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 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.
4. 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.
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
- Witnify.com
- Montana Land Reliance
- Global Health Living Foundation
- Rhumb Line Maps
- GlobalPost
- Louisville Metro Government
- One World Now
- Maine Farmland Trust
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- Institute of Global Orthopaedics and Traumatology
- NOAA
- EduCare India
- Tunisia Live
- New Venture Fund
- Global Family Initiative
- Environmental Law & Policy Center
- Stanford University Medical School
- China Exploration and Research Society
- Undergraduate Summer Research at Middlebury. . . 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, Attorney
- NYC Office of Emergency Management, GIS Specialist
- Defence Construction Canada, Environmental Services
- U.S. Agency for International Development, Senior GIS Analyst
- Maps for Good, Cofounder/Cartographer
- National Geographic Society, Digital Graphics Editor
- South Shore Natural Science Center, Executive Director
- Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, Geospatial Analyst
- Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative, President and Chief Scientist
- European Environmenta Agency, Climate Change Mitigation
- Axis Maps, Managing Director
- Discovery Communications, Vice President, Branded Entertainment
- Outside Magazine, Associate Editor
- Cyrq Energy Inc., CEO
- Pierson Land Works LLC, Vice President for Operations/Senior Project Manager
- The World Bank, Operations Officer, Health, Nutrition, and Population
- Portland Development Commission, Policy Manager
- Center for Community GIS, Director
- Wildlife Conservation Society, Vice President/Global Conservation
- Grizzly Creek Films, Executive Producer and Director
- A J Walter Aviation, Treasurer and Chief Investment Officer
- MapBox, Software Developer
- Shacksbury Cider/Lost Apple Project, Cofounder
- City and County of Denver, Senior City Planner

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