theory are applied to the analysis and interpretation of weather data in order to better understand the structure and evolution of synoptic-scale weather systems. Basic knowledge of mathematics will be assumed.

Pre: GEOG 217 ALT-F

GEOG 420 (3) Conservation of Natural Resources
Survey of natural resources emphasizing energy, minerals, soils, fisheries, and water resources. Also addresses timber, wetlands, and wildlife on public and private lands.

S

GEOG 425 (3) Economic Geography
Examines national and international economic geographical order and trade activities. Topics include economic development, competition, international trade, and impacts on the environment and people.

S

GEOG 430 (3) Historical Geography of the United States
The evolving patterns of settlement, cultures, landscapes, and economies of the United States from the colonial period to 1990. An introduction to historical geography as a sub field of geography, including career opportunities in related professions.

On Demand

GEOG 435 (3) Urban Geography
Hypotheses and generalization related to urban functions, structure, land use, distribution, growth, and sometimes decline. Emphasis will be mostly on the

United States' urban places.

F

GEOG 436 (2) Rural Development

Introduction to theoretical frameworks for analyzing processes of economic, environmental, and social change in rural regions. Includes basic and advanced geographical principles and techniques for studying non-urban areas. Designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for carrying out research projects on rural environments.

S

GEOG 437 (3) Political Geography

Spatial problems and structure of governments, focusing on countries of the world and their geographic internal order. Covers such topics as boundary problems, strategic locations, and geopolitical explanations of international and internal relations and conflicts.

S

GEOG 438 (3) Social Geography

Concepts and theories concerning global and national social problems and the significance of geographic analytic methods for social research. Study of factors related to variations in regional standards of living.

F

CD-Core

GEOG 440 (1-4) Field Studies

Various excursions to study physical and cultural landscapes inside and outside of Minnesota.

Variable

GEOG 445 (3) Latin America

Regional geography covering the ecological and human environment of Middle and South America, including the Caribbean. Students can pick specific topics to study in detail. The geographic relations between the USA and Latin America are also covered.

F

GEOG 446 (3) Canada

Students will develop a knowledge of the environmental, cultural, historical, and economic geographies of Canada. Readings of bestselling fiction and scholarly works written by Canadians will provide a Canadian perspective on the nation's past, present, and future.

ALT-F

GEOG 450 (3) Europe

Cultural, environmental, and economic background of Europe west of Russia and Ukraine. Following a general geographic survey, the course will cover major regions and countries.

S

GEOG 454 (3) Russian Realm

Survey of the area of Russia and her neighbors. Examines regional patterns of the physical environment, natural resources, population distribution, cities, and economic activity. Relates people to the land.

Variable

GEOG 456 (3) Africa

A survey of the physical and cultural resources and economic development of the continent with emphasis on current issues. Topics discussed will focus on Africa South of the Sahara.

Variable

GEOG 458 (3) West Pacific Rim

Examines the ecological and human environments of eastern and southeastern Asia, mainly China, Japan, and off-shore nations. The course will be supported with field information.

Variable

GEOG 464 (4) Teaching Earth Science

An applied course tailored to meet practical needs of a teacher, related to curriculum development and earth science lab equipment and supplies.

Variable

GEOG 471 (4) Field Mapping with GPS

This course covers the basic strategies for field mapping using data acquired from global positioning systems (GPS).

Pre: GEOG 373 or equivalent F

GEOG 473 (4) Geographic Information Systems

Comprehensive examination of computer-assisted systems for manipulation and analysis of spatially-referenced data, including data structure and organization, input and output problems, data management, and strategies for analytical work.

Pre: GEOG 373 S

GEOG 476 (3) Spatial Statistics

Descriptive statistics, probability, hypothesis testing, introduction to non-parametric statistics, correlation, introduction to regression analysis, spatial statistics, and principles of data representation in graphs and tables.

S

GEOG 477 (1-3) Topics in Techniques

This offering will include a variety of selected technical topics in geography, including but not necessarily limited to manual cartographic drafting and negative scribing, photomechanical techniques in production cartography, aerial photo interpretation, and advanced coverage of digital analysis of satellite-derived remote sensor data and global positioning systems.

Pre: Consent Variable

GEOG 478 (3) Spatial Analysis

Survey of theoretical frameworks for spatial analysis, and the study of intermediate geographic quantitative techniques. Includes basic and advanced spatial analysis principles and methods for examining spatial patterns. Designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for carrying out research projects that demand spatial point pattern assessment and analysis of areal units.

Summer

GEOG 479 (1-3) GIS Practicum

This offering will include supervised project work in raster-based and/or vector-based GIS, using problems and data drawn from local or regional agencies or other professional-level organizations with whom the Geography Department maintains a relationship. Students must have completed one of the prerequisite courses, or professional-level experience.

Pre: GEOG 373, or 473, or consent Variable

GEOG 480 (1-3) Seminar

Topics vary in physical, cultural, economic, political, and historical geography, as well as environmental conservation and geographic techniques.

Variable

GEOG 491 (1-4) Senior Paper

F, S

GEOG 497 (1-10) Internship

An applied work and learning experience. The student will provide a written internship report on professional practicum and the work supervisor will be consulted on how much the student has accomplished.

Pre: Consent On Demand

GEOG 499 (1-3) Individual Study

An assignment that is tailored to individual needs of a student. An arrangement is made that the student works on a project (term paper, readings, mapping, field investigation, GIS, or related topics).

Pre: Consent On Demand