The faculty encourages graduate students to arrange courses of study appropriate to their individual needs and aspirations. Programs in Geography may be directed toward a career in public service, teaching and research, private industry, or one of the many other vocational opportunities open to geographers.

Students typically concentrate their study on topics that fall within the special skills and interests of the faculty. Current specialties include behavioral geography; biogeography; cartography; climatology; cultural geography; feminist geography; geo-computation; geographic education; geographic information science; geography of the developing world; geographic theory; geographic visualization; historical geography; human dimensions of global change; nature and society; political geography; population geography; regional economic development and industrial location; remote sensing; and urban geography.

**Admission Requirements**

Applicants apply for admission to the program via the Graduate School application for admission (http://gradschool.psu.edu/prospective-students/how-to-apply). Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-300 Admissions (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies).

Scores from the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) are required for admission, as well as a personal statement.

Students with a 3.00 junior/senior grade-point average (on a 4.00 scale) and with appropriate course work in geography or a related discipline will be considered for admission to the M.S. program or to the five-year Ph.D. program. Applicants with master’s degrees from high-quality graduate programs in geography will be considered for admission to the four-year doctoral program. The best-qualified applicants will be admitted up to the number of places that are available for new students. All students must have or must acquire a broad competence in physical geography, human geography, environment and society, GIScience, and analysis methods (qualitative or quantitative).

Baccalaureate students must earn a master’s degree before they will be considered for admission to the doctoral program.

**Degree Requirements**

**Master of Science (M.S.)**

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Requirements. (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies)

Penn State’s graduate program in Geography works with incoming students to design programs tailored to their specific interests and needs. Thus there are few formal requirements and a maximum of opportunities for students to pursue their own interests under the guidance of the faculty. Each student’s work is supervised by his or her academic adviser and by a committee consisting of two additional members of the Graduate Faculty for M.S. students. The M.S. program is broadly based. It is designed to provide beginning graduate students with basic training in systematic fields, geographical theory, and research techniques.

The M.S. degree may be earned by completing a thesis or two papers. The thesis option requires completion of at least 35 credits at the 400, 500, 600, and 800 level. If the two-paper option is elected, the student must earn 35 credits at the 400, 500, or 800 level. In both cases, at least 18 credits in the 500 and 600 series, combined, must be included in the program. The master’s papers are usually expanded versions of course or semester papers that are of sufficiently high quality that they can be submitted to scholarly journals. At least one of the papers offered to fulfill the M.S. papers requirement must have been written in connection with a departmental course or seminar.

All M.S. students are required to enroll in the following courses during their first year of residence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 500</td>
<td>Introduction to Geographic Research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 502</td>
<td>Research Scholarship in Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select at least three of the following:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 501A</td>
<td>Research Perspectives in Physical Geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 501B</td>
<td>Research Perspectives in Human Geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 501C</td>
<td>Research Perspectives in Human-Environment Geography</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEOG 501D</td>
<td>Research Perspectives in GIScience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All M.S. students are required to complete at least one seminar at the 500 level. Supporting courses are chosen in consultation with an entrance committee (in year one) or the adviser (in subsequent years).

**Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)**

Requirements listed here are in addition to Graduate Council policies listed under GCAC-600 Research Degree Requirements. (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies)

There are three paths to a Ph.D. One is a five-year Ph.D. with M.S. degree, which is available to students who enter Penn State Geography's graduate program without a master's degree. These students are on an accelerated schedule and earn an M.S. along the way to the Ph.D. The
second is a four-year Ph.D., which is available to those students who have already received a master's degree in another program either at Penn State or at another university. The third is an M.S.-to-Ph.D. path, which is available to Penn State Geography M.S. students who decide either to continue into the Ph.D. program after they have started their master's program, or to return for the Ph.D. after having graduated with the M.S. Students on this path are not accelerated and therefore will usually require two years to earn the master's and four years to earn the doctorate.

There is no fixed number of credits; courses are prescribed according to the student's prior experience and academic goals. Graduate Council's communication and foreign language requirement for the Ph.D. degree shall be satisfied in a manner approved by the candidate's doctoral committee.

All doctoral students are required to enroll in GEOG 500 and GEOG 502 during their first year of residence.

**Dual-Titles**

**Dual-Title Ph.D. in Geography and African Studies**

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs).

Geography doctoral students – who are already in the program and who have research and scholarly interests in comparative, sub-regional, national and thematic analyses, environmental change, livelihood systems, socio-economic and political change, and other aspects of African development – may apply to the dual-title doctoral degree program in African Studies. The goal of the dual-title program is to enable graduate students from Geography to complement their knowledge and skills in a major area of geographic specialization with in-depth knowledge of prevailing theories and problem-solving approaches to thematic, regional, or national issues pertaining to African Studies.

The dual-title degree program will provide interested Geography doctoral students with a multidisciplinary approach that will enhance their analytical capabilities for addressing key issues in African development and broad aspects of livelihood change. It thereby will add value to their Geography degree and increase their competitiveness in the job market. The well-rounded, regional specialist who graduates from the program is likely to be employed in an international setting. The program has the potential, therefore, to enhance the reputation of the Geography Department, the College of Earth and Mineral Sciences, the College of the Liberal Arts, and Penn State.

**Admission Requirements**

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Geography and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. Applicants interested in the dual-title degree program must satisfy the degree requirements for the dual-title in African Studies, listed on the African Studies Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/african-studies). Within this framework, final course selection is determined by the student in consultation with the Geography and African Studies academic advisers.

Upon acceptance into the dual-title degree program by the African Studies admissions committee, the student will be assigned an African Studies academic adviser in consultation with the African Studies director and the African Studies admissions committee.

As a student develops specific scholarly interests, s/he may request a different African Studies adviser from the one assigned by the African Studies admissions committee. The student and the Geography and African Studies academic advisers will establish a program of study that is appropriate for the student's professional objectives and that is in accordance with the policies of the Graduate Council, the Geography graduate program, and the African Studies dual-title graduate degree program.

**Requirements for the Geography-African Studies Ph.D.**

The Dual-Title Doctoral Degree in Geography and African Studies is awarded only to students who are admitted to the Geography doctoral program and admitted to the dual-title degree program in African Studies. To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Geography, listed in the Degree Requirements section. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in African Studies, listed on the African Studies Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/african-studies). The minimum course requirements for the Dual-Title Ph.D. degree in Geography and African Studies are as follows:

- Completion of all course work and other requirements for the Geography Ph.D.
- 18 credits of Africa-related coursework at the 400-, 500-, or 800-level, of which the following are required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFR 501</td>
<td>Key Issues in African Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select at least two of the following:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFR 532</td>
<td>Environment and Livelihoods in Africa</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFR 534</td>
<td>Political Economy of Energy and Extractive Industries in Africa (Oil and Mining)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFR 537</td>
<td>Gender, Sexuality and Islam in Africa: Exploring Contemporary Feminist Scholarship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC/AFR 527</td>
<td>Migration, Urbanization, and Policy in the Developing World</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- As many as 6 of the 18 credits may come from 400-, 500-, or 800-level Geography courses, as approved by the student's Geography and African Studies Program advisers.
- The remaining credits can be taken in AFR or in any department other than Geography; of these, no more than 6 credits may be taken at the 400-level and no more than 3 combined credits may come from AFR 596 and GEOG 596.
• Communication and foreign language requirements will be determined by the student and the Geography and African Studies advisors in accordance with the existing Geography language requirements.

The choice of electives in African Studies is to be proposed by the student and is subject to approval by the Geography and African Studies academic advisors. The suite of selected courses should have an integrated, intellectual thrust that probes a thematic, national, or regional issue and that complements the student’s specialty in Geography.

Language Requirement
The language requirement for a student in the dual-title doctoral degree program will be determined by the student and the Geography and African Studies Program advisers in accordance with the existing Geography language requirements.

Qualifying Exam
The qualifying exam in Geography is an oral exam designed to help students to “think analytically and critically in their field of expertise and to understand and apply ideas from other fields of geography to their research domain” (Geography Graduate Student Handbook 2011-2012, p. 30). The format of the qualifying exam for the dual-title student will be unchanged from the existing Geography qualifying exam and will be guided directly by the requirements outlined in the Geography Graduate Student Handbook. The only difference from the Geography qualifying exam will be an explicit African studies component. The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Geography and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the African Studies program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Geography and African Studies. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

Dissertation Committee Composition
In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for dissertation committees (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation), the dissertation committee of a Geography and African Studies dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the African Studies Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the dissertation committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in African Studies, the member of the committee representing African Studies must be appointed as co-chair. The African Studies representative on the student’s dissertation committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Comprehensive Exam
After completing all course work, doctoral candidates for the dual-title doctoral degree in Geography and African Studies must pass a comprehensive examination that includes written and oral components. Written components will be administered on a student’s major Geography subfields and on African Studies. The African Studies representative on the student’s dissertation committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the oral component of the comprehensive examination. The African Studies component of the exam will be based on the student’s thematic, national, or regional area of interest and specialization in African Studies.

Dissertation and Dissertation Defense
Ph.D. students enrolled in the dual-title degree program are required to write a dissertation on a topic that reflects their education and research interest in Geography and African Studies. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the dissertation committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Geography and Demography
Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs).

Admission Requirements
Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Geography and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Demography dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Demography Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/demography). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Demography prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

Degree Requirements
To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Geography, listed in the Degree Requirements section. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Demography, listed on the Demography Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/demography).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Geography and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Demography program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Geography and Demography. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for dissertation committees ((http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation)), the dissertation committee of a Geography and Demography dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Demography Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the dissertation committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Demography, the member of the committee representing Demography must be appointed as co-chair. The Demography representative on the student’s dissertation committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.
Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their dissertation committee and reflects their original research and education in Geography and Demography. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the dissertation committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

**Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Geography and Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment**

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs).

**Admission Requirements**

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Geography and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the HDNRE dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the HDNRE Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/human-dimensions-natural-resources-environment). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in HDNRE prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

**Degree Requirements**

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Geography, listed in the Degree Requirements section. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in HDNRE, listed on the HDNRE Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/human-dimensions-natural-resources-environment).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Geography and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the HDNRE program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Geography and HDNRE. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for dissertation committees (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation), the dissertation committee of a Geography and HDNRE dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the HDNRE Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the dissertation committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in HDNRE, the member of the committee representing HDNRE must be appointed as co-chair. The HDNRE representative on the student’s dissertation committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their dissertation committee and reflects their original research and education in Geography and HDNRE. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the dissertation committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

**Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Geography and Operations Research**

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-200/gcac-208-dual-title-graduate-degree-programs).

**Admission Requirements**

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Geography and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Operations Research dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Operations Research Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/operations-research). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Operations Research prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

**Degree Requirements**

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Geography, listed in the Degree Requirements section. In addition, students must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Operations Research, listed on the Operations Research Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/operations-research).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Geography and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Operations Research program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Geography and Operations Research. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for dissertation committees (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation), the dissertation committee of a Geography and Operations Research dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least one member of the Operations Research Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the dissertation committee is not also a member of the Graduate Faculty in Operations Research, the member of the committee representing Operations Research must be appointed as co-chair. The Operations Research representative on the student’s dissertation committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their dissertation committee and reflects their original research and education in Geography and Operations Research. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the
dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the dissertation committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

**Dual-Title M.S. and Ph.D. in Geography and Women's Studies**

Requirements listed here are in addition to requirements listed in GCAC-208 Dual-Title Graduate Degree Programs (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-208/dual-title-graduate-degree-programs).

**Admission Requirements**

Students must apply and be admitted to the graduate program in Geography and The Graduate School before they can apply for admission to the dual-title degree program. After admission to their primary program, students must apply for admission to and meet the admissions requirements of the Women's Studies dual-title program. Refer to the Admission Requirements section of the Women's Studies Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/womens-studies). Doctoral students must be admitted into the dual-title degree program in Women's Studies prior to taking the qualifying examination in their primary graduate program.

**Degree Requirements**

To qualify for the dual-title degree, students must satisfy the degree requirements for the degree they are enrolled in Geography, listed in the Degree Requirements section. In addition, they must complete the degree requirements for the dual-title in Women's Studies, listed on the Women's Studies Bulletin page (http://bulletins.psu.edu/graduate/programs/majors/womens-studies).

The qualifying examination committee for the dual-title Ph.D. degree will be composed of Graduate Faculty from Geography and must include at least one Graduate Faculty member from the Women's Studies program. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs' Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. There will be a single qualifying examination, containing elements of both Geography and Women's Studies. Dual-title graduate degree students may require an additional semester to fulfill requirements for both areas of study and, therefore, the qualifying examination may be delayed one semester beyond the normal period allowable.

In addition to the general Graduate Council requirements for dissertation committees (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gcac/gcac-600/phd-dissertation-committee-formation), the dissertation committee of a Geography and Women's Studies dual-title Ph.D. student must include at least two members of the Women's Studies Graduate Faculty. Faculty members who hold appointments in both programs’ Graduate Faculty may serve in a combined role. If the chair of the dissertation committee is not a member of the Graduate Faculty in Women's Studies, the member of the committee representing Women’s Studies must be appointed as co-chair. The Women's Studies representative on the student's dissertation committee will develop questions for and participate in the evaluation of the comprehensive examination.

Students in the dual-title program are required to write and orally defend a dissertation on a topic that is approved in advance by their dissertation committee and reflects their original research and education in Geography and Women's Studies. Upon completion of the doctoral dissertation, the candidate must pass a final oral examination (the dissertation defense) to earn the Ph.D. degree. The dissertation must be accepted by the dissertation committee, the head of the graduate program, and the Graduate School.

**Student Aid**

Graduate assistantships available to students in this program and other forms of student aid are described in the Tuition & Funding (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-funding) section of The Graduate School's website. Students on graduate assistantships must adhere to the course load limits (http://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/gsad/gsad-500/gsad-501-credit-loads-graduate-assistants) set by The Graduate School.

**Courses**

Graduate courses carry numbers from 500 to 699 and 800 to 899. Advanced undergraduate courses numbered between 400 and 499 may be used to meet some graduate degree requirements when taken by graduate students. Courses below the 400 level may not. A graduate student may register for or audit these courses in order to make up deficiencies or to fill in gaps in previous education but not to meet requirements for an advanced degree.

**Learning Outcomes**

1. **Know:** Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of the core theories and methods in geography as well as deeper knowledge of three out of four subfields. Graduates will demonstrate specialized knowledge within their chosen sub-field: Human Geography, Environment-Society, Physical Geography, or Geographic Information Science.

2. **Create:** Graduates will be able to creatively synthesize theory and literature within their field of specialization. They will be able to generate new ideas and if appropriate formulate hypotheses in geographic knowledge. Graduates will be able to select from a range of methodological options and create a research framework to provide solutions to geographical problems.

3. **Apply:** Graduates will be able to carry out independent, original, and ethical research that addresses problems in the subfields of geography.

4. **Critical thinking:** Graduates will be able to critically analyze work in their field of specialization.

5. **Communicate:** Graduates will be able to convey ideas or arguments in a professional manner with clear, concise, well-organized papers, proposals, and oral presentations.

**Contact**

**Campus**

University Park

**Graduate Program Head**

CYNTHIA ANN BREWER

**Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or Professor-in-Charge (PIC)**

Brian Hastings King

**Program Contact**

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University Park PA 16802

jdw213@psu.edu

(814) 865-3434

**Program Website**

View (http://www.geog.psu.edu)