

GEOGRAPHY

Graduate Programs

The Department of Geography offers MS and PhD degrees. We have a vibrant graduate program that is built around three broad areas of emphasis: the study of nature-society dynamics, including resource management; GIScience, including unmanned aerial systems; and cultural and historical geography. Major faculty specializations include public health, water security, GIS, remote sensing, climate science, human dimensions of global environmental change, cultural and historical geography, urban and transportation geography, political geography, geoarchaeology, and spatial analysis.

Particular emphasis is placed on the applied aspects of geography, with many graduates employed by private business as well as city, regional, state and national planning agencies. Our graduates have been highly successful in their careers, taking up positions involving city planning, environmental assessment, and university teaching and research, among many others.

The Master of Science Degree

Admission to the master's program in geography is granted to college graduates with superior academic records. An undergraduate geography major is not required. Majors from the social, physical, and behavioral sciences and from the humanities are encouraged to apply. Incoming graduate students must demonstrate competency in cultural geography, physical geography, statistics and cartography. If a student lacks these prerequisite skills, an additional course in each of these subjects is required.

Thesis and non-thesis options exist for the master's degree. The thesis option requires a minimum of 30 credit hours, including a thesis. The non-thesis option requires 36 credit hours. Plans of study can be developed to accommodate many interests.

The Doctor of Philosophy Degree

Admission to the PhD program is granted to students with superior records in their previous graduate study. A previous degree in geography is not required, but incoming students from other disciplines must demonstrate competency in cultural geography, physical geography, statistics and cartography. If a student lacks these prerequisite skills, an additional course in each of these subjects is required. A minimum of 60 hours of graduate credit beyond the master's degree is required for the PhD degree. These hours include core courses (13 hours), elective courses in geography (15 hours minimum), elective courses outside of geography (9 hours minimum), and dissertation hours (15 hours minimum). Each student chooses an individual doctoral committee that advises the student in the formulation of an approved plan of study for the degree. Candidates for the PhD in geography must demonstrate either:

1. proficiency in one language other than English,
2. reading knowledge of two languages other than English,
3. proficiency in advanced quantitative methods,
4. proficiency in advanced qualitative methods, or
5. proficiency in a multi-skill track.

To be advanced to doctoral candidacy, the student must demonstrate proficiency in three specialized subject areas within geography and related disciplines by passing written and oral comprehensive

examinations. An important requirement for the PhD degree is the preparation and successful defense of a doctoral dissertation. The dissertation must demonstrate the candidate's ability to plan and complete independent, original research in geography.