

MASTER OF ARTS IN GEOGRAPHY

Graduate Advisors: Courtney Donovan, Nancy Wilkinson

Admission to the Program

For admission to the graduate program, a student must meet the general University requirements as stated in the Bulletin. For unconditional admission to the M.A. program in Geography, a student must have completed an undergraduate major in Geography with a GPA of 3.25 in the major. An applicant with a GPA of 3.25 or better in a major other than Geography may qualify for admission as a conditionally classified graduate student. The conditional status is removed upon completion of core coursework in physical and human geography, introductory statistics, and introductory GIS, with a grade of B or better in each course. Units earned for remedial or prerequisite coursework are not applied toward the graduate degree.

Please submit applications through Cal State Apply (<https://www2.calstate.edu/apply/>). Transcripts, a Statement of Purpose, and two letters of recommendation are required. Personal interviews with the graduate advisors and appropriate department faculty are recommended.

Written English Proficiency Requirements

The University has a requirement for written English proficiency that is to be assessed at two different levels.

Level One

Written English proficiency will be assessed on the basis of the Statement of Purpose. Students who demonstrate a need for additional writing support will be required to take a graduate-level writing class.

Level Two

Satisfactory completion of GEOG 895 or GEOG 898.

Advancement to Candidacy

In addition to fulfilling all University requirements, students must complete the required curriculum outlined below. All graduate seminars and all courses used on the Advancement to Candidacy (ATC), with the exception of GEOG 895 and GEOG 898, must be taken on a letter grade basis and have earned a B- or better. Not more than 3 units of Independent Study (GEOG 899) and 1 unit of Independent Study (GEOG 699) may be included on the ATC. Internship (GEOG 688) units do not appear on the ATC. Each student must consult with the appropriate graduate advisor regularly and design an individual program leading towards the Culminating Experience requirement (thesis or research paper). For advancement to candidacy, the student must select a Culminating Experience committee comprised of two or three members, at least two of whom must be from the department, and present a research proposal to department faculty. Note that Culminating Experience committee members may have specific requirements for methodological background courses (e.g. the choice of GEOG 701, GEOG 702, or GEOG 705), so this should be considered when planning your course schedules.

Upper-division courses offered by the department may be included with the approval of the graduate advisor. Depending on a student's background and/or objective, additional courses in geography or related fields may be required on advisement.

Program Learning Outcomes

1. Demonstrate competence in understanding and critically evaluating geographic and related information and literature.
2. Design and complete an effective graduate-level thesis or research project, demonstrating mastery in qualitative or quantitative analysis of a geographic research question.
3. Communicate effectively with peers and professionals within their field, exhibiting strong analytical writing, visual, and oral presentation skills.

Geography (M.A.) – 30 Units

Core (12-13 Units)

Code	Title	Units
Select one:		3-4
GEOG 701	Field Methods in Human Geography	
GEOG 702	Field Methods in Environmental Science & Physical Geography	
GEOG 704	Environmental Data Science	
GEOG 705	Geographical Analysis	
GEOG 801	Scope and Method in Geography ¹	3
GEOG 810	Seminar in Physical Geography	3
GEOG 820	Human and Social Geography	3

¹ To be taken by the student during the first year after admission to classified graduate status.

Graduate Seminars in Geography (6-12 Units)

From the following:

(A seminar may be repeated for credit provided that it covers a different topic area and is offered by a different instructor)

Code	Title	Units
GEOG 810	Seminar in Physical Geography	3
GEOG 815	Seminar in GIScience	3
GEOG 820	Human and Social Geography	3
GEOG 857	Issues in Marine and Estuarine Conservation	3

or other courses with approval of the Graduate Studies Coordinator

Courses in Geography or Related Fields (3-9 Units)

Graduate seminars and courses or upper-division courses on advisement

Culminating Experience (3 units)

Code	Title	Units
Select one:		
GEOG 895	Research Project (and Master's Comprehensive Oral Examination)	3
GEOG 898	Master's Thesis (and Oral Defense of Thesis)	3

Master's Oral Examination

A two-hour oral examination is required of all students. One hour is devoted to the research topic (GEOG 895) and a second hour focuses on a discussion of six foundational works in the discipline selected on individual advisement. The examination or either of its parts may be repeated only once. Students must have completed all coursework prior to taking the oral examination which can be scheduled only during the

fall and spring semesters. Examination guidelines are available from the graduate advisor.

Research Proposal

The department requires all M.A. students to present a proposal of their research for the Culminating Experience to faculty and peers within a semester of filing the Proposal for Culminating Experience. The object is to provide students with useful feedback in the critical developmental stage of the research experience. Students present a twenty-minute synopsis of their research ideas to faculty and fellow graduate students focusing particularly on linking the research to a broader theoretical framework and presenting a methodology design to achieve the specifically stated objectives. This is followed by ten minutes (maximum) for questions and comments. Proposal presentations are scheduled as needed.