

College: CLAS

Department: Geography

Degree: B.A./B.S.

Introduction

The Geography Department at Portland State University links environmental studies and cultural studies in a program centered on environmental issues, social and cultural landscapes, sustainability in urban and natural areas, and Geographic Information Science. Coursework emphasizes systematic and regional approaches to understanding the physical environment and human-environment interactions. Techniques classes (in GIS, remote sensing, cartography, and spatial analysis) provide the tools to analyze complex local, regional, and global phenomena. Access to the Pacific Coast and the Cascade Mountains provides ample opportunity for fieldwork-based classes and opportunities for research. The PSU Department of Geography is an excellent choice for undergraduate and graduate students with interests in the linkages between human and natural systems.

Faculty engage in local, regional, and international research projects in hydrology, water resources, biogeography, sustainable development, land use analysis, climate change, cultural ecology and cultural landscapes, the urban environment, geographic education, and geographic information science. Ongoing faculty research sites in international areas include East Asia, high Asia, Latin America, and Mediterranean Europe.

Geography is in the School of the Environment and participates in the Environmental Science and Resources Ph.D. Program. Over 100 undergraduate majors and 30 graduate students participate in two departmental groups, the Friends of Geography and the Student Chapter of the American Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing/Columbia River Region. Several research groups and outreach programs in the department provide additional job and internship opportunities for interested students in public agencies and businesses in such fields as planning, environmental management, GIS, and cartography.

The geography program gives students an appreciation and understanding of the human environment on global, regional, and local scales. It provides background and requisite training for careers in resource, planning, environmental, or education fields. Geography majors find work in urban and natural resource management, spatial/GIS analysis, urban planning, map design and production, and statistical analysis. Geography is the lead department on campus for training in GIS, remote sensing, cartography, and spatial analysis.

Undergraduate Program Learning Outcomes

Develop the skills and methods necessary to collect, analyze, and summarize data relevant to their professions.

Effectively communicate knowledge and research to an educated audience.

Learn and understand the facts and concepts central to the discipline and future career options.

Students will be able to apply geographic theories, models, and generalizations to the definition, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of geographic problems.

Students will be able to articulate and effectively pursue geographic research problems.

Students will be able to communicate geographic ideas and information in clear and correct language and writing.

Students will be able to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a geographic perspective.

Students will be able to use quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis to interpret and present geographic information.

Students will be able to use the process of data collection, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and explanation to interpret geographic information from a variety of sources, including both library and field research.

Students will understand how culture and experience create places and regions.

Students will understand how physical systems and how human actions modify the physical environment.

Students will understand major themes of geographical analysis including location, regions, landscapes, environment, and society.

Students will understand the physical and human characteristics of diverse places and regions.

Students will understand the physical processes that shape the patterns of the earth's surface.

Students will understand the relationships between geographic patterns and their underlying processes.