

GEOGRAPHY, BS

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? 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 REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate students must complete both the following Core General Education (Core GenEd) and University Degree and Quality of Work requirements. The requirements below apply to students whose first term at UW-Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution is Summer 2026 or later.

Students whose first term at UW-Madison or whose earliest post-high school college attendance at any institution occurred before Summer 2026 should refer to the archived Guide (<https://guide.wisc.edu/archive/>) for the requirements that apply to them.

CORE GENERAL EDUCATION (CORE GENED) REQUIREMENTS

Civics & Perspectives 3 credits of Civics & Perspectives coursework.

Communication & Literacy 6 credits of Communication & Literacy coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement> (<https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingenglishplacement/>)

Humanities & Arts 6 credits of Humanities & Arts coursework.

Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning 6 credits of Mathematics & Quantitative Reasoning coursework. This requirement may be partially satisfied by a qualifying placement test score. More information: <https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement> (<https://go.wisc.edu/qualifyingmathplacement/>)

Natural Science & Wellness Complete both:

- 6 credits of Natural Science & Wellness or Natural Science & Wellness + Laboratory coursework.
- one course must be in Natural Science & Wellness + Laboratory coursework.

Social & Behavioral Science 3 credits of Social & Behavioral Science coursework.

Total Credits 30 credits.

For more information see the policy (<https://policy.wisc.edu/library/UW-1095/>).

UNIVERSITY DEGREE AND QUALITY OF WORK REQUIREMENTS

All undergraduate degree recipients must complete the following minimum requirements. Requirements for some programs will exceed these requirements; see program requirements for additional information.

Total Degree 120 degree credits.

Residency Complete 30 credits in residence. A course is considered "in residence" if it is taken when in undergraduate degree-seeking status and:

- is offered by UW-Madison and completed on the UW-Madison campus or at an approved off-site location, or
- is offered by UW-Madison in an online or distance format, or is completed during participation in a UW-Madison study abroad/study away program.

Quality of Work Achieve at least the minimum grade point average specified by the school, college, and/or academic program.

Math Demonstrate minimal mathematics competence by:

- placing above MATH#160;96, or
- successfully completing MATH#160;96, or
- successfully completing a more advanced mathematics course such as MATH#160;112, MATH#160;113, MATH#160;114, MATH#160;141, MATH#160;211, or MATH#160;221.

English Language If required to take the UW-Madison English as a Second Language Assessment Test (MSN-ESLAT), demonstrate minimal English language competence by:

- earning credit for ESL#160;118, or
- achieving a qualifying MSN-ESLAT placement test score.

Language	Complete one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 high school units of a single language other than English, or • one course with the second semester Language designation.
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Major Declaration	Declare and complete the requirements for at least one major.
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COLLEGE OF LETTERS & SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (BS)

Students pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in the College of Letters & Science must complete all of the requirements below. Some courses satisfy more than one L&S degree requirement (visit College of Letters & Science: Requirements (<https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/letters-science/#requirementstext>) for details).

This major can be paired with either the Bachelor of Arts or the Bachelor of Science degree requirements.

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Communication Complete both:

- Part A: one course with the Communication A designation or eligible UW Placement Score; and
- Part B: one course with the Communication B designation

Quantitative Reasoning	Complete both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part A: one course with the Quantitative Reasoning A designation or eligible UW Placement Score; and • Part B: one course with the Quantitative Reasoning B designation
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Ethnic Studies	one 3+ credit course with the Ethnic Studies designation
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Language	the third unit of a language other than English
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Mathematics	Complete two courses of 3+ credits at the Intermediate or Advanced level in MATH, COMP SCI, or STAT subjects. A maximum of one course in each of COMP SCI and STAT subjects counts toward this requirement.
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L&S Breadth: Humanities	Complete 12 credits with the Humanities or Literature designation, which must include at least 6 credits with the Literature designation.
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L&S Breadth: Social Sciences	Complete 12 credits with the Social Science designation.
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L&S Breadth: Natural Sciences	Complete 12 credits, which must include both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 credits with the Biological Science designation, and • 6 credits with the Physical Science designation.
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Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) Coursework	at least 108 credits
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Depth of Intermediate/Advanced Coursework	at least 60 credits at the Intermediate or Advanced level
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Major	Declare and complete at least one major.
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Total Credits	at least 120 credits
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UW-Madison Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 credits in residence, overall, and • 30 credits in residence after the 86th credit
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Quality of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.000 in all coursework at UW-Madison • 2.000 in Intermediate/Advanced level coursework at UW-Madison
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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. 4) 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	Human Geography: Space, Place, Society, and Politics	
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
People-Environment (1 course)	3
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 139	Global Environmental Issues
GEOG/ ATM OCN/ ENVIR ST 131	Climate Change, Climate Action: The Social Dimensions of Climate Change
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 336	International Environmental Governance
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 337	Nature, Power and Society
GEOG/ BOTANY 338	Environmental Biogeography
GEOG/ ENVIR ST 339	Conservation and Climate Change - Local to International Strategies
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/ENVIR ST/ URB R PL 431	Planning for Resilience to Natural Hazards
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)	3
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 Paleoecology: 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/)**
- **GEOGRAPHY: PEOPLE-ENVIRONMENT GEOGRAPHY (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/)**

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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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**FOUR-YEAR PLAN**

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
Language	4 Introductory GEOG	3
Biological Science Breadth	3 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

ADVISING AND CAREERS

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 should 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.

STUDY ABROAD

Learning in Letters & Science emphasizes discovery, growth, understanding different perspectives, and challenging yourself, which makes studying abroad an excellent fit for many L&S students: studyabroad.wisc.edu (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/>)

As a university with global influence, we have more than 300 study abroad programs (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/programs/>) in over 80 countries. These vary in length, academic focus, teaching format, language requirements, cost, and level of independence. There are many programs to complement every major (<https://studyabroad.wisc.edu/academics/major-advising-pages-maps/#L&S>) and any year of college (including the final semester)—and all meet UW–Madison’s high academic standards. Students admitted into Letters & Science can even choose a short program in the summer before they start college or their whole first year: studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch (<http://studyabroad.wisc.edu/launch/>). Talk with your academic advisor about how studying abroad might fit with your academic plan.

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