



GENERAL GEOGRAPHY MAJOR

A Geography Major for Me?

Majoring in Geography without a focus or concentration as in our other Department of Geography majors makes good sense for many students. There are reasons this is so. First, students often do not know the exact area of more focused concentration they wish to pursue as undergraduates. A General Geography major allows them to have a mix of courses and majors/minors that are defined by their personal interests. Second, the General Geography Major is a good liberal arts major—just like History, Political Science, English, etc. In fact, this major is an excellent choice for students



Lindsay Gwyther, 2004 Presidential Scholar and General Geography major.

with broad interests. Often these students choose to go on to graduate school for more specialized studies in Law, Public Health, International Studies, or Geography Teaching. How do you know you are a liberal arts student? One clue is that your interests make it

difficult to choose a specialized major. Third, your interests are such that other more structured majors in Geography make it seem difficult to pursue the topics that really interest you. Fourth, the General Geography Major does not prevent you in any way from taking classes in more specialized majors as long as you have taken the course prerequisites. So you 'mix and match' with other emphases in this major. Fifth, a General Geography major is excellent preparation for later life. For many reasons, it is a good starting point.

This Major has a core of required courses, and choice of elective courses.

Career Opportunities

- Diplomat
- Lawyer
- GIS Trainer/Project Manager
- A Teacher of Teachers
- College Professor
- Planner
- Executive
- Realtor
- Banker
- Journalist
- Writer
- Electronic Media Developer
- Marketing Analyst
- Logistical Analyst

Starting in Community College?

If you begin at a community college, make sure that you get basic skills you will be able to use in teaching. This includes office and computer competence in word processing, spreadsheets, Power-point, etc. Take the

basic general education courses needed for graduation. Do not avoid courses that focus on the United States and the physical and social sciences. You will need this background later. A public speaking course is important. Education is

very people-oriented, and good communication skills (speaking, talking, writing) will be useful. Don't avoid basic math and critical thinking courses including statistics. And you might want to learn CPR and first aid skills as well.

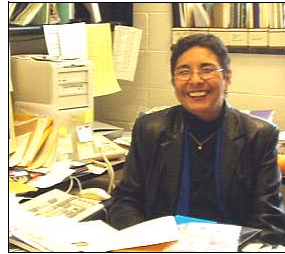
University Degree Requirements

Western Michigan University requires all students to have completed 122 semester credit hours to receive a bachelor's degree. This includes any credit hours that have been officially recognized from other colleges or community colleges.

The specific requirements for graduation that govern you are found in the Western Michigan University Undergraduate Catalog. Since the University changes over time, the version of the Catalog

that governs is the one that is current in the year you enter the University.

Your total credit hours include those in your General Geography Major, your re-



Dr. Elen Cutrim, General Geography Major Adviser and core faculty member.

lated minor(s) or other major, general education courses, and electives.

The General Geography Major allows you to arrange an international study abroad experience, to do an independent study project under the guidance of a Geography faculty member, or (in some cases) a professional internship.. (See below.) You need to plan your program to take advantage of these options, and to think ahead towards your evolving career plans..

Minors Supporting the General Geography Major

You should choose a minor listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. Recommended minors can come from either the colleges of Arts & Sciences, Fine Arts, or Business at Western Michigan University.

Arts & Science Minors include Foreign Languages & Linguistics, Asian & Middle Eastern Languages, Communications, Journalism, Practical Writing (English), Global Studies (Asian, African, European, Latin American Studies), American Studies,

Geosciences, Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, History, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, Anthropology, Public Administration, Environmental Studies, and more.

There are many excellent choices.

Study Abroad, Research Experience, or Internship Options

We recommend that students in this major consider an optional study abroad experience. This is a good way to learn Geography through personal experience and learn of the world beyond the U.S. There are many universities worldwide with excellent Geography programs.

We also recommend students consider doing an independent research activity un-

der the supervision of a Geography faculty member. Carrying through an independent research project is an



Dr. James Biles—core faculty member and International (Latin America) Studies expert.

important demonstration to employers and graduate schools that students can work self-reliantly to answer important questions.

It is also possible to pursue an internship with some agency or organization off-campus. This gives insight into the working world, but also gives agencies an opportunity to observe your skills and work ethic. So all of these can add value to your degree.

Check It Out:

- www.aag.org/careers

The General Geography Degree Program

Your complete program of study at Western Michigan University, or at other colleges from which you are transferring credit, constitutes the entire Bachelor of Science Geography curriculum. This curriculum can be supplemented by adding knowledge and skills from other places also. The more accomplished you are, the more likely you will have a satisfying career. You may wish (at a later time) to consider going to graduate school at some time after completing your bachelor's degree, in order to get more advanced skills and knowledge.

General Education & Liberal Education Curricular Requirements. To complete a college degree at Western Michigan University, each student fulfills "General Education" goals. Each student gains understanding of the natural and social sciences; knowledge of the United States and some international issues/regions; computer, mathematics, and critical reasoning proficiencies, etc. Please see the General Education section of the Undergraduate Catalog for a full description. In addition, students in the College of Arts & Sciences take some additional classes as listed in the Liberal Education Curriculum in the Undergraduate Catalog. These together give students a frame of reference on the world that works for them after graduation. (Believe it or not, students who have studied a foreign language frequently report they have been able to use it effectively in their career.)

The General Geography Major. The General Geography major is a liberal arts major that combines well with other College of Arts & Sciences majors and minors. By making choices about the courses they take, students may pursue a specialized study plan, prepare for careers related to Geography, or plan for further study after graduation. Students are encouraged to consider one of the following:

- Complete a study abroad experience
- Pursue guided independent study
- Participate in a professional internship (GEOG 412).

The 32 credit hour major has two parts, a required core of 14 credit hours and elective courses to make up the remainder of the major. See below for a description.

• *The Core Courses:*

Geography 1050 Physical Geography	4 cr. hrs.
Geography 2050 Human Geography	3 cr. hrs.
Geography 2650 Map, Chart & Air Photo Reading	3 cr. hrs.
Geography 3030 Geographic Inquiry*	4 cr. hrs.

*Prerequisite: You should complete a course in statistics (Stat 1600, 2160, 2600, or 3660 or equivalent). After you graduate, your employer may ask you to collect, analyze, and interpret data to assist in deciding important issues.

• *The Elective Courses:* Students should select 18 hours in consultation with the Geography Adviser:

- Two courses in Systematic Geography (see list of courses in the catalog by topic). Systematic geography courses are ones like "Urban Geography," "Meteorology & Climatology," etc.
- One course in Regional Geography. Regional geography courses are ones like "United States & Canada," "China, Korea & Japan," etc.
- One course in Geographic Methods. Geographic methods courses are ones like "Introduction to Geographic Information Systems", "Remote Sensing of the Environment", etc.

The Related Minor. All Geography majors select a minor also. These minors serve as an important complement to the major. Properly selected, the major and the minor strengthen a student for subsequent careers. However, it is not necessary to select a minor that you think will "pay off" later—particularly if you have no personal interest in it. It is often better to select a minor that you have some interest (or "passion" for) because your motivation stays high. We find that students who maintain their enthusiasm often find interesting (even unique) uses for their minors. (Note: It is possible for students to "double major" instead of a minor.)



Department of Geography faculty possess worldwide experience in Geography. From left, back row: Kevin Weakley, Jordan Yin, Rolland Fraser, Lisa DeChano, Gregory Veeck,. Middle Row: James Biles, David Lemberg, Margaret Pearce, Jay Emerson. Front Row: Deborah Che, David Dickason (Chair), Elen Cutrim, Joseph Stoltman. Not Pictured: Eldor Quandt, Chansheng He, Jeroen Wagendorp, and part-time faculty.



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**GEOGRAPHY—
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE**

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GEOGRAPHY/

Western Michigan University & Geography

Founded in 1903, Western Michigan University has had a strong Geography program throughout its entire history. Today the University has nearly 30,000 students with a comprehensive variety of academic programs. Usually about 2,000 of our students come from outside the United States, from more than 100 countries. Western is one of the U.S.'s 40 largest universities by total student size, and by size of international student population.

Geography has many alumni worldwide, and

we look to maintain ours as a Geography Program of high quality, whose students are accepted into the best graduate programs in the nation. Our alumni pursue successful careers in business, government, education and the services both within and outside the United States—literally from Michigan to Malaysia!

Western Michigan University is located in the City of Kalamazoo—a small, safe metropolis in southern Michigan about half way between Chicago (IL) and Detroit (MI) one hour east of Lake Michigan. You can get to Kala-

mazoo by air, rail and highway.

The University offers comprehensive cultural and athletic programs. It has excellent facilities, and has been rated as one of the top 100 institutions in the nation. Recently *Wired* magazine rated it among the top 75 universities for computing facilities. And Geography is one of the 10 best equipped departments in the nation.

Michigan lies in the heart of the beautiful Great Lakes Region, one of the 'wonders of the world'. Western is a great place to continue your education after graduation.



The main campus of Western Michigan University. The Geography Teaching Program is located in Wood Hall to the right of this photo.