University of Minnesota
College of Liberal Arts
Student Services

Geography
Bachelor of Science

Department of Geography

Information on major requirements is subject to change and is provided here for information purposes. For current information about major requirements, contact your CLA student community or the major department.----01/02

B.S.

Geography describes and explains the past, present, and future locations and spatial patterns of humans and their settlements, cultural and economic traits, and natural environment and resources. The language of maps is a distinctive language of geography, and an ability to use and interpret maps is fundamental to the study and practice of the discipline. Geography offers students an integrative perspective on the relations among social, political, economic, and physical phenomena in space and place.

The B.S. offers a solid foundation in the science of geography in either the environmental systems or geographic information, analysis, and representation track.

Environmental Systems Track

The environmental systems track examines the natural environments and resources that sustain human life and activity. Students explore the local and global patterns of climate, soils, vegetation, and surface land form; changes over time, both naturally occurring and caused by humans, in the natural environment; and ways of analyzing and predicting both human-caused and naturally occurring environmental change.

Geographic Information, Analysis, and Representation Track

The geographic information, analysis, and representation track is concerned with all aspects of geographical information, including collection, storage, manipulation, analysis, and visualization. This track encompasses geographical information science (GIS), cartography, remote sensing, spatial analysis, and numerical modeling.

Degree Requirements

To complete the B.S. in geography, students must complete at least 120 credits, including at least 38 credits in the major with a grade of C- or better. These credits include: three core courses; a modes of geographic inquiry course; and four or five courses in either the geographic information, analysis, and representation track or the environmental systems track. A list of applicable courses is available from the undergraduate adviser in the Department of Geography. Students also complete a senior project.

Required Courses

Core courses:

- Geog 3401—Geography of Environmental Systems; Geog 3561—Principles of Geographical Information Science and one of the following: Geog 1301, 3001, or 3371
- Geog 4001—Modes of Geographic Inquiry or Geog 4002—Social Theory and the Environment
- Mathematics through Math 1272 or through Math 1372; or statistics through Stat 3022; or computer science (CSci 1107 and 1113)

Senior Project

Students complete a senior project either in Geog 3985—Senior Project Seminar or by extra-credit registration in any course in the major track, completing 3993 or 3994. Courses from other programs that may be applied toward the major: Soil 4701—Basic Soil Science or Geo 470—Geomorphology(both in the Environmental Systems Track).

Minor Requirements

Students complete a minimum of 14 credits in 3xxx, 4xxx, or 5xxx courses with a grade of C- or better.
What can I do with a major in geography?

Skills

Geography majors develop skills that are applicable to a wide variety of careers. These skills include:

- Ability to produce and interpret maps
- Critical thinking and analytical skills
- Ability to formulate clear and persuasive messages
- Listening, clarifying, questioning and responding skills
- Ability to work well with diverse groups

Employment

Common areas of employment for this major include but are not limited to:

- Physical/Environmental—water/natural resources planning, environmental impact, terrain/land use planning, conservation
- Cartography—mapping, plotting, graphic design
- Business—marketing, human resources, sales, consulting, recruiting, photography, real estate development
- Nonprofit—fundraising, programming, management, human rights, public policy
- Education—teaching, research, student affairs

Today’s workplace requires individuals with interpersonal skills, the ability to communicate effectively, an ability to solve problems, and adaptability. CLA graduates find that they are well-prepared in all these areas and that their education—especially when combined with experience gained through internships, volunteer positions, past jobs, and other collegiate involvement—makes them competitive.

The Career & Community Learning Center provides students with the tools to identify and pursue potential careers. An extensive resource room, the CLA Link website, career courses and workshops, and a helpful staff are just some of the ways we can help.

How do I declare a geography major?

You will be required to declare a major by the time you have completed 60 credits.

1. Talk with someone from the department: an adviser, a professor, or a teaching assistant, to learn more about the major and its requirements.

2. When you decide upon a geography major, meet with the undergraduate adviser to complete a Major Program Plan.

3. Bring a copy of the form or plan to your CLA student community.

4. If you decide to change your major, contact your CLA student community to learn more about your new major’s declaration process.

For more information

About the geography major:

Undergraduate Advising
408 Social Science Building
(612) 625-0133
http://www.geog.umn.edu/

About CLA requirements, graduation, and other information about majors:

CLA Social Sciences Student Community
575 Heller Hall
(612) 626-7714
http://socialsci.cla.umn.edu
socsci@class.cla.umn.edu

or

CLA Martin Luther King, Jr. Program
19 Johnston Hall
(612) 625-2300
http://www.mlk.umn.edu/
mlk@class.cla.umn.edu

About careers, internships, and community learning opportunities in this major and others:

Career and Community Learning Center
135 Johnston Hall
(612) 624-7577
www.cclc.umn.edu
cclc@class.cla.umn.edu

About graduation with honors:

Students interested in graduating with honors should contact:

CLA Honors Division
115 Johnston Hall
(612) 624-5522
www.cla.umn.edu/honors/
honors@class.cla.umn.edu

Remember!

You have not declared a major until you have:

- completed a Major Program Form with your major adviser
- filed a copy with the major department
  - filed a copy with your CLA student community
  - be sure to keep a copy for yourself