GEOGRAPHY, MS

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 are 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 MS 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 MS (Thesis) degree are prepared to continue on for the PhD 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.