

GEOGRAPHY

Degree: B.A., Geography

Department of Geography (<https://cas.umw.edu/geography/>)

The Geography Department hosts two majors and a certificate in Geographic Information Science. Majors in Geography and in Geospatial Analysis both lead to the Bachelor of Arts degree in Geography.

Geography is the study of the interaction between people and their environments, both natural and human. Geographers examine the places and regions resulting from such interaction and analyze the spatial characteristics of all manner of cultural, economic, political, and physical processes and relationships. Students in the Geography major select one of three areas for specialization:

Society and Politics

A focus on the geographies of people and power. Topics include planning, cities, race & place, globalization, and migration.

Culture

A focus on the geographies of how people live and make places meaningful. Topics include Latin America, the Middle East, sacred spaces, and development studies.

Environment

A focus on the geographies of natural and human environmental processes. Topics include biodiversity, natural hazards, climate change, and urban sustainability.

Through classroom and laboratory experience, field work, and community involvement, students gain the knowledge and skills required to appreciate the diversity of people and places, the integration and interrelationships of places, and the spatial processes that affect modern society.

Geography majors acquire spatial thinking skills by studying research methods appropriate for their area of specialization. These include: geographic information systems (GIS), cartography, remote sensing, field methods, quantitative, and qualitative methods. Majors are also encouraged to engage in internships, study abroad programs, and undergraduate research.

Facilities for geographic studies at Mary Washington include well-equipped laboratories for the study and practice of physical geography, GIS, cartography, and remote sensing. The department hosts a chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, the International Geography Honorary Society.

During the senior year qualified students may pursue Honors in Geography by completing an independent research project and writing and defending a thesis.

Geography majors have pursued a wide variety of careers. These jobs include working for GIS and mapping companies, consulting and engineering firms, as well as numerous non-profit and government organizations. Majoring in geography prepares graduates for work in many different areas, as students have experience studying both the human and physical dimensions of the world. Many graduates also choose to continue their education in graduate schools, studying everything from meteorology to political geography.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will understand the key concepts within the integrated discipline of geography.
2. Students will read, interpret, and critique a map.
3. Students will identify, understand, and critique spatial data or evidence, whether qualitative, quantitative, or cartographic.
4. Students will apply a suitable geographical approach, technique, or method within a research project.
5. Students will identify personal strengths and areas of expertise within geography.

Major Requirements

A minimum of 35-36 credits in Geography and Geographic Information Science.

Code	Title	Credits
Core Courses		17
GEOG 102	Introduction to Human Geography	
GEOG 111	Landform Processes	
GEOG 245	Environment and Society	
	or GEOG 240 Hazards and Resilience	
GISC 250	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems and Cartography	
	or GISC 200 Introduction to GIS	
GEOG 490	Senior Seminar in Geography	
Methods Requirement		3-4
Select one of the following:		
GEOG 252	Quantitative Methods in Geography	
GEOG 363	Qualitative Methods in Geography	
GEOG 365	Field Methods	
GISC 340	Remote Sensing and Air Photo Interpretation	
GISC 351	Spatial Analysis	
GISC 355	Mobile Geographic Information Systems and Global Positioning Systems	
Electives		15
Take 15 credits of GEOG classes; at least 9 elective credits must be at the 300- or 400- level ¹		
Total Credits		35-36

¹ These can include individual studies, special topics classes, and GISC 471 classes. Students can substitute one course from a related field for one of the electives with permission of the department chair.

Certificate in Geographic Information Science can be found by using this link (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/minors/geographic-information-science-certificate/>).

General Education Requirements

The general education requirements for Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science degrees (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/general-education/requirements-bachelor-arts-bachelor-science-degrees/>) apply

to all students who are seeking to earn an undergraduate B.A., B.S. or B.S.Ed. degree.

Students seeking a Bachelor of Liberal Studies degree have a separate set of BLS general education requirements (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/general-education/requirements-bachelor-liberal-studies-degrees/>).

Electives

Elective courses are those that are not needed to fulfill a general education requirement or major program requirement but are chosen by the student to complete the 120 credits required for graduation with a B.A./B.S./B.S.Ed. degree or the BLS degree. These courses may be taken graded or pass/fail (or S/U in the case of physical education and 100-level dance). No student in a regular B.A./B.S./B.S.Ed. program may count more than 60 credits in a single discipline toward the 120 credits required for graduation.

Total Credits Required for the Degree: 120 credits

Plan of Study

This suggested plan of study should serve as a guide to assist students when planning their course selections. It is not a substitute for a student's Degree Evaluation or the Program Requirements listed for this major in the catalog. Academic planning is the student's responsibility, and course selections should be finalized only after speaking with an advisor. Students should familiarize themselves with the catalog in effect at the time they matriculated at the University of Mary Washington. Students should also familiarize themselves with general education requirements (<https://catalog.umw.edu/undergraduate/general-education/>) which can be fulfilled through general electives as well as major/minor course requirements. Course requirements and sequencing may vary with AP, IB, CLEP, Cambridge or previous coursework, transfer courses, or other conditions. To be considered full-time, an undergraduate student must be enrolled in 12 or more credits for the semester.

Course	Title	Credits
Freshman		
Fall		
FSEM 100	First-Year Seminar	3
General Education Courses		12
Credits		15
Spring		
General Education Courses		16
Credits		16
Sophomore		
Fall		
GEOG 102	Introduction to Human Geography	3
Breadth Requirement (Environment)		3-4
General Education Courses or Electives		9
Credits		15-16
Spring		
GEOG 111	Landform Processes	4
Breadth Requirement (Society & Politics)		3
General Education Courses or Electives		9
Credits		16
Junior		
Fall		
GISC 250 or GISC 200	Introduction to Geographic Information Systems and Cartography or Introduction to GIS	4
Breadth Requirement (Culture)		3

General Education Courses or Electives		9
Credits		16
Spring		
Area of Specialization Course		3
Methods Course		3-4
General Electives		6
Credits		12-13
Senior		
Fall		
GEOG 490	Senior Seminar in Geography	3
Area of Specialization Course		3
General Electives		9
Credits		15
Spring		
Area of Specialization Course		3
General Electives		12
Credits		15
Total Credits		120-122

Geography Faculty

Melina A. Patterson, Chair
Dawn S. Bowen, Career Advisor

Professors

Dawn S. Bowen
Stephen P. Hanna
Farhang Rouhani

Associate Professors

Caitlin C. Finlayson
Jacqueline Gallagher
Marco Millones Mayer
Joseph W. Nicholas
Melina A. Patterson
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