Geography, Ph.D.

Doctor of Philosophy

The Doctoral 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 Ph.D. in Geography at WVU students must complete 28 credit hours of graduate courses (based upon the curriculum described below), form a committee of graduate faculty to supervise their study, pass a comprehensive exam, write and defend a dissertation research proposal, and finally, write and defend a dissertation.

Degree Requirements

- **Credit Hours:** Coursework will be selected based on the research area of each student, providing an individualized plan of study appropriate to the field of Human Geography, Environmental Geography, or Geographic Information Science. Students are required to complete a minimum number of 28 graduate credit hours in Geography at the 400 level or above. Coursework substitutions may be approved as appropriate by a student’s graduate committee. No more than 6 credit hours of 400-level courses may be counted towards the degree. Students may petition their committee to transfer up to 9 credit hours from another program, including other graduate programs at WVU.

- **Grade Point Average:** Students must earn a minimum GPA of 3.0 overall, and 3.0 in coursework applied to their graduate program.

- **Comprehensive Examinations:** The student is required to pass an oral and three written comprehensive examinations no later than the fourth semester. The student will be examined on two specialty areas and a third area closely related to the proposed dissertation research topic.

- **Dissertation Proposal/Defense:** Upon successful completion of the comprehensive examination and no later than the end of the fifth semester, the student will be expected to defend a dissertation research proposal. The award of the Ph.D. is granted upon the successful defense of the dissertation itself.

- **Additional Requirements:** The academic progress of every Ph.D. 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 Ph.D. deadlines, timing requirements, and other rules may be requested from the Graduate Director. Waivers are only given under extraordinary circumstances.

- **Timeline and Required Deadlines:**
  - First year: Course work
    - Fall semester: File plan of study
    - Spring semester: Form committee
  - Second year: Course work
    - Fall semester: Form committee, if not yet completed
    - Spring semester: Oral and Written comprehensive exams
  - Third year: Defend proposal/Field work/Data collection
    - Fall semester: Defend dissertation proposal by the end of semester
    - Fall and Spring semesters: Collect data/conduct fieldwork as necessary
  - Fourth year: Dissertation writing

Curriculum Requirements

**CORE COURSES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 600</td>
<td>Geography Research Colloquium (4 credits minimum)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEOG 601</td>
<td>Geographic Traditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 603</td>
<td>Qualitative Research in Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or GEOG 701</td>
<td>Quantitative Spatial Analysis</td>
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**GEOGRAPHY ELECTIVES**

- Two GEOG courses at the 500 level or above

**METHODS COURSE**

- Select one course from the following list:
  - GEOG 550 Geographic Information Science
  - GEOG 602 Geographic Research-Design
  - GEOG 651 Geographic Information Science: Technical Issues
  - GEOG 654 Environmental Geographic Information Systems Modeling
  - GEOG 655 Remote Sensing Principles
  - GEOG 753 Exploratory Spatial Data Analysis
SEMINAR COURSE

Select one course from the following list:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 591</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 594</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 612</td>
<td>Gender, Society and Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 640</td>
<td>Geopolitical Perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 691</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 696</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 791</td>
<td>Advanced Topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 794</td>
<td>Seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 796</td>
<td>Graduate Seminar</td>
</tr>
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ADDITIONAL COURSEWORK

In consultation with graduate committee, select an additional 6 credit hours of graduate level coursework**

Total Hours: 28

* Excluding GEOG 600, GEOG 601, GEOG 697, GEOG 780, GEOG 797.

** Additional coursework may include Geography courses at the graduate level or, with approval from the student's graduate committee, may include graduate level coursework from related disciplines. Additional disciplines may include, but are not limited to, graduate level coursework in Biology, Forestry, Geology, History, Natural Resource Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Statistics, Women's and Gender Studies. Additional coursework also exclude GEOG 600, GEOG 601, GEOG 697, GEOG 780, 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.

PH.D. PROGRAM

Students obtaining a doctorate in geography will be able to:

• Communicate geographical concepts orally and in writing
• Apply research skills to analyze geographical questions
• Propose, produce and defend original research of publishable quality
• Explain geographic principles as they relate to their area of research
• Effectively communicate the state of knowledge in their research area
• Identify research questions in geography
• Critique and assess peer-reviewed literature