

GEOGRAPHY, BA

Are you passionate about environmental sustainability? Are you curious about what a socially just world might look like? Do you find physical landscapes inspiring? Are you interested in the analysis and visualization of data? Are you intrigued by the diversity of people and places around the world? Do you find the social life of cities fascinating? Are you kept up at night wondering why some places are rich while others are poor? If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, but especially more than one, Geography could be a great fit for you. Geography is especially ideal for individuals who have a wide range of interests spanning the natural sciences, humanities, social sciences, and data sciences.

Geography is an interdisciplinary field that seeks to understand patterns and interrelationships on Earth. These range from humans’ relationships with the environment and the interactions of earth systems to the social worlds and built environments that different societies build to mapping and spatial analysis of big data. It is a rich and vibrant discipline that is essential to understanding the world and many of its problems. Geography thus offers a unique lens through which to illuminate the intertwined places, societies, and ecologies that comprise our diverse world.

HOW TO GET IN

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Requirements	Details
How to get in	No application required. All students who meet the requirements listed below are eligible to declare. For information on how to declare, visit Advising & Careers.
Courses required to get in	None
GPA requirements to get in	None
Credits required to get in	None
Other	None

REQUIREMENTS

UNIVERSITY GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are required to fulfill a minimum set of common university general education requirements to ensure that every graduate acquires the essential core of an undergraduate education. This core establishes a foundation for living a productive life, being a citizen of the world, appreciating aesthetic values, and engaging in lifelong learning in a continually changing world. Various schools and colleges will have requirements in addition to the requirements listed below. Consult your advisor for assistance, as needed. For additional information, see the university Undergraduate General Education Requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#requirementsforundergraduatestudytext>) section of the Guide.

General Education

- Breadth—Humanities/Literature/Arts: 6 credits
- Breadth—Natural Science: 4 to 6 credits, consisting of one 4- or 5-credit course with a laboratory component; or two courses providing a total of 6 credits
- Breadth—Social Studies: 3 credits
- Communication Part A & Part B *
- Ethnic Studies *
- Quantitative Reasoning Part A & Part B *

* The mortarboard symbol appears before the title of any course that fulfills one of the Communication Part A or Part B, Ethnic Studies, or Quantitative Reasoning Part A or Part B requirements.

COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA)

Students pursuing a bachelor of arts degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. The College of Letters & Science allows this major to be paired with either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of science curriculum.

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Mathematics Complete the University General Education Requirements for Quantitative Reasoning A (QR-A) and Quantitative Reasoning B (QR-B) coursework.

Language

- Complete the fourth unit of a language other than English; OR
- Complete the third unit of a language and the second unit of an additional language other than English.

L&S Breadth

- 12 credits of Humanities, which must include 6 credits of literature; and
- 12 credits of Social Science; and
- 12 credits of Natural Science, which must include one 3+ credit Biological Science course and one 3+ credit Physical Science course.

Liberal Arts and Science Coursework Complete at least 108 credits.

Depth of Intermediate/Advanced work Complete at least 60 credits at the intermediate or advanced level.

Major Declare and complete at least one major.

Total Credits Complete at least 120 credits.

UW-Madison Experience

- 30 credits in residence, overall; and
- 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit.

Quality of Work	• 2.000 in all coursework at UW–Madison
	• 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW–Madison

NON–L&S STUDENTS PURSUING AN L&S MAJOR

Non–L&S students who have permission from their school/college to pursue an additional major within L&S only need to fulfill the major requirements. They do not need to complete the L&S Degree Requirements above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

Students must declare one of the major options (p. 3) below, complete Core Requirements common to each option, and also the specific requirements for their declared option.

CORE REQUIREMENTS

30 credits the major, to include these core requirements:

Breadth

3 courses, 1 each from these areas:

Code	Title	Credits
Human Geography (1 course)		3
GEOG 101	Introduction to Human Geography	
GEOG 104	Introduction to Human Geography	
GEOG/ART HIST/ ENVIR ST/ HISTORY/ LAND ARC 239	Making the American Landscape	
GEOG 300	Weird Geographies	
GEOG 301	Revolutions and Social Change	
GEOG 302	Economic Geography: Locational Behavior	
GEOG/ URB R PL 305	Introduction to the City	
GEOG 307	International Migration, Health, and Human Rights	
GEOG/CHICLA/ GEN&WS 308	Latinx Feminisms: Women's Lives, Work, and Activism	
GEOG/ INTL ST 311	The Global Game: Soccer, Politics, and Identity	
GEOG/ INTL ST 315	Universal Basic Income: The Politics Behind a Global Movement	
GEOG 318	Introduction to Geopolitics	
GEOG 340	World Regions in Global Context	
GEOG 342	Geography of Wisconsin	
GEOG 355	Africa, South of the Sahara	
GEOG 358	Human Geography of Southeast Asia	
GEOG/ AMER IND 410	Critical Indigenous Ecological Knowledges	
GEOG 501	Space and Place: A Geography of Experience	
GEOG/ URB R PL 503	Researching the City: Qualitative Strategies	

GEOG/ GEN&WS 504	Feminist Geography: Theoretical Approaches	
GEOG/ URB R PL 505	Urban Spatial Patterns and Theories	
GEOG 507	Waste Geographies: Politics, People, and Infrastructures	
GEOG 510	Economic Geography	
GEOG 511	Critical Social Theory	
GEOG 513	Queer Geographies	
GEOG/ GEN&WS 514	Feminist Geography: Methodological Approaches	
GEOG 515	Trans Autotheories	
GEOG 518	Power, Place, Identity	
GEOG 566	History of Geographic Thought	
People–Environment (1 course)		3
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 139	Global Environmental Issues	
GEOG/ART HIST/ ENVIR ST/ HISTORY/ LAND ARC 239	Making the American Landscape	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 309	People, Land and Food: Comparative Study of Agriculture Systems	
GEOG/ ATM OCN/ ENVIR ST 332	Global Warming: Science and Impacts	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 333	Green Urbanism	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 337	Nature, Power and Society	
GEOG/ BOTANY 338	Environmental Biogeography	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 339	Environmental Conservation	
GEOG 340	World Regions in Global Context	
GEOG 344	Changing Landscapes of the American West	
GEOG/ AMER IND/ ENVIR ST 345	Caring for Nature in Native North America	
GEOG 359	Australia: Environment and Society	
GEOG/ AMER IND 410	Critical Indigenous Ecological Knowledges	
GEOG/C&E SOC/ ENVIR ST 434	People, Wildlife and Landscapes	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 439	US Environmental Policy and Regulation	
GEOG/ENVIR ST/ HISTORY 460	American Environmental History	
GEOG/ SOIL SCI 526	Human Transformations of Earth Surface Processes	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 534	Environmental Governance: Markets, States and Nature	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 537	Culture and Environment	

GEOG 538	The Humid Tropics: Ecology, Subsistence, and Development
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 557	Development and Environment in Southeast Asia
Physical Geography (1 course)	
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 120	Introduction to the Earth System
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 127	Physical Systems of the Environment
GEOG/ GEOSCI 320	Geomorphology
GEOG/ ATM OCN/ ENVIR ST 322	Polar Regions and Their Importance in the Global Environment
GEOG/ ATM OCN/ ENVIR ST 332	Global Warming: Science and Impacts
GEOG/ ATM OCN/ ENVIR ST/ GEOSCI 335	Climatic Environments of the Past
GEOG/ BOTANY 338	Environmental Biogeography
GEOG 342	Geography of Wisconsin
GEOG 344	Changing Landscapes of the American West
GEOG/ GEOSCI 420	Glacial and Pleistocene Geology
GEOG 523	Advanced Paleocology: Species Responses to Past Environmental Change
GEOG/ SOIL SCI 525	Soil Geomorphology
GEOG/ SOIL SCI 526	Human Transformations of Earth Surface Processes

Total Credits 9

Capstone

Code	Title	Credits
Complete one of:		3-6
GEOG 565	Colloquium for Undergraduate Majors	
GEOG 681 & GEOG 682	Senior Honors Thesis and Senior Honors Thesis	
GEOG 691 & GEOG 692	Senior Thesis and Senior Thesis	

Total Credits 3-6

MAJOR OPTIONS

Declare one of these major options:

View as listView as grid

- **GEOGRAPHY: HUMAN GEOGRAPHY** ([HTTPS://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY/GEOGRAPHY-BA/GEOGRAPHY-HUMAN-GEOGRAPHY-BA/](https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/geography/geography-ba/geography-human-geography-ba/))
- **GEOGRAPHY: PEOPLE-ENVIRONMENT GEOGRAPHY** ([HTTPS://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY/GEOGRAPHY-BA/GEOGRAPHY-PEOPLE-ENVIRONMENT-GEOGRAPHY-BA/](https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/geography/geography-ba/geography-people-environment-geography-ba/))
- **GEOGRAPHY: PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY: EARTH SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES** ([HTTPS://GUIDE.WISC.EDU/UNDERGRADUATE/LETTERS-SCIENCE/GEOGRAPHY/GEOGRAPHY-BA/GEOGRAPHY-PHYSICAL-GEOGRAPHY-EARTH-SYSTEMS-ENVIRONMENTAL-PROCESSES-BA/](https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/geography/geography-ba/geography-physical-geography-earth-systems-environmental-processes-ba/))

RESIDENCE AND QUALITY OF WORK

- 2.000 GPA in GEOG and major courses
- 2.000 GPA on 15 upper-level credits, taken in residence¹
- 15 credits in GEOG, taken on the UW-Madison campus

¹ GEOG courses designated Intermediate/Advanced are upper level in this major.

HONORS IN THE MAJOR

Students may declare Honors in the Geography Major in consultation with the Geography undergraduate advisor.

HONORS IN THE MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

To earn a BA or BS with Honors in the Major in Geography students must satisfy both the requirements for the major (above) and the following additional requirements:

- Earn a 3.300 University GPA
- Earn a 3.300 GPA in all GEOG courses and major courses
- At least 1 Advanced level major course or 6 credits in major courses numbered 300 and higher, taken for Honors
- Complete a two-semester Senior Honors Thesis (GEOG 681 & GEOG 682) for a total of 6 credits.

UNIVERSITY DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Total Degree To receive a bachelor's degree from UW-Madison, students must earn a minimum of 120 degree credits. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 degree credits. Students should consult with their college or department advisor for information on specific credit requirements.

Residency	Degree candidates are required to earn a minimum of 30 credits in residence at UW–Madison. "In residence" means on the UW–Madison campus with an undergraduate degree classification. "In residence" credit also includes UW–Madison courses offered in distance or online formats and credits earned in UW–Madison Study Abroad/Study Away programs.
Quality of Work	Undergraduate students must maintain the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, or academic program to remain in good academic standing. Students whose academic performance drops below these minimum thresholds will be placed on academic probation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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1. Explain patterns and relationships that result from human societal dynamics, Earth systems processes, and the interaction of these dynamics and processes at a range of spatial and temporal scales.
2. Analyze the interdependencies within and among human societal dynamics, people and environment relations, and Earth systems.
3. Employ appropriate theories, methodologies, technologies, and ethical frameworks to design and conduct research, and analyze and assess research findings.
4. Critically interpret theoretical texts and empirical materials from a wide range of sources using appropriate ethical practices, theories, methods, and GIS tools from the humanities, social sciences, and Earth systems sciences.
5. Apply geographic concepts, information, approaches, and technologies to inform community-engaged discussions, policy debates, and public and private sector planning efforts about the Earth, people and environment relations, and human geographies.
6. Present complex geographic concepts and information using written, oral, and visual forms of communication effective for disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and general public audiences.

FOUR-YEAR PLAN

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This Four-Year Plan is only one way a student may complete an L&S degree with this major. Many factors can affect student degree planning, including placement scores, credit for transferred courses, credits earned by examination, and individual scholarly interests. In addition, many students have commitments (e.g., athletics, honors, research, student organizations, study abroad, work and volunteer experiences) that necessitate they adjust their plans accordingly. Informed students engage in their own unique Wisconsin Experience by consulting their academic advisors, Guide, DARS, and Course Search & Enroll for assistance making and adjusting their plan.

First Year			
Fall	Credits	Spring	Credits
Communication A	3	Ethnic Studies (e.g., GEOG 305)	3
Quantitative Reasoning A	3	Quantitative Reasoning B	3
Foreign Language	4	Introductory GEOG	3

Biological Science Breadth	3 Foreign Language	4
Introductory GEOG	3-4 Literature Breadth	3
16		16
Second Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Communication B (e.g., GEOG 101)	4 Humanities Breadth	3
Humanities Breadth	3 Social Science Breadth	3
Major course: Human Geography	3-4 Major course: Physical Geography	3
INTER-LS 210	1 Major course: People-Environment	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
14		15
Third Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Social Science Breadth	3 Literature Breadth	3
Natural Science Breadth	3 Major course: Mapping	3-4
Humanities Breadth	3 GEOG 365	3
Intermediate-Level Geography in Subarea	3-4 Electives	6
STAT 301	3	
15		15
Fourth Year		
Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
GEOG 565	3 Advanced-Level Geography Elective in Subarea	3-4
Intermediate-Level Geography Elective in Subarea	3-4 Electives	10
Electives	8	
15		14
Total Credits 120		

ADVISING AND CAREERS

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DECLARE OR CANCEL THIS MAJOR

Please follow the process described on the Geography website (<https://geography.wisc.edu/undergraduate/geography-major/#advising-and-declaring-the-major>).

Students with questions about the major, courses, and careers are encouraged to contact the Geography undergraduate advisor.

CAREERS

Given its interdisciplinary nature, Geography prepares students for employment in a wide variety of fields spanning the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, both domestically and abroad. Fields where geographers commonly find employment include, but are not limited to: ecological restoration; urban planning; economic development; human rights; corporate sustainability; immigration advocacy and refugee resettlement; environmental consulting; social movements

and community organization; national security; data analysis and visualization; risk assessment; public health; journalism; diplomacy; transportation; sustainable agrifood systems. Moreover, geographers trained in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and cartography are in high demand from governments, businesses, and nonprofits for their spatial data analysis and visualization skills.

SUCCESSWORKS

SuccessWorks (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/>) at the College of Letters & Science helps you turn the academic skills learned in your classes into a fulfilling life, guiding you every step of the way to securing jobs, internships, or admission to graduate school.

Through one-on-one career advising, events, and resources, you can explore career options, build valuable internship and research experience, and connect with supportive alumni and employers who open doors of opportunity.

- What you can do with your major (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/what-you-can-do-with-your-major/>) (Major Skills & Outcomes Sheets)
- Make a career advising appointment (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/make-an-appointment/>)
- Learn about internships and internship funding (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/finding-a-job-or-internship/>)
- Try “Jobs, Internships, & How to Get Them,” (<https://successworks.wisc.edu/canvas/>) an interactive guide in Canvas for enrolled UW–Madison students