Macalester’s nationally and internationally recognized Geography Department is unusually broad in scope for an undergraduate liberal arts college. The department leads students through an exploration of urban and regional planning, human-environment geography, cartography, geographic information science, and population and socioeconomic development in various regions of the world. Students may major or minor in geography and non-majors may take a specialized minor focused on geographic information systems (GIS).

Faculty and Staff
The department’s faculty members serve as academic advisors and each year teach approximately 575 students, including nearly 110 majors and 25 minors in about 25 courses (not including independent projects and internships).

Holly Barcus, professor and chair, is a population geographer with interests in rural environments around the globe. She teaches Population 7 Billion; Contemporary Mongolia, Rural Landscapes and Livelihoods; Introduction to GIS; GIS and Community Partnerships; and a senior seminar on Migration and Migrants. Her recent projects focus on the intersection between migration, (im) mobilities, and identity among ethnic minorities in rural Mongolia and the migration-induced changes in ethnic diversity of rural communities in the United States.

Eric Carter, Edens Associate Professor of Geography and Global Health, teaches Medical Geography, Geography of Environmental Hazards, Geography of Latin America, Health GIS, and a senior seminar in medical geography. His research focuses on the science and politics of public health; disease ecology; international development; and environmental justice, principally in Latin America.

I-Chun Catherine Chang, assistant professor, is an urban and economic geographer with interests in sustainable urbanism and green capitalism in the global South. She teaches World Urbanization; Geography of Asia; Asian Cities; Urban Ecology; and a senior seminar on Global Urbanism. Her recent research focuses on the local variegations and global circulations of eco-city policies, financialization of sustainable urbanism production, and the inequality implications of Asian green urban projects.

David Lanegran, John S. Holl Professor of Geography Emeritus, is the coordinator of the Minnesota Alliance for Geographic Education (MAGE) and teaches summer courses for K–12 geography teachers. MAGE provides a wide range of services to teachers of geography with support from the National Geographic Education Foundation, the Minnesota Office of Higher Education, and other organizations interested in K–12 education.

William Moseley, professor, is a development and environment geographer. He teaches Human Geography; People, Agriculture and the Environment; Geography of Development and Underdevelopment; Geography of Africa; and a senior seminar in Comparative Environment and Development Studies. His research focuses on tropical agriculture, food security, environment and development policy, and Africa.

Ashley Nepp, GIS lab instructor, is a GIS specialist with a particular interest in cartographic design and geovisualization. She teaches the lab component for the introductory and advanced GIS courses, manages the GIS computer laboratory, and works on GIS-related community outreach projects.

Laura Smith, associate professor, teaches courses in urban economic geography, transportation, the regional geography of the U.S. and Canada, and statistical methods. She also teaches an urban GIS seminar that connects the class with a community project. Her research projects have focused on mortgage foreclosures in the Twin Cities and on issues of American Indian land ownership.

Daniel Trudeau, associate professor, teaches City Life, Qualitative Methods, Political Geography, Urban Geography, and Cities of the 21st Century. His research focuses on urban governance, processes of racial segregation and integration, and the politics of urban sustainability movements in North America.

Recent Topics Courses
Geovisualization
Contemporary Mongolia
Asian Cities
Urban Ecology

Honors Projects
Rachel Fehr ’16 (Iowa City, Iowa), “Exploring the Role of Horticulture in Alleviating Food Insecurity Among Women in Botswana”
Claire Hofius ’16 (Whidbey Island, Wash.), “Vaccination and Risk: The Influence of Environmental and Social Risk on Vaccination Refusal in California”
Paige Moody ’16 (Lee, N.H.), “Car Sharing and Local Sustainability: Exposing the Implications of Assumption-Based Sustainability Initiatives in Minneapolis”
Claire Finn ’15 (Davis, Calif.), “National Park Service Relevancy in the 21st Century: An Exploration of Racial Inclusion and the Urban Push”
Zhe Yu Lee ’15 (Singapore), “Farmer Discontent in Peri-Urban Bangalore: The Utopia of Agricultural Modernization, Neoliberal Developmentalism and the 21st Century Global City”
Special Opportunities

Students often assist faculty members with professional research. One recent project was to develop a neighborhood profile for use as a base for planning for future development. Students also collaborated with faculty to study the revitalization potential of inner-city commercial corridors in the Twin Cities. Another student worked with a faculty member to study food deserts in Cape Town, South Africa, and another studied migration and changing religious landscapes in Mongolia.

Numerous geography majors have collaborated with faculty on presentations for professional conferences such as the Midwestern Undergraduate Geography Symposium. In addition, Honors students presented their honors research at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers in San Francisco.

Students in Regional Geography of the U.S. and Canada; and People, Agriculture and the Environment courses have taken trips to Thunder Bay, Ontario, and the Minnesota Iron Range to examine the resource-based economy of the boreal forest region. Rural Landscapes and Livelihoods students explored small towns and their economies in rural Wisconsin, including tours of dairy farms and apple producers.

Honors and Awards

The National Council for Geographic Education Award for Excellence of Scholarship is awarded to an outstanding senior majoring in geography.

The David A. Lanegran Award in Geography, named after the department’s longest-serving faculty member, is presented annually to senior geography majors in recognition of their significant contributions to the community life of the department.

The Hildegard Binder Johnson Prize, named after the department’s founder, is presented annually to senior geography majors in recognition of their significant contributions to the community life of the department.

The traditional and notorious Golden Shovel is given to students who distinguish themselves verbally in seminars, class discussions, and on field trips.

Study Abroad

At Macalester, all students are encouraged to study abroad. Geography majors may take part of their junior year abroad anywhere from Asia, Africa, Australia and Europe to South America. Geography faculty members have recently directed study abroad programs in Botswana and South Africa.

Internships

Van Anh Le ’18 (Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam), American Chamber of Commerce in Singapore
Hannah Bonestroo ’17 (Ames, Iowa), Belize REU Site, community GIS intern
Katie Jurenka ’17 (Ames, Iowa), Metropolitan Council–Green Line Extension Office
Daniel Lindholm ’17 (Madison, Wis.), MAMAC Systems, energy display evaluator
Dorothy Moore ’17 (Oak Park, Ill.), St. Paul Federation of Teachers, social media coordinator
Jessie Del Fiacco ’16 (Spooner, Wis.), Water Legacy, communications and development intern
Paige Moody ’16 (Lee, N.H.), Gardening Matters, data and mapping intern
Matt Creasy ’15 (Freeport, Maine), Minnesota Land Trust, intern

After Macalester

Gage Garretson ’16 (Camp Lejeune, N.C.) is a 2016 American Humanity in Action Fellow.
Joseph Klein ’16 (Webster Groves, Mo.) is a service development intern at Metro Transit.
Jesse Meisenhelter ’16 (Portland, Ore.) is interning with National Geographic in Washington, D.C.
Claire Finn ’15 (Davis, Calif.) is the Centennial Volunteer Ambassador for the National Park Service, stationed at Yosemite National Park in California.
Jordan Lim ’15 (Cupertino, Calif.) received a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant award to work in Malaysia.
Anoushka Millear ’15 (Seattle) received a post-bachelor fellowship at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) in Seattle.
Charles Stanton ’15 (Chicago) is teaching in Chicago with Teach for America.
Zachary Aver ’14 (Sioux Falls, S.D.) was selected for the New York City Urban Fellows program.
Sylvia Thomas ’14 (Winona, Minn.) won a prestigious Watson Fellowship to study community radio in Bolivia, Bangladesh, and Tanzania.
Sara Horowitz ’13 (Pelham, Mass.) is a Fulbright Scholar in China investigating periurban agriculture.
Agata Miszczyk ’13 (Rochester, Minn.) is a GIS Technician at HDR, a civil engineering firm.
David Tomporowski ’12 (Perham, Minn.) is senior transportation planner at the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Alumni currently pursuing or recently receiving master’s and/or doctoral degrees in geography:

Nick Mar ’15 (Sacramento, Calif.) is pursuing an MS in management at Northwestern University–Kellogg School of Business.
Evan Moorman ’14 (Los Angeles), master’s in urban and regional planning at the University of California–Los Angeles.
Slaviša Mijatovic ’12 (Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina), MA, York University
Kathryn Zager ’12 (Anchorage, Alaska), MA, University of North Carolina

Visitors

Recent invited speakers sponsored by the department include these professors: Caroline Faria (University of Texas–Austin), Dawn Biehler (University of Maryland–Baltimore County); Lorraine Dowler (Penn State University); Owen Furuseth (University of North Carolina–Charlotte); and Maano Ramutsindela (University of Cape Town).

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