



# Geography Student Handbook

Sacramento State Geography, 2025-2026



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# Welcome to Geography

“Of all the disciplines, it is geography that has captured the vision of the earth as a whole.”

*Kenneth Boulding*

## WELCOME, GEOGRAPHY STUDENTS!

Welcome to our department.

This student handbook provides a way for you to track your degree progress and helps you navigate a path—not only to complete your degree—but to seek a profession in geography or attend graduate school. Hopefully, it will serve you as a convenient resource for general information about the department, information about the degree programs, whom to contact with various questions, and a little about the discipline of geography.



This handbook does not replace the personal one-to-one contact between you and your advisor. We require that you meet with your advisor every fall semester before you register for Spring courses. If you have specific questions about courses or your degree progress, ask your advisor, and you can ask these questions at any time. When you declare geography as your degree, you are automatically assigned an advisor, but you may, at any time, change your advisor to one of the other full-time professors. Simply tell the department coordinator (Pedro Garcia; 916-278-6109, [geography@csus.edu](mailto:geography@csus.edu)) who you want to advise you. The decision is yours.

The department coordinator is a great source for advice and answers to general questions. The department office is located in Sequoia Hall 334. You can contact any of our faculty by e-mail, phone or leave them a note in their mailbox (in the department office). We are here for you.

Most importantly, the department faculty and staff want you to do your best, succeed, and to enjoy your academic experiences in our department. Again, welcome.

Dr. Matt Schmidtlein  
Professor and Chair of Geography  
Sequoia Hall 334D  
[schmidtlein@csus.edu](mailto:schmidtlein@csus.edu)  
(916) 278-7581

## DEPARTMENT OFFICE

We are located in Sequoia Hall, Room 334. It is usually open between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday with the exception of the lunch hour. Our department coordinator, Pedro Garcia, will do his best to help with any inquiries. He can aid you with many tasks including:



- making initial inquiries
- leaving written messages for faculty
- handing in course work outside of class time
- furnishing proper forms including (but not limited to) add/drop, withdrawal, change advisor, and name/address/contact change.
- changing your major or concentration
- helping to schedule appointments with your advisor or other faculty
- answering general questions

Pedro Garcia  
Geography Department Coordinator  
Sequoia Hall 334  
geography@csus.edu  
(916) 278-6109

## CONTACTING GEOGRAPHY AT SACRAMENTO STATE

Our address is:

Department of Geography  
CSU Sacramento  
6000 J St.  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6003  
(916) 278-6109  
geography@csus.edu  
<http://www.csus.edu/geog/>

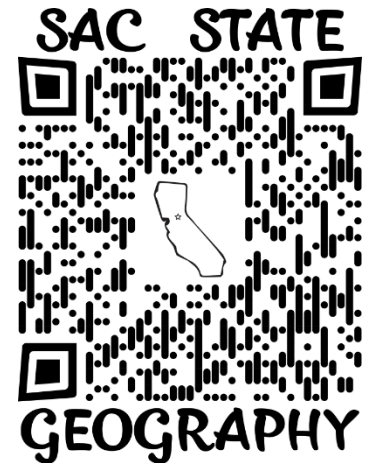
## BECOMING INVOLVED

The Sacramento State Geography Department has a chapter of Gamma Theta Upsilon, the international honor society in geography, as well as a club for its majors. The Sacramento State Geography Club schedules regular social events at which students, faculty, and staff have a chance to relax and socialize.

We encourage student participation in the annual meetings of the California Geographical Society and the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, which usually occur in May and September, respectively. Both include student paper and poster competitions. You can learn about these organizations and their opportunities for students at <http://calgeog.org/> and <http://apcgweb.org/>.

## SUPPORTING THE DEPARTMENT

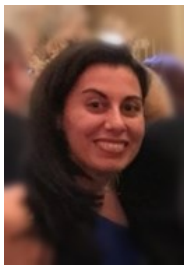
We largely rely upon donations from alumni and community members to support department outreach, events, and well as scholarship and other student support funds. If you know of folks who may be interested in supporting our work, please share this QR code (link: <https://securelb.imodules.com/s/1894/19/home-hero.aspx?sid=1894&gid=2&pgid=418&cid=1063&dids=90>).



## FACULTY PROFILES AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Our department houses very active geographers who are involved in successful efforts of teaching, research, scholarship, creative activities, community service, and leadership in the discipline. The following list outlines the degrees, specializations, some of the courses they teach, and contact information for each of our faculty members:

### PERMANENT FACULTY



Jasmine Arpagian, Ph.D. (San Diego State University), Assistant Professor

Interests: Participatory Planning, Qualitative GIS  
Courses: Urban and Regional Planning, Europe, Themes in World Geography

SQU 314  
arpagian@csus.edu  
(916) 278-4564



Bruce Gervais, Ph.D. (UCLA), Professor

Interests: Biogeography, Climatology, Paleoecology, Sustainability.  
Courses: Physical Geography, Meteorology, Biogeography, Earth Transformed.

SQU 308  
gervais@csus.edu  
(916) 278-4207



Caroline Keegan, Ph.D. (University of Georgia), Assistant Professor

Interests: Labor, Political Ecology, Race and Migration, Engaged Research, Feminist Qualitative Methods  
Courses: Cultural Geography, Political Ecology

SQU 302  
c.keegan@csus.edu



Anna  
Klimaszewski-  
Patterson, Ph.D.  
(University of  
Nevada Reno),  
Professor

Interests: Paleoecology/  
Landscape Archaeology;  
Landscape Modeling;  
Geovisualization;  
Augmented/Virtual Reality  
and Internet of Things (IoT);  
GIScience; Applied  
Geography

SQU 330  
anna.kp@csus.edu  
(916) 278-4272

Courses: Applied GIS,  
Computer Cartography,  
Programming for GIS I & II,  
Database Management,  
Physical Geography,  
Visualizing Global  
Environments



Tom Krabacher,  
Ph.D. (UC Davis),  
Professor

Interests: Cultural Ecology,  
Economic Development,  
Landscapes, Environmental  
History.

SQU 334  
krabacherts@csus.edu  
(916) 278-6338

Courses: Physical  
Geography, Themes in World  
Geography, Climate,  
Population, Geography of  
Africa, Field Geography  
(Suburban-Rural), Senior  
Research Seminar in  
Geography, Ideas & Skills in  
Geography



Hanieh Haji  
Molana, Ph.D.  
(Kent State),  
Assistant  
Professor

Interests: Cultural  
Geography, Geography of the  
Middle East, Feminist  
Geography, Urban  
Geography, Qualitative  
Methods.

SQU 306  
hajimolana@csus.edu  
(916) 278-4576

Courses: Cultural  
Geography, Geography of the  
Middle East, Feminist  
Geography, Qualitative  
Methods

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Patrick Oberle,  
Ph.D. (Syracuse),  
Associate  
Professor

Interests: Urban Geography,  
GIScience, Participatory GIS,  
Historical Geography, Post-  
Industrial Cities, North  
America

SQU 310  
patrick.oberle@csus.edu  
(916) 278-3881

Courses: Geographic  
Information Systems,  
Transforming the City,  
Applied GIS, Cartography,  
U.S. and Canada, Senior  
Research Seminar, Themes  
in World Geography



Erica Orcutt,  
Ph.D. (UC Davis),  
Assistant  
Professor

Interests: Remote Sensing,  
Biogeography, Habitat  
Modeling

SQU 312  
erica.orcutt@csus.edu  
(916)278-6987

Courses: Physical  
Geography, Global Climate  
Change, Remote Sensing



Mathew  
Schmittlein,  
Ph.D. (University  
of South  
Carolina),  
Professor and  
Chair

Interests: Environmental  
Hazards and Vulnerability,  
GIScience, Public Health.

SQU 334  
schmittlein@csus.edu  
(916) 278-7581

Courses: Advanced  
Geographic Information  
Systems, Quantitative  
Methods in Geography,  
Physical Geography,  
Environmental Hazards &  
Society, Introduction to  
Maps & Geographic  
Techniques.

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James Wanket,  
Ph.D. (UC  
Berkeley),  
Professor

Interests: Quaternary  
Studies, Climate Change,  
Biogeography,  
Geomorphology, California.

SQU 334  
jwanket@csus.edu  
(916) 278-7580

Courses: Physical  
Geography, Physical  
Geography Lab, Global  
Climate Change, Field  
Geography (Physical),  
Landforms, Senior Research  
Seminar in Geography.

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## LECTURERS

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Jennifer Kusler	Courses: Violent Weather, Physical Geography, Physical Geography Lab	SQU 332 j.kusler@csus.edu (916) 278-6410
Laura McGowan, Ph.D.	Courses: Meteorology, Global Climate Change	SQU 332 mcgowan@csus.edu (916) 278-6410
Marius Petraru, Ph.D.	Courses: Physical Geography, Physical Geography Lab, Cultural Geography	SQU 332 mpetraru@csus.edu (916) 278-6410
Matt Rosenberg	Courses: California, Themes in World Geography, Cultural Geography	SQU 332 rosenberg@csus.edu (916) 278-6410
João Santos, Ph.D.	Courses: Landforms, Physical Geography	SQU 332 joao.santos@csus.edu (916) 278-6410
Jane Slavensky	Courses: Physical Geography Lab	SQU 332 jane.slavensky@csus.edu (916) 278-6410
Kimberly Walton	Courses: Themes in World Geography, Cultural Geography, Physical Geography, Physical Geography Lab	SQU 332 geoprofessor@aol.com (916) 278-6410

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# What is Geography?

“Geography is the study of earth as the home of people.”

*Yi-Fu Tuan*

## DEFINITIONS

Geography explores the interrelationships between people and the Earth. To comprehend this human-environment interface, our students study climate, weather, landforms, water resources, plants and animals, and at the same time, peoples, societies, economies, and cities to reveal some of the biggest challenges of our time including climate change, resource degradation, urban growth and design, globalization, immigration, and ethnic and territorial conflict.

Geography's approach to these issues emphasizes its interrelationships and spatial patterns, which overlap in intricate ways and give rise to distinctive places, environments, regions, and landscapes. Students work with a variety of data and tools, including traditional paper maps, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Geographic Information Systems (GIS), and other computer applications to collect, display, and analyze spatial data. Geography's unique combination of knowledge and analytical techniques, produce a clear understanding of the interaction between the environment and people including human impacts on the environment and their effects on us.

As an integrative discipline, drawing on knowledge and data common to many physical sciences, social sciences, and even the humanities, geography encourages students to develop a spatial perspective to explore key issues facing society and the environment. Thus, geographers offer society, government, and academia a perspective that emphasizes the character of place, patterns and processes, and locational analysis. We contribute to a better understanding of today's world and provide options for a better one.

If you like to travel, use and read maps, learn about peoples and places, and collect and analyze data; then you are—in some ways—a geographer. If you are interested in teaching, exploring new landscapes, analyzing the relationships between people and their environment, using and applying new computer technologies, creating better places, or solving environmental problems, then geography is an ideal major.

Geography graduates are in demand. As the Association of American Geographer's pamphlet on Careers in Geography states, “more geographers than ever before are employed in exciting jobs, using skills in cultural, regional, and physical geography as well as modern technologies that have revolutionized the workplace.”

## AREAS OF GEOGRAPHIC STUDY

There are numerous subfields within the discipline of geography. Some of these include *human geography*, which studies the spatial aspects of human settlement, cultures, and human uses of the Earth's environments; *physical geography*, which studies spatial patterns, processes, and interrelationships in the natural environment; *regional geography*, which involves the study of human and physical geography within defined world regions. The methods used within the discipline include principles, techniques, and tools such as maps, aerial photographs, geographic information systems, remote sensing, global positioning systems, virtual globes, satellite imagery, and field instruments.



The Association of American Geographers lists a number of specialty groups (most of which are subfields) that their member geographers belong to. There are more subfields than the following list includes (and there are specializations within many of the following subfields. For example, the subfield of geomorphology can be broken into many specializations including fluvial geomorphology, glacial geomorphology, soils, and quaternary studies), but the list provides a peek into geography's breadth.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Africa                                       | European                                   |
| Animal                                       | Geographic Information Science and Systems |
| Applied Geography                            | Geographic Perspectives on Women           |
| Asian Geography                              | Geographies of Food and Agriculture        |
| Bible  | Geography Education                        |
| Biogeography                                 | Geography of Religions and Belief Systems  |
| Business Geography                           | Geomorphology                              |
| Canadian Studies                             | Hazards, Risks, and Disasters              |
| Cartography                                  | Health and Medical Geography               |
| China  | Historical Geography                       |
| Climate                                      | History of Geography                       |
| Coastal and Marine                           | Human Dimensions of Global Change          |
| Communication                                | Indigenous Peoples                         |
| Cryosphere                                   | Landscape                                  |
| Cultural and Political Ecology               | Latin American                             |
| Cultural Geography                           | Middle East                                |
| Cyberinfrastructure                          | Military Geography                         |
| Development Geography                        | Mountain Geography                         |
| Disability                                   | Paleoenvironmental Change                  |
| Economic Geography                           | Polar Geography                            |
| Energy and Environment                       | Political Geography                        |
| Environmental Perception and Behavioral Geog | Population                                 |
| Ethics, Justice, and Human Rights            | Qualitative Research                       |
| Ethnic Geography                             | Recreation, Tourism, and Sport             |

Regional Development and Planning  
Remote Sensing  
Rural Geography  
Russian, Central Asian, and East European  
Sexuality and Space  
Socialist and Critical Geography

Spatial Analysis and Modeling  
Study of the American South  
Transportation Geography  
Urban Geography  
Water Resources  
Wine

# Your Program

“A map is the greatest of all epic poems. Its lines and colors show the realization of great dreams.”

*Gilbert Grosvenor*

## ADVISING

Geography students are assigned an advisor as soon as they become majors. You may change your advisor at any time. Academic Advising is required during each Fall semester before you register for Spring courses. Make appointments early to protect your priority registration. To schedule an appointment, contact your advisor. After you meet with your advisor, the academic hold will be lifted, and you may register for your Spring courses. If you wish to change your advisor, please contact the department coordinator.



## THE DEGREE PROGRAM

The Geography Department offers a B.A. in Geography that features balanced preparation in physical and human geography, geographic skills and techniques, and regional study. Four concentrations within the major allow for specializations in human geography, physical geography, GIScience, and urban planning. The Department has two computer labs to support training in GIS, GPS, computer cartography, and remote sensing, and to allow students to pursue independent research projects. Available software includes ESRI's ArcGIS Pro. The department is home to the campus's Paleoecology Lab.

## GEOGRAPHY COURSE OFFERINGS

Lower division courses at Sacramento State are those with course numbers below 100. Upper division undergraduate courses have course numbers between 100 and 199. The current listing of all courses offered in the Geography Department, along with their descriptions, can be found in the university catalog at <https://catalog.csus.edu/courses-a-z/geog/>.

Lower division offerings in physical geography, cultural geography, and geographical techniques introduce students to the discipline. At the upper division level, students choose among regional classes, topical classes ranging from meteorology to transportation, and technique classes that include GIS, map making, spatial analysis, remote sensing, and field work.

In the department's capstone course (Geog 190), majors display their geographic knowledge and skills via senior research projects. These projects, usually in the form of posters, are on display at the department's annual Poster-Palooza event.

## DEGREE CONCENTRATIONS

All Geography majors are required to select at least one of four concentrations focusing on a particular subfield of geography. The four concentrations are:

- *Geographic Information Science* - The GIScience concentration gives students majoring in Geography a firm understanding of the theory and practice of GIS and other spatial analytical techniques. Students develop an understanding of geographic concepts and systematic approaches through completing the Department's standard lower division, core, and breadth coursework. Upper-division coursework ground students in basic GIScience concepts, and allow them to choose from electives that equip them with more specific analyses and output skills
- *Human Geography* - The Human Concentration gives students a broad, well-rounded understanding of the discipline of geography within the context of the social and human spheres of influence and interactions, and serves as an ideal basis of further graduate work.
- *Metropolitan Area Planning (MAP)* - Students choosing this path develop expertise in planning and development in metropolitan regions, working closely with various experts in the field through coursework and internships. A broad array of planning courses are offered in the Department by several faculty with expertise in the planning field.
- *Physical Geography* - Students choosing this path develop an intellectual foundation in the physical landscapes of Earth and interactions with people. Climate, weather, landforms, and the geographic patterns of life on Earth are points of focus in this concentration. The Paleoecology Lab provides opportunity for students to gain hands-on experience in physical geography field and laboratory techniques.

## REGISTRATION TIPS

Here are several things to consider while determining which courses to take:

- Take GEOG 102: Ideas and Skills in Geography, the first Fall semester you are here. This course is designed for sophomores and juniors who have had one or more lower division geography courses. It introduces you to the broader discipline and it connects you to your cohort of fellow geography majors. Unless you are a freshman, **it is important to take this course in your first Fall semester.**
- Take GEOG 3: Introduction to Maps and Geographical Technologies, the first Fall semester you are here.
- Take GEOG 109: Geographic Information Systems, as soon as possible (it is offered every semester). If you have little or no experience with GIS, we recommend that you take GEOG 3 first or concurrently with 109. GIScience students should plan on taking this the first semester of their junior year.
- Take Geog 118 in the first Spring semester of your junior year.
- For GIScience students, also take Geog 150 as soon as possible. It does not have a pre-req, and taking it early allows you more flexibility in scheduling subsequent courses.

- Since all students must complete 9 units of upper division GE coursework, consider taking one of the approved GE courses in Geography to cover Area 3, Area 4, and Area 5. These approved GE courses will count both for your major and for GE.
- Review the description of the four concentrations (see previous page) available within the major. Use the planning worksheet (included below) for your selected concentration to identify the classes you need. You can use this along with the expected semesters that courses are offered listed in the catalog to create a semester-by-semester plan for your degree. You may change your mind along the route, but it's helpful to have a plan from the beginning.
- You are assigned one of the full-time faculty members as your major advisor. Go see them once a semester to make sure you are on track. Every Fall semester is mandatory. The department coordinator can help you switch advisers, should you wish to do so.
- When it is your turn to register for classes and it appears that a geography class you want is full, contact the department coordinator (334 Sequoia Hall; (916) 278-6109, geography@csus.edu) to see if further information is available.
- Internships are highly recommended as part of your Sacramento State geography education. Sources of internship information are sent to you using your Sac State e-mail address. Your fellow students also are valuable resources in this regard.
- Interact with the faculty. Visit them in their offices not just to ask about what's going to be on the exam, but to talk about ideas! Their offices are on the 3rd floor of Sequoia Hall
- Check your Sacramento State e-mail early and often. Important communications from the administration (including the registrar), the department chair, internships, and your professors arrive via this medium.

# GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SCIENCE (GISCIENCE)

## BA in Geography, Concentration Planning Worksheet

### Core Requirements

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 1(GE:5A)		
Geog 2 (GE:4)		
Geog 3		
Geog 11 (GE:5C)		
Geog 102		
Geog 109*		
Geog 118		
Geog 190 (GE:WI)		

\*Course must be completed with a minimum grade of C-

Regional Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 121		
Geog 127 (GE:3)		
Geog 128		
Geog 129x		
Geog 131		
Geog 133 (GE:3)		

### Concentration Requirements

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 110*		
Geog 150*		
Geog 155*		

\*Course must be completed with a minimum grade of C-

Physical Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 111 (GE:5A)		
Geog 113 (GE:5A)		
Geog 115 (GE:5A)		
Geog 116 (GE:5A)		
Geog 117		
Geog 160		
Geog 165(GE:5A)		

Techniques Elective (two of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 105		
Geog 107		
Geog 151		
Geog 163		
Geog 181		
Geog 182		
Geog 193x		

Sections of GEOG 195A or GEOG 199 with sufficient units and focused on relevant content may be substituted for a concentration course requirement with the consent of the major advisor and department chair.

Human Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 141		
Geog 142		
Geog143 (GE:4)		
Geog 144		
Geog 145 (GE:4)		
Geog 147		
Geog 148		
Geog 149		
Geog 164		

Notes:

# HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

## BA in Geography, Concentration Planning Worksheet

### Core Requirements

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 1(GE:5A)		
Geog 2 (GE:4)		
Geog 3		
Geog 11 (GE:5C)		
Geog 102		
Geog 109		
Geog 118		
Geog 190 (GE:WI)		

Regional Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 121		
Geog 127 (GE:3)		
Geog 128		
Geog 129x		
Geog 131		
Geog 133 (GE:3)		

### Concentration Requirements

Human Geography Electives (four of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 141		
Geog 142		
Geog143 (GE:4)		
Geog 144		
Geog 145 (GE:4)		
Geog 147		
Geog 148		
Geog 149		
Geog 164		
Geog 182, Geog 193A, or Geog 193B		

Physical Geography Elective (one of the following):

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 111 (GE:5A)		
Geog 113 (GE:5A)		
Geog 115 (GE:5A)		
Geog 116 (GE:5A)		
Geog 117		
Geog 160		
Geog 165(GE:5A)		

Sections of GEOG 195A or GEOG 199 with sufficient units and focused on relevant content may be substituted for a concentration course requirement with the consent of the major advisor and department chair.

Additional Regional Geography Elective (one additional course)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 121		
Geog 127 (GE:3)		
Geog 128		
Geog 129x		
Geog 131		
Geog 133 (GE:3)		

Notes:

Additional Human or Regional Elective

One additional course from either the Human Geography or Regional Geography elective lists

# METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING (MAP)

## BA in Geography, Concentration Planning Worksheet

### Core Requirements

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 1(GE:5A)		
Geog 2 (GE:4)		
Geog 3		
Geog 11 (GE:5C)		
Geog 102		
Geog 109		
Geog 118		
Geog 190 (GE:WI)		

Regional Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 121		
Geog 127 (GE:3)		
Geog 128		
Geog 129x		
Geog 131*		
Geog 133 (GE:3)		

\*Recommended for concentration

### Concentration Requirements

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 148		
Geog 182		

Physical Geography Elective (one of the following):

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 111 (GE:5A)		
Geog 113 (GE:5A)		
Geog 115 (GE:5A)		
Geog 116 (GE:5A)		
Geog 117		
Geog 160*		
Geog 165(GE:5A)		

\* Recommended for concentration

Human Geography Elective (three of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 141		
Geog 142		
Geog143 (GE:4)		
Geog 144		
Geog 145 (GE:4)		
Geog 147		
Geog 149		
Geog 164		
ENVS 122		

Additional Recommended Courses:

- Econ 132
- Econ 180
- Hist 163
- Hist 184/Art 188B
- RTPA 154

Techniques Elective (one of the following):

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 105		
Geog 107		
Geog 110		
Geog 150		
Geog 151		
Geog 155		
Geog 163		
Geog 181		
Geog 193A or 193B		

Sections of GEOG 195A or GEOG 199 with sufficient units and focused on relevant content may be substituted for a concentration course requirement with the consent of the major advisor and department chair.

Notes:

# PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

## BA in Geography, Concentration Planning Worksheet

### Core Requirements

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 1(GE:5A)		
Geog 2 (GE:4)		
Geog 3		
Geog 11 (GE:5C)		
Geog 102		
Geog 109		
Geog 118		
Geog 190 (GE:WI)		

Regional Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 121		
Geog 127 (GE:3)		
Geog 128		
Geog 129x		
Geog 131		
Geog 133 (GE:3)		

### Concentration Requirements

Physical Geography Electives (five of the following):

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 111 (GE:5A)		
Geog 113 (GE:5A)		
Geog 115 (GE:5A)		
Geog 116 (GE:5A)		
Geog 117		
Geog 160		
Geog 165(GE:5A)		
Geog 193C		

Techniques Elective (one of the following):

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 105		
Geog 107		
Geog 110		
Geog 150		
Geog 151		
Geog 155		
Geog 163		
Geog 181		
Geog 182		
Geog 193A		
Geog 193B		

Human Geography Elective (one of the following)

Course	Taken	Planned
Geog 141		
Geog 142		
Geog143 (GE:4)		
Geog 144		
Geog 145 (GE:4)		
Geog 147		
Geog 148		
Geog 149		
Geog 164		

Sections of GEOG 195A or GEOG 199 with sufficient units and focused on relevant content may be substituted for a concentration course requirement with the consent of the major advisor and department chair.

Notes:

## GEOGRAPHY MINOR WORKSHEET

Students from other majors can obtain a minor in Geography by completing 18 units as approved by the minor advisor. Courses must be selected in consultation with and approved by a faculty advisor in Geography. A minimum of 6 upper division units must be earned in residence.

Two of the following lower division courses:

Geog 1            Physical Geography: The Distribution of Natural Phenomena

Geog 2            Cultural Geography

Geog 3            Introduction to Maps and Geographic Technologies

Nine units of upper division Geography, excluding GEOG 194, GEOG 195, GEOG 198, & GEOG 199.

Three additional units in Geography, either lower division or upper division.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS MINOR WORKSHEET

Students from other majors can obtain a minor in Geographic Information Systems by completing 18 units as approved by the minor advisor. Courses must be selected in consultation and approved by a faculty advisor in Geography. A minimum of 6 upper division units must be earned in residence.

Courses in parentheses are prerequisites.

### Required Courses

Geog 3            Introduction to Maps and Geographic Technologies

Geog 109        Geographic Information Systems

Geog 110        Advanced Geographic Information Systems (Geog 109)

Geog 150        Programming for GIS

Geog 155        GIS Data Acquisition and Management

Select one of the following:

Geog 105        Computer Cartography (Geog 109)

Geog 107        Remote Sensing

Geog 151        Programming for GIS II (Geog 150)

Geog 163        Applied GIS (Geog 109)

Geog 181        Quantitative Methods in Geography

Three units of upper division GIS coursework from another department with permission of the GIS Minor advisor.

## GENERAL EDUCATION CATEGORY COMPARISONS

Beginning in Fall 2025, the General Education (GE) requirement categories were realigned to create a common set of GE requirements across California Community Colleges, the University of California system, and the California State University System. These categories now apply to all GE classes at Sacramento State moving forward. But you can use the table below to see which of the former GE categories fulfill the requirements of the new GE categories:

GE COMPARISON TABLE

<b>Current GE Categories</b>	<b>Prior GE Categories (before Fall 2025)</b>
1A: English Composition	A2: Written Communication
1B: Critical Thinking	A3: Critical Thinking
1C: Oral Communication	A1: Oral Communication
2: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning	B4: Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning
3A: Arts	C1: Arts
3B: Humanities	C2: Humanities
4: Social and Behavioral Sciences	D: The Individual and Society
5A: Physical Sciences	B1: Physical Science
5B: Life Sciences	B2: Life Forms
5C: Laboratory	B3: Lab
6: Ethnic Studies	F: Ethnic Studies

## INTERNSHIPS

Our location as the state's capital provides students with a wide range of government resources (federal, state, and local) on which to draw, as well as the opportunity for internships with diverse public agencies. These internships can provide excellent "real world" training opportunities and possible subsequent permanent employment. In addition, some geography courses include opportunities for community engagement.

Internships can also provide a valuable way to obtain on-the-job experience (place it on your resume), contact with employers, and it can give you a sense of what you want to do after graduation. A good internship allows you to be part of the agency or organization's day-to-day activities. Finally, internships are important because you are more employable after this experience.

Talk with your major advisor to explore internship possibilities. Check your Sacramento State e-mail for internship and job opportunities. When times are economically good, we send out quite a few of these announcements. In addition, you can go to the career center in Lassen Hall 1013 for information on career advising. They can help you with finding internships, volunteer experiences, and part-time jobs. They also help with developing resumes and cover letters. Also, you can go directly to government agencies, organizations, and local companies that interest you and inquire about internships. In this situation, you should provide the name of a faculty member as a reference, an updated resume, and, in many cases, you should volunteer your services.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### JACK MROWKA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Geography Department awards the Mrowka Scholarship to one or more students each semester to acknowledge their outstanding scholarship and academic achievement. This \$2,000 award is given in memory of Jack Mrowka, a Professor and Chair of the Geography Department who passed away in July 2002.



### GALE GAULT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Geography Department awards the Gale Gault Memorial Scholarship to one student each year to encourage the promotion of women in the field of geography. The \$1,000 award is given in memory of Gale Gault, a Sacramento State Geography graduate from the class of 1984.

### GEOGRAPHY STUDENT CONFERENCE FUND

The Geography Department offers funds to support student participation in academic conferences and professional development activities, including travel, registration, or other related costs. Please contact the department chair with questions on the use of these funds.

# Geography's Facilities

"The principle training of the geographer should come, wherever possible, by doing fieldwork."

*Carl Sauer*

The Department has multiple labs that support teaching, research, and training. Two computer labs support our geotechnology emphasis in GIS, GPS, computer cartography, and remote sensing, and they allow students to pursue independent research projects. Available software in these labs include ESRI's ArcGIS (including 3-D, Network Analyst and Spatial Analyst extensions) and ERDAS remote sensing programs. The Department also hosts the campus's Paleoecology Lab, but perhaps the most important facility is found outside—in the field.

## THE FIELD

Our location in Sacramento provides our field courses access to a wide range of landscapes and environments relating to urban, rural, and physical geography. Our Geography program emphasizes many educational goals and objectives including one that gives students field experience in as wide a variety of natural and cultural environments as possible. We hope to instill in students the skill of observation and an appreciation for the importance of working with other cultures in a variety of places to ensure the understanding of environmental and cultural relationships and processes.



Fieldwork is often fundamental to the way geographers perceive, research, and understand the world. As former AAG President Patricia Gober (1998, "Distance Learning and Geography's Soul." *Association of American Geographers Newsletter*. May 1998. 33:5. page 2) states, "Most geographers have a deep connection with places, one that has drawn us to the field, one that we communicate to students, and one that binds us together as an intellectual community." For this reason, the field is considered our most important laboratory.

## GISCIENCE LABS

The Geography Department's GIScience labs support teaching and research with geotechnologies including geographic information systems, remote sensing, and global positioning systems. These labs are hands-on, exploration-based, multimedia-learning environment where students gain personal experience with ideas, concepts, and problem solving. Computer techniques make some complex processes (like



analytical modeling, non-linear and spatial correlation, layering, diffusion, and cartographic representation) easier to understand, and give students direct experience in applying concepts to problem-solving exercises. This approach to learning is consistent with broader educational shifts. The labs support and encourage the use of computer technology in all aspects of geographic research including data collection, storage, management, analysis, and display. The labs are located at 5027 Tschannen Science Complex and 311K Sequoia Hall.

## PALEOECOLOGY LAB

The Department also hosts the campus's Paleocology Laboratory, which is located on the 3rd floor of Sequoia Hall (326A). Established in 2004, the mission of the laboratory is to conduct environmental research to further our understanding of past and present physical landscapes and to promote student education and research. The lab emphasizes sediment core research and tree-ring research.

The Paleocology Lab allows motivated students hands-on experience in field sampling techniques and laboratory processing and analysis of various environmental data.



## STUDY ABROAD

Studying abroad enriches both your geography degree but also your life in many ways:

- You enhance your education by adding a new, international perspective to your studies.
- You develop first-hand knowledge of other peoples, places, and environments.
- You may earn more career options. Your international experience provides a strong professional advantage that many businesses are looking for.
- You may improve your foreign language abilities.
- You broaden your perspective on U.S. society and yourself.
- You experience personal growth, especially in the areas of independence and self-confidence.

If you think you cannot afford it than think again. Many program costs are comparable to the costs of studying here and financial aid applies.

If you think you might be interested, take the following steps:

**Step One:** Ask yourself the following questions:

- Why am I interested in studying abroad?
- Where do I want to study?
- How long do I want to study abroad – academic year, semester, summer?
- Do I want to study a particular subject while abroad?
- Do I want to fulfill requirements for your major or minor?

- Do I know any languages other than English, or am I interested in learning another language?
- Is cost a significant factor in my program selection?

**Step Two:** Research the various programs that are available.

**Step Three:** Talk with your geography advisor about the program that most interests you.

**Step Four:** Attend a General Information Study Abroad Session. Information sessions provide an introduction to study abroad and an overview of options for Sacramento State students.

**Step Five:** Make an appointment to talk to a Study Abroad Coordinator. You will work together to define and clarify your goals and program needs, and to select a program on the basis of your qualifications and interests. Once you have selected the appropriate program, you can begin the application process.

**Step Six:** Talk again with your advisor, but this time you will focus on course selection. We try to match the courses that you need for your degree and those that are offered abroad. This selection process will also involve the department chair.

**Step Seven:** Get one or two recommendations from a professor. You must, however, have taken a class with the professor recommending you.

**Step Eight:** Prepare for your interview(s) with faculty members. It is advised to be knowledgeable of current events for the country you are interested in, as well as its political system, popular culture, and history.

# Life After Sac State

“During the next decade geography will move to center stage in our society as mobile, real-time, interactive geographic technologies and systems are adopted...in most large-scale private and governmental organizations...”

*Doug Richardson*

## OCCUPATIONS

The Association of American Geographer’s (AAG) brochure titled Careers in Geography lists three primary job market sectors for geographers: education, government, and the private sector.

Education...needs K-12 teachers with solid geography backgrounds, since all states have recently introduced higher standards for geography instruction. At the college level, exciting new courses attract large numbers of students, and the demand for faculty with regional specialties or theoretical and research capabilities is strong.

All levels of government...hire geographers. They may work for local and state economic development or planning offices, conduct research in recreation and park use, or map land use from satellite images. Many geographers at the federal level work for the National Imagery and Mapping Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Central Intelligence Agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Department of State.

Private sector firms...need geographers who can develop and apply geographic ideas and technologies to complex real world systems. Geographers also conduct marketing studies, plan transportation routes, understand international markets, and determine environmental risks associated with site locations. From transportation agencies to electric utility companies, and from forestry to telecommunications, real-time mobile interactive geographic technologies and databases are emerging as the backbone of large-scale operations management systems for industries with distributed assets and mobile workforces.

For more information, talk with your major advisor and visit the AAG's webpage at [www.aag.org](http://www.aag.org) and their career page at [http://jobs.aag.org/home/index.cfm?site\\_id=15004](http://jobs.aag.org/home/index.cfm?site_id=15004).

Students who have graduated from Sacramento State with a BA in Geography have found employment in a variety of careers. The following is a partial list of companies and government agencies that have hired some of our recent graduates.

Alza Corporation  
American Conservation Experience  
American River College  
Apple  
ARCAIS

BAE Systems  
BNSF Railway  
Brown and Caldwell  
California Air Resources Board  
California Department of Conservation

California Department of Fair Employment & Housing  
California Department of Fish & Game  
California Department of Food & Agriculture  
California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection  
California Department of Pesticide Regulation  
California Department of Resource Recycling & Recovery (CalRecycle)  
California Department of Technology  
California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)  
California Department of Water Resources  
California Division of Boating & Waterways  
California Energy Commission  
California Governor's Office of Emergency Services  
California State Parks  
California State University - Sacramento  
Cardno  
CH2M Hill  
City of Elk Grove  
City of Folsom  
City of Manteca  
City of Rancho Cordova  
City of Rocklin  
City of Roseville  
City of Sacramento  
City of San Jose  
City of Vacaville  
City of West Sacramento  
County of Del Norte  
County of Nevada  
County of Sacramento  
County of San Mateo  
County of Sonoma  
County of Yolo  
County of Yuba  
Drake Haglan & Associates  
Elk Grove Water District  
EN2 Resources Inc.  
Energy Absorption Systems Inc.  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)  
Facebook

Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco  
Frontline Energy Services  
Global Earthquake Model  
Granite Construction  
ICF International  
Institute of Ecohydrology Research  
Institution of Transportation Engineers  
Integrated Computer Solutions  
Keller Williams Realty  
KIRA  
Land IQ  
Los Rios Community College District  
Michael Baker International  
Micron Technology  
MST Architects  
Natural Lands Trust  
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board  
OHSU  
Pacific Crest Trail  
Pacific Gas & Electric Company (PG&E)  
Placer County Water Agency  
Pristine Sun LLC  
Quantum Spatial  
Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG)  
Sacramento Regional Fire  
San Diego State University  
San Joaquin Council of Governments  
SCI Consulting Group  
Shell  
Sierra College  
Sierra Nevada Brewing Company  
SMUD  
Solano County Water Agency  
Southgate Recreation & Park District  
Stanislaus Council of Governments  
State of California Franchise Tax Board  
Stockton Unified School District  
Strategic Economics  
Sutter Health  
Tahoe Conservancy  
Teichert Materials  
Trimble  
University of California - Davis  
UPS

URS Corporation  
US Army Corps of Engineers  
US Bureau of Land Management  
US Bureau of Reclamation  
US Department of Agriculture

US Environmental Protection Agency  
US Forest Service  
US Geological Survey (USGS)  
Versight Inc.  
Walk Sacramento

## GRADUATE SCHOOL

Graduate school provides geography students with more options. It can help you attain a high-level position or enable you to teach at the college level. In addition, graduate school increases your knowledge of the world, exposes you to new ideas and theories, provides you with the opportunity to work with the best and latest geographic technology, and offers you the chance to work closely with professors on research topics.

As you think about careers that you might want to enter, you should think about whether graduate school is a part of your long-range plan. Talk it over with others and your professors. If you decide to pursue graduate school, here are several steps and considerations to selecting an appropriate graduate school.

What type of geography interests you? Being interested broadly in geography is great, but this will not help you in graduate school. Pick a subfield that greatly interests you, and we are not referring to the broad categories physical, human, or geotechnologies. Select something more specific like ethnic, political, social, urban, climatology, biogeography, etc. It will even help your chances if you could make it more specific than that.

Talk with your professors and your major advisor by the end of your junior year, even if you do not plan to attend graduate school for a couple of years.

Read the literature, especially the recent literature, of your chosen subfield. What articles or books most impressed you? If the authors are professors, where do they teach or conduct research? You should consider those universities.

Look at the AAG's Guide to Geography Departments (we have a Department copy) and pay particular attention to what other departments specialize in and the specializations of individual professors. Add those institutions to your list.

Look at the home pages of the universities on your list. What do they have to offer that interests you? Check out faculty web pages. Go back to Step 3 and read the literature of other professors that interest you.

Talk with the professors that interest you the most. Perhaps start with an e-mail, but do not simply praise their work. Give them specific details about their research that you liked. Ask them questions that derive from their work. If they answer you, reply with a thank you e-mail and state that you would like to come out and look at the department as a possible location for graduate school.

Most graduate schools require that you take the GRE or another entrance examination. Your scores must reach a certain level. Think about taking it twice to get the best scores possible.

High grade point averages and examination scores increase your likelihood of admission to a graduate program, but contacts and letters of recommendation are also important.

You should select a few potential graduate schools based on a careful analysis of your academic interests and abilities and the university's reputation, expertise, and cost. Apply to at least two or three universities. Choices narrow down quickly as one gets an offer with a teaching assistantship while others offer no funding.