The Doctor of Philosophy 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, urban ecology, sustainability, climatology, and health geography.

The department provides opportunities for graduate students to gain practical experience through service as departmental teaching or research assistants. 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.