

# Geography, M.A.

## Master of Arts

The Master's Program in Geography at West Virginia University provides students with cutting edge training in the history and theory of geography, experience with advanced geographic research methodologies and specialized mentoring from faculty experts across three sub-disciplinary fields (Human Geography; Environmental Geography; Geographic Information Science). To earn a M.A. in Geography at WVU students must complete 30 credit hours of graduate courses (based upon the curriculum described below), form a committee of graduate faculty to supervise their study, write and defend a thesis or project proposal, and finally, write and defend a thesis or project.

## Degree Requirements

The M.A. thesis option is designed to enable full-time students to satisfy all program requirements and complete an examinable thesis within two years. Students are required to be well grounded in one or more of the program's three areas of specialization (Geographic Information Science; Human Geography; and Environmental Geography).

- **Credit Hours:** Students are required to complete a minimum of 30 graduate credit hours in Geography at the 400 level or above. The program requires that no more than six credits be at the 400-level.
- **Grade Point Average:** Students must earn a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 and a minimum GPA of 3.0 in courses applied to the degree.
- **Graduation Requirement:** Students have the option of pursuing a Professional Master's Project or completing a Master's Thesis. The M.A. thesis is an independent research project undertaken by the student. The thesis research should adhere to the following: 1) Demonstrate knowledge of the literature in the student's chosen field, 2) Use data and methods appropriate to the research, 3) Draw conclusions from the research endeavor. The Professional Master's Project is designed for students interested in a more focused project than the traditional research thesis option. It is not recommended for students considering entering a Ph.D. program. The project has strict deadlines and must be completed in one semester and after the completion of GEOG 601 and GEOG 602 Geographic Research-Design.
- **Additional Requirements:** The academic progress of every master's student is reviewed each year. Students must submit a self-evaluation signed by their advisor by January 15. The Graduate Committee will conduct its annual review of students in February and communicate with students in or before March. Waivers to the M.A. deadlines, timing requirements, and other rules may be requested from the Graduate Director. Waivers are only given under extraordinary circumstances.
- **Thesis Defense:** The defense date must be advertised to the department at least two weeks in advance. Thesis/Project defenses are not normally scheduled between June 15 and August 15. In accordance with College requirements, original signatures are required on the shuttle sheet form specifying the outcome of the defense. Students should work closely with their advisors to establish expectations for length and structure of the thesis/project.
- **Benchmarks:** For details, please go to the Geography Degree Progress tab (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/eberlycollegeofartsandsciences/geologyandgeography/#degreeprogress>).

## Curriculum Requirements

Code	Title	Hours
<b>CORE COURSES:</b>		<b>10</b>
GEOG 600	Geography Research Colloquium (repeated every semester)	
GEOG 601	Geographic Thought	
GEOG 602	Geographic Research-Design	
<b>GEOGRAPHY ELECTIVES: *</b>		<b>9</b>
GEOG Courses at the 400 level or above		
<b>ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK:</b>		<b>5</b>
Any GEOG course at the 400 level or above.		
Any course at the 400 level or above with permission from the project/thesis adviser.		
<b>GRADUATION TRACK:</b>		<b>6</b>
Select one option from below:		
<b>Professional Track:</b>		
GEOG 780	Non-Thesis Project	
Any GEOG course at the 400 level or above		
<b>Thesis Track:</b>		
GEOG 797	Research	

Total Hours

30

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Excluding GEOG 697 and GEOG 797.

## **Major Learning Outcomes**

### **GEOGRAPHY**

The graduate program in Geography at West Virginia University trains students at the highest level to assume leadership roles in research, teaching, and applied work in Human Geography, Environmental Geography, and Geographic Information Science.

The Geography Graduate Committee regularly reviews the structure and content of the M.A. and Ph.D. programs to provide the best possible education to students in order to meet the needs for highly trained individuals in Human Geography, Environmental Geography, and Geographic Information Science.

### **M.A. PROGRAM**

Student's obtaining a Master's in Geography with a Research Track will be able to:

- Communicate geographic concepts orally and in writing
- Apply research skills to analyze geographic questions
- Propose, produce and defend original research in their field of study
- Explain geographic principles as they relate to their area of research

Student's obtaining a Master's in Geography with a Professional Studies Track will be able to:

- Communicate geographic concepts orally and in writing
- Demonstrate knowledge in their field of geography
- Apply geographical knowledge and methods to at least one of the following:
  - Human geography
  - Environmental geography
  - Geographic Information Science