Geography (B.A., B.S.)

Department of Geography

What do Amnesty International, Boeing, National Geographic, and Esri have in common? Penn State geographers are there, hard at work every day. Our students and alumni are behind the maps you use daily, as well as the policies that shape our cities and the analysis that sustains our environment. Geographers help shape the future design of cities and infrastructure. They assess impacts of rising sea levels, melting glaciers, and tropical storms, as well as study impacts of wild fires or wetlands. Geographers analyze markets and locations for businesses and use cutting-edge satellite data to defend human rights by detecting large-scale abuses. They work directly with local people on social justice issues such as health and migration. If you want to change the world, there is no better discipline for people who thrive on complex challenges and want to make a real impact on lives and our environment.

PennState
College of Earth
and Mineral Sciences

Visit: www.ems.psu.edu/academics/find-program-study/geography-ba-bs

Overview

In both the B.A. and B.S., geography offers a mix of social, physical, and methodological areas of study that comprise the core of the major. Combining a geography major with other areas of study allows students to choose from a broad range of topics to suit their individual interests. Both B.A. and B.S. programs offer an integrated course of study in which students learn fundamental concepts in physical and human geography while developing methodological proficiency in qualitative analysis, spatial analysis, and/or geospatial technologies.

The B.A. is a broader liberal-arts based program that incorporates foreign language study and courses outside the major in combination with core and elective geography courses.

The B.S. centers on the more quantitative areas of the discipline, especially Geographic Information Systems (GIS) while still allowing for breadth in topical areas.

In both the B.A. and B.S., students can customize and specialize their programs through the completion of undergraduate certificates. The geography major can provide preparation for a career in business, industry, or government.

You might be a good fit if ...

- You want to understand and influence the economic, political, and environmental forces that shape our world.
- You want to make maps using cutting-edge technology to understand people and environments to make a difference in our world.
- You want to work at the intersection of science, technology, and policy in information technology, business, nonprofits, local, state, or federal governments, or education.
- You are passionate about issues of human and environmental justice.

Internships and scholarships

The College of Earth and Mineral Sciences awards more than $2.5 million annually, including awards exclusively for students interested in geography.

Clubs and activities

- Supporting Women in Geography
- GIS Coalition
- UnderDoGS (Undergraduate Department of Geography Students)
- Gamma Theta Upsilon

Geography is the perfect building block for a future in any sector. I'm applying the skills learned as a geography major to both federal government and non-profit internships. Geography encourages me to always ask questions and be curious about the world around me, qualities that are essential to employers in my field.

~ Emily Shiels

Specialization Certificates

- Climate & Environmental Change
- Environment & Society Geography
- Geographic Information Science
- Geospatial Big Data Analytics
- Global Environmental Systems
- Justice, Ethics & Diversity in Space
- Landscape Ecology
- LandSCAPES: Societies, Cultures, & Political Economies

Why choose Penn State?

The geography program is recognized as one of the very best in the world. The breadth of classes on offer for our undergraduates set us apart in an environment where interconnection and complexity are crucial for understanding the world's most pressing problems. Our students take this to heart and go on to change the world for the better.

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