

# GEOGRAPHY

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



## **What is geography?**

Geography is the science of place and space. Geographers ask where things are located on the surface of the earth, why they are located where they are, how places differ from one another, and how people interact with the environment. Geographers also study the linkages between human activity and natural systems and how these are changing. The two main branches of geography are **human geography** and **physical geography**.

## **Geography ... ... It's not just about maps**

Human geography is concerned with the spatial aspects of human existence – how people and their activities are distributed in space, how they use and perceive space, and how they create and sustain the places that make up the earth's surface. Human geographers work in urban and regional planning, transportation, marketing, real estate, tourism and international business.

Physical geography studies patterns of climates, land forms, vegetation, soils and water. Physical geographers forecast the weather, manage land and water resources, and analyze and plan for forests, rangelands and wetlands.

Both use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for mapping and analysis. GIS is a set of tools to process space and air photo images, Global Positioning System data, census and transportation data, and a range of urban, business, and environmental problems.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Geography Department is to provide the highest quality liberal arts education and applied, career-oriented preparation. Students learn to integrate concepts from the broad discipline of geography and gain the depth of expertise in specific, technical areas to prepare them competitively for professional life and/or graduate school. We value the application of theory and research to real-world problems that affect the common good. Student research is encouraged and enhanced by faculty who actively engage their discipline. Our faculty offer students opportunities for internships, service-learning experiences, faculty/student collaborative research partnerships and presentations at professional conferences. The Geography Department is a community wherein faculty and students collaborate to produce well-informed, morally responsible professionals.

## **Academic Program**

The Geography Department offers a major and minor in geography, as well as a geographic information systems (GIS) minor for non-geography majors and a concentration area in GIS for majors. The department emphasizes GIS laboratory work, internships, collaborative faculty-student research, study abroad experiences and service learning to give our students a solid foundation in geographic principles and techniques, as well as an appreciation for the diversity of people and places. It makes extensive use of computer skills to explore a wide range of topics, from regional studies to issues of global importance.

With foundations in both the natural and social sciences, geography prepares students for a wide range of careers in government, the private sector and education. Geographers create digital maps, perform location analyses for retail and service stores, analyze land use and urban planning, work with census data, teach and hold a wide variety of other jobs. Graduates also pursue advanced degrees in geography, business, urban and regional planning, community development, GIS and natural resource management.

**Want to learn more? Visit our Web site: [www.stthomas.edu/geography](http://www.stthomas.edu/geography)**

Student-faculty research collaborations are common in geography.

The department is small and effective, with close working relationships among students and faculty. Many students conduct applied research in conjunction with faculty members and are funded through grants from the Young Scholars program, the Minnesota GIS/LIS Consortium, and other public and private agencies. Many geography majors also take advantage of internship opportunities for pay and/or academic credit with a wide variety of local organizations. Students have the opportunity to present their research at local, regional and national conferences.

### **Recent student research projects**

- Elderly and Isolated?: Demographics of the Contemporary American Frontier.
- Can Rice Producing Nations Feed Their People?
- Finding the Most Suitable Location for a New NFL Expansion Team.
- The Impact of Environmental Quality on Patterns of Per Capita Income.
- Suitable Areas for Refugees to Live.
- The Relation of Bar Locations to Crime; A Geospatial Analysis.
- The Impact of Farm Subsidies on the Economic Success of Farm Dependant Counties.

## Recent student internships

- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- USDA Agricultural Research Service
- Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance
- The Izaak Walton League
- Best Buy
- Target Corp.
- Xcel Energy
- Great River Greening

## About St. Thomas

The University of St. Thomas is a Catholic, comprehensive university that fosters a tradition of service to the public and an energetic, thoughtful approach to the challenges of contemporary life. Serving 11,000 undergraduate and graduate students, St. Thomas is located in Minnesota's Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

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