

Geography

Learning Goals

1. To understand, use, and articulate concepts that are fundamental to a geographical perspective, such as scale, region, location, place, distance, and connectivity.
2. To critically examine a range of thematic problems; to pose and evaluate geographic questions within a range of epistemological frameworks.
3. To develop and use basic geographic skills such as map reading and analysis, landscape interpretation, and regional synthesis; to interpret and evaluate different forms of geographic evidence such as maps, landscapes, images, and location/place-based data.
4. To select and implement geographic methods that are appropriate to answer given questions; to analyze quantitative and qualitative information to answer those questions; to effectively tell the story visually, verbally, in writing, and through maps.
5. To design and carry out independent geographic research that demonstrates an understanding of how geographers ask questions, collect evidence, use methods, and contextualize their investigation and findings in relation to philosophical and theoretical frameworks.

About the major

Geography is an inherently interdisciplinary field of study that explores virtually all aspects of life on earth from a distinctly spatial perspective. The Geography Department at Middlebury focuses on human geography. We provide our majors with a strong foundation in geographic concepts and theory, substantive knowledge in the major branches of human geography, and extensive training in geospatial methods including GIS and cartography.

Learning to think spatially, and to communicate geographic ideas and evidence both visually and verbally, are fundamental goals of our curriculum.

Geography students are well prepared to do independent research and to work with faculty members as research assistants. Geography students further enrich their education through summer internships with government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

Geographers seek to identify and explain spatial patterns and processes and how they change over time. Maps have a special place in geography as uniquely revealing sources and as means of presenting geographic arguments. A

major objective of the Geography Department is to make students sensitive to these concepts, so that they can better understand the world in which they live.

“I use the analytical, communication and technical skills from my major daily to provide context for business decisions, ensure that I consider different perspectives in my work, and find new problems that geographic analysis can be applied to.”

—Sam Libby '09
Practice Lead, Esri

Reasons you might choose this major

- Face it, you love maps and have spent hours poring over an atlas.
- You are fascinated by human interactions across space and time, both globally and in particular locations.
- You want to better understand how politics, economics, ethnicities, and other factors affect human relationships to particular places, nationalities, and identities.
- You want to better understand and analyze major societal challenges important to you, such as economic inequality, climate change, territorial disputes, and energy.
- You want to enhance your GIS and other technology skills.



Translating Learning into Professional Competencies

Throughout your time at Middlebury, you will develop and enhance the following core professional competencies, skills, and dispositions highly valued by employers that will prepare you for leadership and success in any given field:

Critical Thinking: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.

Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers from diverse backgrounds.

Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits.

Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional development.

Where geography majors go

Applying your learning through internships . . .

Students pursue internships and research in a variety of fields, enabling them to apply their liberal arts learning in real-world settings. Internships, research, and self-directed projects enrich your academic experience and help prepare you for life after Middlebury. Students have interned or done research at the following:

Street Sense	NOAA
Witnify.com	EduCare India
Montana Land Reliance	Tunisia Live
Global Health Living Foundation	New Venture Fund
Rhumb Line Maps	Global Family Initiative
GlobalPost	Environmental Law & Policy Center
Louisville Metro Government	Stanford University Medical School
One World Now	China Exploration and Research Society
Maine Farmland Trust	Undergraduate Summer Research at Middlebury
Appalachian Mountain Club	
Institute of Global Orthopaedics and Traumatology	

. . . leading to meaningful, dynamic, and engaging career paths.

See just some of the many interesting ways our graduates have applied their liberal arts learning to engage the world. If you want to see what other Middlebury alumni are doing now, log into Midd2Midd and search by major. [go/midd2midd](#)

U.S. Department of the Interior, <i>Attorney</i>	Outside Magazine, <i>Associate Editor</i>
NYC Office of Emergency Management, <i>GIS Specialist</i>	Cyrq Energy Inc., <i>CEO</i>
Defence Construction Canada, <i>Environmental Services</i>	Pierson Land Works LLC, <i>Vice President for Operations/Senior Project Manager</i>
U.S. Agency for International Development, <i>Senior GIS Analyst</i>	The World Bank, <i>Operations Officer, Health, Nutrition, and Population</i>
Maps for Good, <i>Cofounder/Cartographer</i>	Portland Development Commission, <i>Policy Manager</i>
National Geographic Society, <i>Digital Graphics Editor</i>	Center for Community GIS, <i>Director</i>
South Shore Natural Science Center, <i>Executive Director</i>	Wildlife Conservation Society, <i>Vice President/Global Conservation</i>
Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, <i>Geospatial Analyst</i>	Grizzly Creek Films, <i>Executive Producer and Director</i>
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, <i>President and Chief Scientist</i>	A J Walter Aviation, <i>Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer</i>
European Environmental Agency, <i>Climate Change Mitigation</i>	MapBox, <i>Software Developer</i>
Axis Maps, <i>Managing Director</i>	Shacksbury Cider/Lost Apple Project, <i>Cofounder</i>
Discovery Communications, <i>Vice President, Branded Entertainment</i>	City and County of Denver, <i>Senior City Planner</i>