Geography (GEO) - Courses

+ next to a course number indicates a general education course

Courses

+GEO 102 Cr.3
Maps and Society
This course introduces all aspects of maps and how they affect the individual in society. It examines the evolution of maps, the map as an art form, the map as a communication medium for spatial knowledge, the meaning of maps and their relationship to culture and society past and present, the influence of maps on an individual through mass media and the Internet, and the way maps reflect personal and societal points of view. It focuses on privacy and civil liberty issues of the individual in the age of digital information where maps and map databases can disclose the privacy of personal space. In addition, today’s GIS maps (in planning, in marketing, in hazard controls, etc.) embed substantial amounts of personal information that can affect personal security and how our lives are directly, indirectly, knowingly, and unknowingly influenced. Offered Fall, Spring.

+GEO 110 Cr.3
World Cultural Regions
This course provides an understanding of the global distribution of world cultures. The cultural, economic and natural patterns and their interrelationships are examined on a global and regional scale. The development and distribution of cultural regions within countries are included when appropriate. Offered Fall, Spring.

+GEO 200 Cr.3
Conservation of Global Environments
Introduction to natural resources, resource management, environmental and land use ethics, environmental impacts of resource utilization and strategies to resolve environmental conflicts. Course examines the relationships between society and the environment from the global to the local scale. Offered Fall, Spring.

GEO 201 Cr.3
Geography of United States and Canada
Physical and cultural characteristics of United States and Canada. Changing patterns of land use and the accompanying economic and cultural development of the various regions. Offered Occasionally.

+GEO 202 Cr.3
Contemporary Global Issues
This course will offer a contemporary multi-disciplinary perspective regarding the major issues and trends confronting the global society as it enters the 21st century. Emphasis will be given to a critical review and assessment of the origin and present condition of the plethora of situations and problems affecting modern global society. The student will also learn to critically evaluate current and future events. The course will incorporate the views and approaches of the following disciplines: sociology/anthropology, economics, geography, political science, and history. Students may only earn credit in one of the following: ANT 202, ECO 202, GEO 202, HIS 202, POL 202, SOC 202. Offered Fall, Spring.

GEO 204 Cr.3
Geography of Wisconsin
Geographic patterns in Wisconsin. Physiographic regions, climate, population distribution, resources and their use, agriculture, industry, transportation, and urban growth. Offered Occasionally.

GEO 208 Cr.3
Applications of Geographic Information Systems I
An introduction to applied aspects of Geographic Information Systems. GIS software, with an emphasis on ArcGIS, will be used to develop working proficiency with basic GIS procedures and applications. Topics include data input and output, forming queries, data overlay processes, and creating map layouts. Prerequisite: not open to geography majors. Offered Occasionally.

ESC/GEO 250 Cr.3
Maps and GIS
Students will acquire fundamental knowledge and learn key concepts underlying spatial data, different map types and uses, thematic symbolization and visualization, and spatial analytical techniques. They will learn how to critically assess and communicate knowledge concerning spatial environments. Students will also learn how to use GIS and Web mapping technologies. Lect. 2, Lab 2. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall, Spring.

GEO 300 Cr.3
Population Geography
A systematic analysis of the populations of the world and the geographic factors influencing human existence. A study of the origin and distribution of populations and the cultural features with which they are associated. Offered Occasionally.

GEO 304 Cr.3
Geography of Europe
Geographic factors in the changing physical, political, cultural and economic patterns in Europe. Emphasis on northwestern, central, and southern Europe and their importance in world affairs. Offered Occasionally.

GEO 306 Cr.3
Economic Geography
This course introduces students to the global economic patterns which have shaped and conditioned the world of the 1990s, and the salient economic geography models and approaches which help to explain such patterns. Elements emphasized include the evolution of social and economic organization; the globalization of economic activity since the late 1400s; the interconnectedness of development and underdevelopment; and the relationship between development and social environmental problems. Prerequisite: GEO 110 or ECO 110 or HIS 101 or ANT/ECO/GEO/HIS/POL/SOC 202. Offered Occasionally.

GEO 307 Cr.3
Political Geography
A real differentiation and analysis of relationships between geographic factors and political entities. This includes physical environment, organization of space, cultural influences, and economic capabilities. Offered Occasionally.

GEO 308 Cr.3
Applications of GIS II
Advanced exploration of geographic information systems tools and applications. GIS software, with an emphasis on ArcGIS, is used to develop advanced GIS skills. Topics include: working with coordinate systems, editing and managing relational databases, working with ArcGIS extensions, and GIS project management. Prerequisite: GEO 208. Not open to geography majors. Offered Occasionally.

GEO 309 Cr.3
Urban Geography
Geographical study of cities, their form, function, site and situation. Classification of cities, urban land use patterns, and the role of the city within its region. Offered Occasionally.
Transportation Geography
Transportation geography is the study of the movement of people and commodities across the earth’s surface. It deals with the spatial interactions between people and places. This course is designed to introduce you to the study of transportation systems from a geographic perspective. One can think of transportation as a service that the transportation industry offers travelers to insure mobility. The relation between the supply for transportation and the demand for moving people and goods characterize the performance of the transportation system. Such performance is extremely important for our sustainability as it relates to the well being of our economy, society and environment. Studying a transportation system and its performance entails the analysis of various aspects that relate to infrastructure, vehicles, and operations by which vehicles are operated using the available infrastructure. The effective management of transportation systems requires an understanding of various concepts and analytical methods that are often used by transportation professionals to make informed decisions about transportation policy. While transport geographers study a wide range of topics, the focus of this introductory course is on: theoretical and practical concepts of transport geography, current transportation issues and problems, and analytical methods for describing, analyzing and modeling transportation systems using GIS software. Offered Annually.

Geography of Africa
Cultural, physical and economic characteristics including the bases of problems in socio-economic development are investigated from a geographic perspective. Resources, regions, and world ties are studied. Offered Occasionally.

The Geography of Latin America and the Caribbean
The cultural and physical characteristics of Latin America and the Caribbean region are systematically examined and explained. This includes an examination of diverse physical and ‘built’ environments that encompass this region, from the borderlands of northern Mexico to the Tierra Del Fuego of the south; from the lush tropical environments of the Amazon, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, to the Altiplano and arid regions of the west; from disparate lowlands to the startling mountain zones of the Andes. Indigenous civilizations which developed out of unique arrangements with these complex environments as well as those imposed and imported since 1500 will be explored in depth. Offered Occasionally.

Sustainable Development and Conservation
This course is designed to engage students in critical thinking with regard to how the current momentum in environmental conservation is shaping global development practices. The dual and seemingly conflicting mandates of conservation and development are examined not only through theory but also case studies from different parts of the world. Offered Annually.

Geography of East and Southeast Asia
The geography of China, Japan, the Koreas, and Mongolia; the geography of the 10 states of Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines, and Burma. Contemporary geopolitical problems and prospects; East Asia and the world; primordial and historical factors contributing to identity and conflict. The course emphasizes human-cultural patterns, salient physical characteristics, and the relationship between these. Offered Occasionally.

Geography of the Middle East, Central and South Asia
Cultural, physical and economic elements of this predominantly Islamic domain are examined from a geographic perspective for a better understanding of this region of the world. Cultural and socio-economic impact of these regions on other regions and cultures of the world, including their resources, are investigated. Offered Occasionally.

Earth’s Polar Regions
The geography of the Arctic and Antarctic. Physical environment, climate, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, natural resources and development, exploration, governance, indigenous peoples, and anthropogenic impacts. Comparisons and contrasts between the circumpolar northern Arctic region and the southern continent of Antarctica. Connections of the polar regions to global processes and international issues. Offered Occasionally.

Remote Sensing
Introduction to remote sensing, emphasizing satellite multispectral observations of the earth applied to such fields as agriculture, forestry, water resources, urban and regional planning, and environmental assessment. Upper Midwest and selected areas worldwide are explored with visual and digital image processing techniques. (Cross listed with ESC/GEO, may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall.

Map Design and Geovisualization
In this course students will learn about the process of making maps, how to acquire and appropriately manipulate spatial data, and how to design clear, compelling, and beautiful maps. In addition to the key theories underlying the cartographic discipline, students will learn technical skills to enhance their other research interests and make them far more competitive on the job market once they graduate. Students will apply their knowledge about map design using cutting edge software. Lect. 2, Lab 2. Prerequisite: GEO/ESC 250. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall.

Introduction to Geographic Information System and Science
An introduction to both theoretical and applied aspects of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). GIS software, with an emphasis on ArcGIS, will be used to explore geographic questions. Hands-on exercises pertaining to environmental science, natural resource management, business, and urban planning will be used to complement lecture material. Topics will include data organization, database structure, input and output, data quality, and geographic analysis of spatial and attribute data. Lect. 2, Lab 2. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 250; STAT 145. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall, Spring.
**ESC/GEO 390 Cr.3**  
**Geospatial Field Methods**  
Covers fundamental concepts of geospatial data collection, analysis, and representation. Students gain hands-on experience using geospatial technology at field sites in the La Crosse area. Includes reconnaissance and surveys using current methods, including GPS and total stations; and practical integration of field data into a geographic information system. Lect. 2, Lab 2. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 385 or concurrent enrollment; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall.

**GEO 395 Cr.3**  
**Geospatial Applications of Unmanned Aerial Systems**  
This course provides an introduction to the Unmanned Aerial system (UAS) from the geospatial perspective which includes: UAS sensors and platforms, civilian and remote sensing applications, sensors calibration and boresighting, operational requirements, data processing using specialized software to derive products such as ortho-rectified imagery, multispectral imagery, digital terrain and surface models, current rules and regulations governing owning and operating a UAS in the United States. Students in this course will get hands-on experience of UAS mission planning and flying with both fixed-wing and multi-rotor UAS for environmental data collection outside classroom. The course content will also prepare the students for the remote pilot exam conducted by the FAA. They will complete hands-on lab exercises involving UAS data pre-processing and analysis to generate geospatial products and access their accuracy. Lect. 2, Lab 2. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 250. Offered Occasionally.

**GEO 401 Cr.1**  
**Focus on Geography: A Capstone Course**  
A seminar-style course designed to prepare students for graduate school and/or a career in geography/earth science. This course will cover the basic concepts of interviewing, graduate school application, oral presentation of a topic, and the writing of professional abstracts. The development of the field will be studied by the reading and discussion of landmark articles in geography and earth science. Students are expected to actively participate in the assessment of their major. Prerequisite: senior standing. Offered Fall.

**ECO/GEO/HIS/POL/PSY/SOC 408 Cr.4**  
**Teaching and Learning History and Social Studies in the Secondary School**  
This course will be integrated with a field experience. In the context of a real classroom, teacher candidates will learn how to plan for and assess student learning in history and social sciences. With a focus on content knowledge, teacher candidates will plan a variety of meaningful learning experiences, assess student learning, and monitor and modify instruction to best support the individual learners in the classroom. The teacher candidate will design, enact, and assess activities that advance student understanding to more complex levels. Teacher candidates will gain experience in monitoring the obstacles and barriers that some students or groups of students face in school and learn how to design learning experiences to support all learners. Prerequisite: EDS 351. (Cross-listed with ECO/GEO/HIS/POL/PSY/SOC; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall, Spring.

**ESC/GEO 422/522 Cr.3**  
**Meteorology**  
Atmospheric concepts and processes of the earth's weather are covered. Principles and laws which govern the behavior of the atmosphere are investigated, including energy exchange between the earth and the atmosphere, forces governing atmospheric motion, atmospheric moisture and stability, condensation and precipitation processes, air masses and cyclogenesis, thunderstorm and tornado development, and hurricanes. Surface and upper-air charts, synoptic patterns, thermodynamic charts; radar and satellite images, and weather patterns are analyzed. Prerequisite: ESC 221; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Spring.

**ESC/GEO 425/525 Cr.3**  
**Biogeography**  
A systematic analysis of the geographic distribution of organisms from historical, ecological and regional perspectives. Emphasis is placed on the principles and the methods of biogeography. Special reference is made to bio-geographic regions, the distribution of organisms in space and time, and ecological biogeography. Prerequisite: ESC 101 or ESC 211; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall - Odd Numbered Years.

**ESC/GEO 426/526 Cr.4**  
**Soil Systems**  
A comprehensive study of soils around the world and the factors and processes that drive their formation and dynamic evolution. Emphasis is placed on soil morphology, formation, and biogeochemical influences within the soil environment. A one-credit lab section is devoted to the hands-on exploration and study of soils through laboratory and field exercises. Prerequisite: ESC 222; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

**ESC/GEO 427 Cr.3**  
**Water Resources**  
A study of physical water resources systems and management and utilization of water as a resource. Class activities will include seminars on critical water resource management issues and hands-on analysis of pertinent data, including exercises in Geographic Information Systems. Prerequisite: ESC 101; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Spring - Odd Numbered Years.

**ESC/GEO 428 Cr.3**  
**Past Environmental Change**  
An overview of the study of environmental change during the Quaternary. Approaches used to understand past climatic conditions and effects on terrestrial and marine ecosystems at global, regional and local scales will be explored, as will physical, geochemical and biological methods associated with continuous and depositional environments. Prerequisite: ESC 221 and ESC 222; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Alternate Years.

**ESC/GEO 430/530 Cr.3**  
**River Systems**  
A systematic study of the interactions of flowing water and surface landforms. Emphasis is placed on watershed and stream development, sediment transport and storage, flow frequency analysis, and applications of fluvial principles to river management and stream restoration. Class activities will include field exercises in the La Crosse region, mathematical analysis of hydrologic variables, and spatial analysis with Geographic Information Systems. Prerequisite: ESC 222; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Spring - Odd Numbered Years.
ESC/GEO 440/540 Cr.3
Geographic Interpretation of Aerial Photographs
Systematic applications of aerial photographs in the interpretation and analysis of geographic problems. Emphasis is placed on the interpretation of digital photographs within a geographic information system. Topics include urban and rural land use, natural resource, and environmental assessment. Lect. 2, Lab. 2. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 385; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

ESC/GEO 445/545 Cr.3
Advanced Remote Sensing
Advanced techniques of digital satellite and airborne image analysis and processing, emphasizing theory and applications in natural resource, land use and environmental assessment. Includes practical approaches to integrating imagery with geographic information systems for spatial analyses and decision making. Data acquisition, integrity, manipulation, formatting, storage, and retrieval are also examined. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 345. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Spring.

ESC/GEO 450 Cr.3-12
Geography Internship
Practical experience with a variety of organizations where the student's geographic background and training can be utilized to advantage. Students are placed in carefully selected positions screened by the department. Actual work supervision is accomplished by personnel of the selected agency and the department staff coordinator. A maximum of five credits may be counted toward the non-education major. Prerequisite: geography major; cumulative GPA of 2.25 with a minimum of 2.75 GPA in geography; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Pass/Fail grading. Offered Fall, Spring, Summer.

ESC/GEO 455/555 Cr.3
Web Mapping
In this course, students will learn how to produce and design interactive Web maps for communication. Web maps take many forms and they are continually changing. Thus, the objective of this course is to do two things: (1) develops proficiency in the scripting languages and tools most frequently used to design and create these maps; and (2) teaches the theory and concepts underlying good Web map design so that as the technologies change in the future students will still be able to design effective Web maps. At the end of this course, students will be able to design a Web map from scratch. Lect. 2, Lab 2. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 250, ESC/GEO 355; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO, may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Spring.

ESC/GEO 460/560 Cr.3
Environmental Hazards
Environmental processes are investigated in light of the hazards they might pose for development and how they may be avoided, mitigated and managed. Prerequisite: ESC 221 or ESC 222; junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall - Even Numbered Years.

GEO 465/565 Cr.3
Scripting in GIS
This course will teach students how to customize within GIS software using scripting and programming tools commonly used in GIS discipline. Students will learn about the conceptual and practical aspects of programming for geographic applications using Python, a free open-source scripting language. Python is well integrated with all the major GIS softwares, and a very popular language among GIS professionals. The course focuses on solving geographic problems by modifying and automating generic GIS software through programming. In this course, students will learn general and transferable scripting skills, and GIS-specific applications, including the basics of writing and modifying scripts, batch processing and automation of repetitive geoprocessing tasks, and designing complex geoprocessing tasks. The skills learned in this course are equally applicable in scientific research, the public sector, and in industry. Students taking this course must be familiar with geographic data structures, basic GIS concepts, and demonstrate basic understanding of geospatial analysis. No prior programming experience is required or expected. This course is taught largely at an undergraduate level. Graduate students will have additional course requirements/expectations. Lect. 2, Lab 2. Prerequisite: ESC/GEO 385. Offered Occasionally.

ESC/GEO 470/570 Cr.1-3
Special Topics in Geography/Earth Science
Specifically selected topics or skills which may be designed for the interest of special groups will be offered with formalized instruction and methodology appropriate to geography and/or earth science. May be counted as an elective in the geography major or earth science minor at the discretion of the Geography/Earth Science Department. Prerequisite may be required at the discretion of the department. Repeatable for credit - maximum six. Prerequisite: junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

ESC/GEO 476/576 Cr.1-3
Geography/Earth Science Topics for Teachers
Selected topics in geography and/or earth science pertinent to applications in the teachers' classrooms. Courses are designed to meet the needs of teachers so that they may implement the course material into their classroom teaching. Prerequisite: junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

GEO 485/585 Cr.3
Advanced Geographic Information Science
Advanced theories in geographic information systems database structures, advanced applications, database transfers, database management, use of census data, spatial analysis, and decision-making. Emphasis on ARCGIS and its applications. Integration of GIS with remote sensing and GPS. Lect. 2, Lab. 2. Prerequisite: STAT 145; ESC/GEO 385; junior standing. Offered Spring.

GEO 488 Cr.3
Spatial Data Analysis
Theory, methods, and techniques for quantitative analysis of spatial data. Students will learn and employ basic quantitative techniques for describing, modeling, and analyzing spatial data. This course explores point pattern analysis, methods for continuous data, and spatial regression. Focus will be on the interpretation and the application of spatial data analysis techniques to address geographic problems. Prerequisite: STAT 145; GEO/ESC 385 or concurrent enrollment; junior standing. Offered Alternate Years.
ESC/GEO 490/590 Cr.2-3

**Independent Study**

Individual readings and investigation of selected problems in geography. Open to senior majors and minors with a "B" (3.00) average in geography. Registration with consent of regular advisor, instructor, department chairperson, and the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. Repeatable for credit - maximum six. Maximum three credits applicable to major. Maximum three credits from any instructor. Prerequisite: junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Consent of instructor. Offered Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer.

ESC/GEO 495/595 Cr.1-3

**Seminar in Geography/Earth Science**

Investigation into various topics in geography or the earth sciences. Varying topics will be offered at intervals with a specific title assigned to each. Prerequisite: two semesters of geography and/or earth science. Additional prerequisite may be required by the instructor. Repeatable for credit - maximum six. Variable topics; check semester timetables. Prerequisite: junior standing. (Cross-listed with ESC/GEO; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Occasionally.

ESC/GEO 499 Cr.1-3

**Undergraduate Research**

Individual research by an advanced student under the supervision of a faculty member in the geography/earth science department. The student must present a written report and either have their work published in an appropriate journal or presented either orally or by poster at a conference acceptable to the department chair and adviser. A contract must be signed by the student, the project advisor, the student's advisor and the Geography/Earth Science Department Chair. Repeatable for credit - maximum three. Three credits may be applied to a major or minor in geography and earth science. Prerequisite: 12 credits of geography and/or earth science with six of the credits numbered 300 or above, or consent of the instructor and department chair. (Cross-listed with GEO/ESC; may only earn credit in one department.) Offered Fall, Winter, Spring, Summer.