

# GEOGRAPHY, M.S.

The Department of Geography is a leader in the field of geography and offers exceptional opportunities for graduate education. The department has been consistently rated as one of the best in the country and, for over 100 years, has been the training ground for generations of geographers. The department's strength is reflected in its ability to attract top-caliber students, compete for significant research funding, and publish foundational scholarly work. The department maintains strength across the full spectrum of subfields within the discipline, and is organized into four major thematic areas: physical geography and earth system science, people and environment, human geography, and cartography/GIS.

Department faculty and graduate students represent a diverse community within which a wide range of perspectives, approaches and research strategies is accommodated. The faculty has long been recognized nationally and internationally for outstanding contributions to geography and beyond. Many graduate students have gone on to prominence within government, industry, and academia, and some of the most influential names in geography received their training in Madison.

The department offers two masters of science in geography (thesis option): a master of science in geography and a master of science in cartography and geographic information systems.

Graduate students at the M.S. level are expected to acquire a broad foundation in geography in addition to specializing in one or more areas of concentration. Students who earn the M.S. (Thesis) degree are prepared to continue on for the Ph.D., or for positions in government agencies, planning organizations, environmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and private industry.

The department takes in roughly 10–15 new graduate students each year. In recent years, about half of all incoming graduate students have completed an undergraduate major in a subject other than geography.

## FACILITIES

Housed in historic Science Hall, the Department of Geography offers exceptional facilities for advanced study in geography, cartography, and GIS. The department maintains the University Cartographic Laboratory, the Arthur Robinson Map and Air Photo Library, a computer lab, several computer classrooms, and laboratory facilities specializing in biogeography, biogeochemistry, paleoecology, geomorphology, and soil research. In addition, the building houses the Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office, the History of Cartography Project, and the Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies.

Graduate students may supplement their work in the geography department with study in other departments of the university, and there are frequent opportunities for advanced work in interdepartmental seminars. The location of the state capital at Madison makes possible easy contact with state agencies and some federal agencies.

## ADMISSIONS

Please consult the table below for key information about this degree program's admissions requirements. The program may have more detailed admissions requirements, which can be found below the table or on the program's website.

Graduate admissions is a two-step process between academic programs and the Graduate School. **Applicants must meet** the minimum requirements (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/>) **of the Graduate School as well as the program(s)**. Once you have researched the graduate program(s) you are interested in, apply online (<https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/>).

Requirements	Detail
Fall Deadline	December 15
Spring Deadline	The program does not admit in the spring.
Summer Deadline	The program does not admit in the summer.
GRE (Graduate Record Examinations)	Not required.
English Proficiency Test	Every applicant whose native language is not English or whose undergraduate instruction was not in English must provide an English proficiency test score and meet the Graduate School minimum requirements ( <a href="https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency">https://grad.wisc.edu/apply/requirements/#english-proficiency</a> ).
Other Test(s) (e.g., GMAT, MCAT)	n/a
Letters of Recommendation Required	3

## FUNDING

### GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources to help you afford graduate study might include assistantships, fellowships, traineeships, and financial aid. Further funding information (<https://grad.wisc.edu/funding/>) is available from the Graduate School. Be sure to check with your program for individual policies and restrictions related to funding.

### PROGRAM RESOURCES

See "How Does Funding Work?" at the Geography Master's FAQ (<https://geography.wisc.edu/graduate/graduate-programs-faq/>).

## REQUIREMENTS

### MINIMUM GRADUATE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Review the Graduate School minimum academic progress and degree requirements (<http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirements>), in addition to the program requirements listed below.

### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

#### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

Face to Face	Evening/Weekend	Online	Hybrid	Accelerated
Yes	No	No	No	No

## Mode of Instruction Definitions

**Accelerated:** Accelerated programs are offered at a fast pace that condenses the time to completion. Students typically take enough credits aimed at completing the program in a year or two.

**Evening/Weekend:** Courses meet on the UW–Madison campus only in evenings and/or on weekends to accommodate typical business schedules. Students have the advantages of face-to-face courses with the flexibility to keep work and other life commitments.

**Face-to-Face:** Courses typically meet during weekdays on the UW–Madison Campus.

**Hybrid:** These programs combine face-to-face and online learning formats. Contact the program for more specific information.

**Online:** These programs are offered 100% online. Some programs may require an on-campus orientation or residency experience, but the courses will be facilitated in an online format.

## CURRICULAR REQUIREMENTS

### Requirement Detail

Minimum  
Credit  
Requirement

30 credits

Minimum  
Residence  
Credit  
Requirement

16 credits

Minimum  
Graduate  
Coursework  
Requirement

15 credits (50% of 30 credits) must be graduate-level coursework. Details can be found in the Graduate School's policy: <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244> (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1244/>)

Overall

3.00 GPA required.

Graduate  
GPA  
Requirement

This program follows the Graduate School's policy: <https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203> (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1203/>).

Other Grade  
Requirements

n/a

Assessments  
and  
Examinations

A formal thesis is required.

Language  
Requirements

No language requirement.

## REQUIRED COURSES

### Breadth Requirements

Most students complete the coursework for breadth requirements prior to entering the program. Students who begin the program lacking one or more of the breadth courses are expected to complete such coursework during the master's program. One course taken for breadth can also be used to fulfill degree requirements. Typically, these courses are not seminars. Students must complete the equivalent of one undergraduate-level course in each subarea (Physical Geography, Human Geography, People-Environment Geography, Cartography/GIS).

### Coursework

GEOG 765 Geographical Inquiry and Analysis: An Introduction (1 credit) + GEOG 766 Geographical Inquiry and Analysis: Techniques (3 credit); two geography graduate courses 300-level and above: one can double count

for breadth, cannot include seminars; two (3 credit) 900-level geography seminars with two different core or affiliate Geography faculty members.

## Geography Seminars

Code	Title	Credits
GEOG 900	Seminar in Geography	1-3
GEOG 901	Seminar in Cultural Geography	2-3
GEOG 918	Seminar in Political Geography	2-3
GEOG 920	Seminar in Physical Geography	1-3
GEOG 930	Seminar in People-Environment Geography	2-3
GEOG 970	Seminar in Geographic Information Science	1-3
GEOG/A A E/ ANTHRO/C&E SOC/ HISTORY/LACIS/ POLI SCI/PORTUG/ SOC/SPANISH 982	Interdepartmental Seminar in the Latin-American Area	1-3
GEOG/AFRICAN/ ANTHRO/ ECON/HISTORY/ POLI SCI 983	Interdepartmental Seminar in African Studies Topics	3

## POLICIES

### GRADUATE SCHOOL POLICIES

The Graduate School's Academic Policies and Procedures (<https://grad.wisc.edu/acadpolicy/>) provide essential information regarding general university policies. Program authority to set degree policies beyond the minimum required by the Graduate School lies with the degree program faculty. Policies set by the academic degree program can be found below.

### MAJOR-SPECIFIC POLICIES

#### PRIOR COURSEWORK

##### Graduate Work from Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 6 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree or earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

##### UW–Madison Undergraduate

No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

##### UW–Madison University Special

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 6 credits of graduate coursework as defined above taken as a UW–Madison Special student. Coursework earned five or more years prior to admission to a master's degree or earned ten years or more prior to admission to a doctoral degree is not allowed to satisfy requirements.

### PROBATION

The Department of Geography expects graduate students to progress through a sequence of benchmarks within prescribed time periods. These benchmarks constitute a reasonable rate of accomplishment for full-time students holding teaching or research appointments. The department recognizes that individual circumstances vary, and not all

students progressing toward their academic goals will hit the benchmarks exactly. Thus a student's progress is considered unsatisfactory only after a period of time elapses following an unmet benchmark. A student not making satisfactory progress is placed on probation. For detailed information about these benchmarks and triggers for probationary status, see the department's Criteria for Satisfactory Progress (<https://geography.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Criteria-for-Satisfactory-Progress.pdf>).

## ADVISOR / COMMITTEE

The chair (or co-chair) of a Masters student's committee is the student's advisor. This individuals must be graduate faculty in Geography or affiliated with Geography. The committee must have at least three members, two of whom must be graduate faculty (or former graduate faculty up to one year after resignation/retirement). Two of the three members must be affiliated with the Geography Department. The third member may be a qualified individual from within or outside UW-Madison. Inclusion of committee members who are not UW-Madison graduate faculty must be approved by the student's advisor.

## CREDITS PER TERM ALLOWED

15 credits

## TIME LIMITS

For program-specific time constraints, please see Probation Policy above. This program follows the Graduate School's Time Limits policy (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1221/>).

## GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

These resources may be helpful in addressing your concerns:

- Bias or Hate Reporting (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/bias-or-hate-reporting/>)
- Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/policies/gapp/#grievance-procedure>)
- Hostile and Intimidating Behavior Policies and Procedures (<https://hr.wisc.edu/hib/>)
  - Office of the Provost for Faculty and Staff Affairs (<https://facstaff.provost.wisc.edu/>)
- Dean of Students Office (<https://doso.students.wisc.edu/>) (for all students to seek grievance assistance and support)
- Employee Assistance (<http://www.eao.wisc.edu/>) (for personal counseling and workplace consultation around communication and conflict involving graduate assistants and other employees, post-doctoral students, faculty and staff)
- Employee Disability Resource Office (<https://employee disabilities.wisc.edu/>) (for qualified employees or applicants with disabilities to have equal employment opportunities)
- Graduate School (<https://grad.wisc.edu/>) (for informal advice at any level of review and for official appeals of program/departmental or school/college grievance decisions)
- Office of Compliance (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/>) (for class harassment and discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence)
- Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/>) (for conflicts involving students)
- Ombuds Office for Faculty and Staff (<http://www.ombuds.wisc.edu/>) (for employed graduate students and post-docs, as well as faculty and staff)

- Title IX (<https://compliance.wisc.edu/titleix/>) (for concerns about discrimination)

Students should contact the department chair or program director with questions about grievances. They may also contact the L&S Academic Divisional Associate Deans, the L&S Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning Administration, or the L&S Director of Human Resources.

## OTHER

n/a

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## GRADUATE SCHOOL RESOURCES

Take advantage of the Graduate School's professional development resources (<https://grad.wisc.edu/pd/>) to build skills, thrive academically, and launch your career.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Articulates, critiques, or elaborates the theories, research methods, and approaches to inquiry or schools of practice in geography.
2. Identifies sources and assembles evidence pertaining to questions or challenges in geography.
3. Demonstrates understanding of geography in a historical, social, or global context.
4. Selects and/or utilizes the most appropriate methodologies and practices.
5. Evaluates or synthesizes information pertaining to questions or challenges in geography.
6. Communicates clearly in ways appropriate to geography.
7. Recognizes and applies principles of ethical and professional conduct.

## PEOPLE

### Faculty

Department Chair: John (Jack) Williams

Professors: Ian Baird, Holly Gibbs, Robert Kaiser, Erika Marin-Spiotta, Joseph Mason, Lisa Naughton, Kristopher Olds, Morgan Robertson, Robert Roth, Matthew Turner, John (Jack) Williams, Keith Woodward, A-Xing Zhu

Associate Professors: Aslıgül Göçmen, Qunying Huang, Jenna Loyd, Sarah Moore, Stephen Young

Assistant Professors: Christian Andresen, Song Gao, Ken Keefover-Ring, Almita Miranda, Jen Rose Smith