

Geography, M.A.

The Master of Arts program in geography focuses on investigating the environmental consequences of human decisions, the social implications of environmental change, and the geographic information science that enables these studies. Central to the department's studies are the theories, methods, and models of environmental, social, and geographic information science. Within this broad domain, the department has strengths in environmental justice, environmental modeling, GIScience and GIS, land use and its environmental consequences, sustainability, urban ecology, climatology, and health geography.

Master of Arts students follow one of two tracks. The professional track is designed as a terminal nonthesis degree that prepares students to enter the workforce directly after receiving an M.A. degree. The thesis track includes an independent research project and prepares students to enter a Ph.D. program or a career that requires creative research in selected areas of geography.

The department provides opportunities for graduate students to gain practical experience through service as departmental teaching or research assistants. In addition, graduate students often compete successfully for intramural and extramural funding for graduate education.

Graduate students often present their research at professional conferences and publish their work in academic journals. These presentations and papers can be the product of independent research or research projects led by a faculty member.

Learning Outcomes

Nonthesis (Professional) Program

Students who successfully complete the professional M.A. (nonthesis) program in the Department of Geographical and Sustainability Sciences will demonstrate:

- broad knowledge of the basic concepts, tools, and areas of study of field of geography; and
- a basic understanding of and ability to apply tools and techniques in a particular area of geography.

Thesis Program

Students who successfully complete the M.A. (thesis) program in the Department of Geographical and Sustainability Sciences will demonstrate:

- both broad knowledge of the field of geography and deep knowledge in their area of research concentration;
- an ability to communicate their research concisely and effectively to both general and specialist audiences in written and verbal formats;
- an ability to formulate research questions; select, design, and apply appropriate research methods (e.g., testable hypotheses, data collection, management, analytical techniques); and utilize critical thinking skills to build knowledge, theory, and/or practice in their area of research concentration;
- competence in teaching geography, environmental, or sustainability related courses; and
- understanding of and an ability to operate under professional standards of ethical conduct.