



## University of Alaska Geography Program University of Alaska Fairbanks

### Geography B.A. Overview of Program Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim

Geography provides an holistic view of the earth as a whole, its distinct and varied regions, as well as the types of, and interaction between human activities and the physical world. Geography is the two-way bridge between the physical and social sciences as it explores the interrelationships between the earth's physical and biological systems, and how these environmental systems provide a natural resource base for human societies. Geography also provides the framework for the integration of new and emerging technologies such as GIS and Remote Sensing with studies in a broad range of academic disciplines.

Geographers are interested in patterns and process of physical and social change including climate change, geographic information science and technologies, human settlement patterns, natural resources distribution and management, environmental studies, and in the inherent "sense of place" among peoples throughout the world. Geographic methodologies include observation, measurement, description and analysis of places including likenesses, differences, interdependence, and importance.

The UA Geography Program has recently revised the Bachelor of Arts Program. The geography B.A. degree provides broad cultural training and background in the liberal arts with an emphasis in the **Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim**. The B.A. also provides a geographic perspective based on these regions and prepares students for careers in management, policy, teaching, field-based research, regional planning, and private sector careers. The B.A. also provides an excellent foundation for advanced studies in a wide range of academic disciplines.

#### **Background and Rationale**

The B.A. in Geography emphasizes the University of Alaska's unique geographic setting and utilizes the Department's academic expertise and research interests in the Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim. No other geography program in the nation can match the natural laboratory that is Alaska; nor can other institutions make available to students rich geographic perspectives that investigate the Circumpolar North and its interrelationship with the Pacific Rim. This program takes advantage of the depth and breadth of Northern expertise found throughout the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, UAF, and UA.

The B.A. in Geography is built upon a defined set of "foundation" courses that provide students with academic training in the fundamental components of the discipline including: geography, global geographic perspectives, physical geography of the earth, geographic information sciences and technology, human geography, and the synthesis of these core tenets through a "capstone" experience. Students, in consultation with their faculty advisors, shall select courses that reflect a regional emphasis in the Circumpolar North or the Pacific Rim, or may choose to combine courses from both areas to gain a broader geographic perspective and explore the unique interrelationships between the two regions. B.A. students are encouraged to complete discipline-specific minors (see #5, below), to take advantage of the considerable topical and regional expertise found throughout the UAF community and also to underscore the important role other disciplines play within the field of Geography.

#### **Student Outcomes**

Upon graduation, geography majors will have mastered the core tenets of the discipline. Such training will provide students the required skills needed for the job market and/or the foundation from which study of the various components of the discipline of geography can be further pursued.

Students will gain: 1) a high level of mastery of the key disciplinary tenets of geography, 2) a fuller understanding of the geography of the Circumpolar North and/or Pacific Rim, 3) the skills and tools necessary to observe, investigate, analyze, and synthesize broad issues pertaining to one (or both) of the region/s noted above, 4) an ability to investigate and understand *relationships between* physical, human, political, cultural, regional, and global geographic perspectives and how humans interact with and respond to the landscape.

Students who graduate with a B.A. will be employable as state and federal agency managers, planners, geographic/mapping technicians, cartographers, GIS technicians, field-based researchers in geography or related fields. We are preparing students to work effectively in the ever-growing environment that exists between disciplinary experts, interdisciplinary researchers/managers, and GIS computer / programming professionals. This program, with its practical emphasis on spatial context, critical thinking, problem solving, geographic information science and technology, and analysis, with a focus on the Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim will provide a sound preparation for advanced study in other branches of geography for example, geospatial analysis, economics, or management.

### **Geography B.A. Degree Requirements**

1. Complete the general university requirements.
2. Complete the B.A. degree requirements.
3. Complete the following required foundation courses:
 

GEOG 101-- Local Places, Global Regions: An Introduction to Geography	3
GEOG 211X-- Earth Systems: Elements of Physical Geography	4
GEOG 312--People, Places, and Environment: Principles of Human Geography	3
GEOG 338--An Introduction to GIS	3
GEOG 490 W,O--Geography Seminar	3
4. Complete the following program (major) requirements. Students will tailor their program through course selection from the categories below in consultation with their advisor to focus on a subspecialty in the Circumpolar North and/or the Pacific Rim.
  - a. Regional Geography: Complete two of the following:
 

GEOG 302--Geography of Alaska	3
GEOG 303--Geography of US and Canada	3
GEOG 305--Geography of Europe	3
GEOG 306--Geography of Russia	3
GEOG 311W--Geography of Asia	3
GEOG 410--Geography of the Pacific Rim	<u>3</u>
GEOG 427--Geography of Cold Lands	3
  - b. Physical Geography: Complete one of the following:
 

GEOG 339--Maps and Landscape Analysis	3
GEOG 401--Weather & Climate	3
GEOG 411--Pattern and Process in the Subarctic and Arctic	4
GEOG 412--Geography of Climate Change	3
  - c. Human Geography: Complete one of the following:
 

GEOG 203--World Economic Geography	3
GEOG 402--Resources and Environment	3
GEOG 404--Urban Geography	3
GEOG 405--Political Geography	3
  - d. Techniques: Complete one of the following:
 

GEOG 301 Geographic Field Studies	3
GEOG 309 Cartography	3
GEOS 404 Geosciences Applications for GPS and GIS	3
  - e. Electives: Complete two courses (6 credits) from any of the above categories, or other courses appropriate to the student's chosen program of study. Both courses must be at 300 level or higher and approved by the student's advisor.
 

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5. Minimum credits required 120

***Note:** Geography majors are encouraged to reinforce their program focus with a minor in one of the following areas: Alaska Native Studies, Anthropology, Asian Studies, Economics, Environmental Politics, Foreign Languages, Geology, Geophysics, Global Studies, History, Journalism, Natural Resource Management, Northern Studies, Political Science, Rural Development, Russian Studies*