

# Geography (BS)

## Degree Requirements

Majors in Arts and Sciences may be completed with a minimum of 120 semester hours unless designated otherwise. At least 30 hours of course work, which represents 25% of the required 120 hours, must be at the upper division level in order to fulfill the University's residency requirement. At least 15 of the 30 upper-division hours must be in the major or concentration area. An overall grade-point-average (GPA) of 2.0 is required for graduation. In addition, a minimum GPA of 2.0 is required in the student's major or concentration area.

A student with a major in geography must take a group of required core geography courses as well as six (6) additional upper division courses for a total of 47 semester hours. The six (6) additional upper division courses include at least one course from each of the four categories: Human, Physical, Regional, and Technical. **Geography 101 and 102 are prerequisites to most upper level physical geography courses and Geography 114 and 115 are prerequisites to most upper level human geography courses listed below.**

| Geography Major Requirements (47 HRS)  | Credit Hours |
|--|--------------|
| Core requirements for a geography major  | 29           |
| GEO 101 & 101L   | 4 hrs        |
| GEO 102 & 102L   | 4 hrs        |
| GEO 114  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 115  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 201  | 1 hrs        |
| GEO 331  | 4 hrs        |
| GEO 332  | 4 hrs        |
| GEO 435  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 485  | 3 hrs        |
| One additional natural science course, one additional social science course outside of geography and ST 210.   |              |
| Geography majors will have to take at least one upper level course from each of the four categories: Human, Physical, Regional, and Technical. Majors are still required to take at least six upper level courses (for at least 18 hrs). | 18           |
| Human Geography Courses:   |              |
| GEO 312  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 321  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 365  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 370  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 417  | 3 hrs        |
| Physical Geography Courses:  |              |
| GEO 310  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 405  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 410  | 3 hrs        |
| GEO 411  | 3 hrs        |

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| GEO 412   | 3 hrs   |
| GEO 440   | 2 hrs   |
| GEO 441   | 2 hrs   |
| GEO 443   | 3 hrs   |
| Regional Geography Courses:   |         |
| GEO 313   | 3 hrs   |
| GEO 314   | 3 hrs   |
| GEO 315   | 3 hrs   |
| GEO 317   | 3 hrs   |
| GEO 475   | 1-6 hrs |
| Technical Geography Courses: *  |         |
| GIT 442   | 4 hrs   |
| GIT 460   | 4 hrs   |
| GIT 461   | 4 hrs   |
| GIT 462   | 4 hrs   |
| GIT 490   | 4 hrs   |
| *Only two courses in the GIT minor may be counted toward the Geography major.   |         |
| Complete at least 15 semester hours in residence in major at the 300 and/or 400 level. A minimum GPA of 2.0 is required in major. | 15      |

### General Education Requirements For Geography Majors

Areas I and II of the General Education Requirements for Geography are specified in the College of Arts and Sciences section. Note that a portion of Area IV (GEO 114, GEO 115) and the Natural Sciences portion of Area III (GEO 101, GEO 102, ST 210) are fulfilled by the major requirements specified above.

## Department Information

Department of Earth Sciences website  
<http://southalabama.edu/colleges/artsandsci/earthsci/>

The Department of Earth Sciences includes the disciplines of Geography, Geology, and Meteorology, and it offers a B.S. degree as well as a minor in each of these three majors. Students can also earn a GIS Certificate and/or a minor in Geographic Information Technology (GIT) Geography, which is both a natural and a social science, studies the location, spatial distribution, and spatial interaction of Earth's natural and human environments. Courses and research in the program encompass the broad subfields of Human Geography (for example, tourism, health, and social justice), Physical Geography (like climatology, natural hazards, and environmental geography), Regional Geography (International Economics and Relations), and Geographic Techniques, including Geographic Information Science and Technology (GIS/GIT) and Remote Sensing. Upon completing their degree, geography students are employed in government, industry, and nonprofits in multiple kinds of work environments (includes field, lab, computer, office and work).

Geology is an interdisciplinary physical science pertaining to the study of the Earth. Courses and research within the department address the chemical and physical properties of minerals, rocks, soils, sediments, and water; the processes that shape the Earth's surface; the stratigraphic, paleobiological, and geochemical records of Earth history; and the processes associated with deformation in the Earth's crust and mantle. Together an understanding is obtained of present-day, historical, and long-term feedbacks between global systems, as well as the origin and occurrence of our natural resources.

Meteorology is the study of atmospheric phenomena and the processes that cause weather. The science of meteorology is firmly rooted in basic physical laws governing mass, momentum, and energy. Many weather processes are simulated by complex computer models; however, accurate weather analysis and forecasting often requires meteorologists to identify and conceptualize weather patterns often missed by automated techniques.

The programs of the Department of Earth Sciences are designed to give the non-major a background in Earth and atmospheric science and the human impact on the landscape as part of a general education. Students pursuing a degree in Geography, Geology, or Meteorology must also have a minor in another discipline.

The Department of Earth Sciences offers a departmental honors program that allows exceptional students to pursue independent research. Students work with a faculty committee to choose an Earth Sciences research project (Geography, Geology, Meteorology), develop a prospectus, and complete a senior thesis. Students completing this program graduate with departmental honors.

Requirements for successful completion of an honors degree in Geography, Geology, or Meteorology include a GPA of at least 3.50 at graduation and completion of ES 492 (Honors Earth Sciences Seminar), ES 497 (Senior Thesis Prospectus), and six hours of ES 499 (Senior Honors Thesis). These classes are in addition to those required for the major in Geography, Geology, or Meteorology. All honors courses are listed under the prefix ES. Students interested in Earth Sciences honors must apply for the program by their junior year. Complete requirements are available on the departmental web page.

All first-time freshmen must successfully complete CAS 100: First Year Experience as a degree requirement. Students must enroll during their first term at USA, except for summer-entry students who must enroll in the fall semester following entry. Students must demonstrate technology proficiency by passing the designated class in their major. GEO 331 for Geography majors, GY 301 for Geology majors, or MET 455 for Meteorology majors.

## **Graduate Studies**

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Although the Department of Earth Sciences has no graduate degree program, courses, including Geographic Information Technology (GIT), are offered at the graduate level for students enrolled in Biology, Public Administration, Marine Sciences and Environmental Toxicology, and others who need such course work. Contact the Department for more information.