

Geography

College of Social Sciences

Department of Geography

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B.A. in Geography

Minor in Geography

Minor in Urban Studies

Subject Matter Preparation for Single Subject Teaching Credential in Social Sciences

Certificate in Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Geography

The world of the 21st century is a place where there are very complex interactions between an increasingly fragile environment and the people who make up the many varied and diverse cultures on it. Geographers are uniquely trained to “see the big picture” so that they can more fully understand these complex interactions of the environment and the many cultures of humankind.

Geography, therefore, is an integrative discipline that is composed of both the physical and social sciences. Its distinctiveness is as much a product of its unique approach to the study of the earth and its human inhabitants as it is the subject matter itself. Thus, geography employs a spatial framework for organizational purposes analogous to the chronological framework employed in history.

Central to geographic inquiry is a concern with the human occupancy of the earth, the character of the human environment, and the interrelationships that link humans and the physical world. In sum, geography seeks to provide a broad understanding of the world, its people, and its problems. Geography seeks to provide applied specializations and technical skills that can address economic, social, and environmental problems at scales that range from local to global.

Not surprisingly, the subject matter of geography is diverse. Geographers examine and analyze patterns of rural and urban settlement, resource exploitation, land use,



and social and cultural phenomena. They are concerned with the natural features and processes of the earth's surface, the ways in which nature has conditioned the human occupancy of the earth, and the ways in which people have modified natural landscapes.

The department's instructional programs are designed to address certain objectives. First, we provide, for both majors and non-majors alike, a greater understanding of the world as an element of a liberal education which is becoming an increasingly important component of a complete university education. Second, we conduct programs that assure a depth of knowledge in subject matter and technique for majors and minors in geography. Third, we serve those students in related disciplines who wish to strengthen programs of study through a selection of courses in geography.

Faculty and Facilities

Instruction at introductory and advanced levels is conducted by a faculty whose teaching and research interests are diverse. All major facets of the discipline are represented as are a number of specializations, which include medical geography, economic studies of China, urban revitalization, archeological studies, political ecology of natural resource management, environmental monitoring using remote sensing, urban air quality, urban and regional planning, environmental planning, and climate change and global governance.

Two laboratory facilities are available for student use. One laboratory is a physical geography laboratory that is maintained for the conducting of research and for instruc-

tion in physical geography. It is also used for the support of the department's atmospheric science research, which primarily focuses on the study of air quality in the San Joaquin Valley. The second laboratory is the Urban Planning and Environmental Research Laboratory. It is a 32-station, state-of-the-art, computer laboratory that is used for instruction and research in urban planning, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), environmental studies, remote sensing, and a variety of other applications.

Career Opportunities

Geographers are employed in government and the private sector. Their knowledge and skills have applications in a variety of fields including teaching, planning, cartography, GIS, locational analysis, intelligence and security, land and resource management, policy research, transportation, and industrial development.

Agencies of federal, state, and local governments are major employers of geographers. At the federal level many agencies employ geographers. At state and local levels most geographers are involved in planning, land and resource management, and community development. Because many businesses and industries have important geographical dimensions to their operations, there is demand for geographers in the private sector. Geographers are employed in banking, transportation, international trade, utilities, wholesaling and retailing, and a number of other fields. Finally, teaching is a major occupation for individuals with training in geography. The department welcomes inquiries about career opportunities.