

Proposed Changes to Geography B.A. Degree

University of Alaska Geography Program
School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Submitted by
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**MAJOR/MINOR
PROGRAM/DEGREE REQUIREMENT CHANGE**

Department Geography College/School SNRAS

Prepared by Mike Sfraga, Cary de Wit Phone x7494

Name of Program: B.A., Geography

Degree Level (i.e., Certificate, A.A., A.A.S., B.A., B.S., M.S., Ph.D.)

A. CHANGE IN DEGREE REQUIREMENTS: (Brief statement of program/degree changes and objectives)

Establish 5 discipline-specific "foundation" courses that create a sound geographic perspective and foundation for the degree. Refine the focus to emphasize the Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim regions. Foundation courses are common to both the B.A. and B.S. degrees.

B. CURRENT REQUIREMENTS (AS IT PRESENTLY APPEARS IN THE CATALOG):

(suggestion: paste copy from catalog)

Major--B.A. Degree

1. Complete the general university requirements.
2. Complete the B.A. degree requirements.
3. Complete the following program (major) requirements: *
 - a. Complete the following:
 - GEOG 101--World Regional Geography --3 credits
 - or GEOG 203--World Economic Geography --3 credits
 - GEOG 205--Elements of Physical Geography--3 credits
 - GEOG 339--Maps and Landscape Analysis --3 credits
 - or GEOG 401--Weather and Climate--3 credits
 - GEOG 482W,O--Geography Seminar--3 credits
 - GEOG elective--3 credits
 - b. Complete three of the following regional courses:
 - GEOG 302--Geography of Alaska--3 credits
 - GEOG 303--Geography of United States and Canada--3 credits
 - GEOG 305W--Geography of Europe--3 credits
 - GEOG 306--Geography of Russia--3 credits
 - GEOG 311W--Geography of Asia--3 credits
 - GEOG 427--Cold Lands--3 credits
 - c. Complete two of the following cultural courses:
 - GEOG 402--Resources and Environment--3 credits
 - GEOG 404W--Urban Geography--3 credits
 - GEOG 405--Political Geography--3 credits
 - d. Complete one of the following techniques courses:
 - GEOG 309--Cartography--4 credits
 - GEOG 408--Quantitative Research Techniques--3 credits

4. Complete approved electives--open
5. Minimum credits required--120 credits

* Student must earn a C grade or better in each course.

C. PROPOSED REQUIREMENTS (AS IT WILL APPEAR WITH THESE CHANGES:
(underline new wording ~~strike through~~ old wording and use catalog format)

Major--B.A. Degree

1. Complete the general university requirements.
2. Complete the B.A. degree requirements.
3. Complete the following ~~program (major) requirements~~ required foundation courses*:
 1. ~~Complete the following:~~
 - ~~GEOG 101--World Regional Geography~~ Local Places, Global Regions: An Introduction to Geography (3) or ~~GEOG 203--World Economic Geography (3)~~ 3
 - ~~GEOG 205-211X--Elements of Physical Geography~~ Earth Systems: Elements of Physical Geography 3 4
 - ~~GEOG 312--People, Places, and Environment: Principles of Human Geography~~ 3
 - ~~GEOG 338--An Introduction to GIS~~ 3
 - ~~GEOG 339--Maps and Landscape Analysis (3)~~
 - ~~or GEOG 401--Weather and Climate (3)~~ 3
 - ~~GEOG 482~~ 490 W,O--Geography Seminar 3
 - ~~GEOG elective~~
 4. Complete the following program (major) requirements. Students will tailor their program through course selection from the categories below in consultation with their advisor to focus on a subspecialty in the Circumpolar North and/or the Pacific Rim.
 - a. Regional Geography: Complete three two of the following regional courses:
 - GEOG 302--Geography of Alaska 3
 - GEOG 303--Geography of US and Canada 3
 - GEOG 305--Geography of Europe 3
 - GEOG 306--Geography of Russia 3
 - GEOG 311W--Geography of Asia 3
 - GEOG 410--Geography of the Pacific Rim 3
 - GEOG 427--Geography of Cold Lands 3
 - b. Physical Geography: Complete one of the following:
 - GEOG 339--Maps and Landscape Analysis 3
 - GEOG 401--Weather & Climate 3
 - GEOG 411--Pattern and Process in the Subarctic and Arctic 4
 - GEOG 412--Geography of Climate Change 3
 - c. Human Geography: Complete one of the following:
 - GEOG 203--World Economic Geography 3
 - GEOG 402--Resources and Environment 3
 - GEOG 404--Urban Geography 3
 - GEOG 405--Political Geography 3
 - d. Techniques: Complete one of the following techniques courses:
 - GEOG 301 ~~Geographic Field~~ ~~Field Research~~ ~~Techniques~~ Studies 3
 - GEOG 309 Cartography 3
 - ~~GEOG 408 Quantitative Research Techniques~~ 3
 - GEOS 404 Geosciences Applications for GPS and GIS 3

- e. Electives: Complete two courses (6 credits) from any of the above categories, or other courses appropriate to the student's chosen program of study. Both courses must be at 300 level or higher and approved by the student's advisor. 6

5. Minimum credits required 120

Note: Geography majors are encouraged to reinforce their program focus with a minor in one of the following areas:

Alaska Native Studies, Anthropology, Asian Studies, Economics, Environmental Politics, Foreign Languages, Geology, Geophysics, Global Studies, History, Journalism, Natural Resource Management, Northern Studies, Political Science, Rural Development, Russian Studies

D. JUSTIFICATION FOR CHANGE:

The existing degree program is comprised of courses that cover a wide range of geographic regions and content areas. The faculty propose a more focused degree program that emphasizes the University of Alaska's unique geographic setting and utilizes the Department's academic expertise and research interests. Such program refinement is a function of a purposeful academic transition to assure that the UAF Department of Geography addresses disciplinary trends, student interests, and does so in a geographically applicable context. Moreover, program changes reflect the UAF and UA stated goals of supporting academic programs that address issues relevant to Alaska and the Circumpolar North, while considering strategic geographic regions such as the Pacific Rim.

Faculty propose changes in the B.A. to emphasize the Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim. No other geography program in the nation can match the natural laboratory that is Alaska; nor can other institutions make available to students rich geographic perspectives that investigate the Circumpolar North and its interrelationship with the Pacific Rim. Such program adjustments also take advantage of the depth and breadth of Northern expertise found throughout the School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, UAF, and UA.

Faculty propose the B.A. be built upon a defined set of discipline-based "foundation" courses that provide students with academic training in the fundamental components of the discipline. The required "foundation" courses educate students in the core tenets of geography, global geographic perspectives, physical geography of the earth, geographic information sciences and technology, human geography, and the synthesis of these tenets through a "capstone" experience. With one exception (Principles of Human Geography), the "foundation" requirements are composed of existing courses; these courses have been realigned and focused to achieve a more regionally relevant and discipline-based degree program. The foundation requirements also will provide students with critical disciplinary training for post-baccalaureate study.

Students, in consultation with their faculty advisors, shall select courses that reflect a regional emphasis in the Circumpolar North or the Pacific Rim. Students may choose to combine courses from both regional areas to have a broader geographic perspective and explore the unique interrelationships between the two regions.

By emphasizing discipline-specific minors (#5, above), the geography faculty recognize the considerable topical and regional expertise found throughout the UAF faculty and underscore the important role other disciplines play within the geography B.A. degree program.

Program/Degree Requirement Changes - FORMAT 5

E. ESTIMATED IMPACT OF ACTION ON BUDGET, FACILITIES/SPACE, FACULTY RESOURCES:

One new/additional foundation course to be offered in the spring (Principles of Human Geography).

One new/additional regional course to be offered every-other spring (Geography of the Pacific Rim).

Both courses to be taught by a proposed new, tenure-track faculty member (with additional course-load requirements in the BS program). Budget requirements for this position have been submitted to UAF/UA administration in preparation for a 2008 program implementation.

F. WHAT PROGRAMS/DEPARTMENTS WILL BE IMPACTED BY THIS PROPOSED ACTION?

Include information on the Programs/Departments contacted (e.g., email, memo).

Realignment of existing geography courses to create the program's foundation requirements, and the creation of two new courses will impact the geography department.

G. IF MAJOR CHANGE--ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRAM:

(Description of the student learning outcomes assessment process.)

Student Outcomes

Upon graduation, geography majors will have mastered the core tenets of the discipline. Such training will provide students the required skills needed for the job market and/or the foundation from which study of the various components of the discipline of geography can be further pursued.

Students will gain: 1) a high level of mastery of the key disciplinary tenets of geography, 2) a fuller understanding of the geography of the Circumpolar North and/or Pacific Rim, 3) the skills and tools necessary to observe, investigate, analyze, and synthesize broad issues pertaining to one (or both) of the region/s noted above, 4) an ability to investigate and understand *relationships between* physical, human, political, cultural, regional, and global geographic perspectives and how humans interact with and respond to the landscape.

Students who graduate with a B.A. will be employable as state and federal agency managers, planners, geographic/mapping technicians, cartographers, GIS technicians, field-based researchers in geography or related field sciences. We are preparing students to work effectively in the ever-growing environment that exists between disciplinary scientists and interdisciplinary researchers/managers, and GIS computer/programming experts. This program, with its practical emphasis on spatial context, critical thinking, problem solving, geographic information science and technology, and analysis, with a focus on the Circumpolar North and Pacific Rim will provide a sound preparation for advanced study in other components of geography, for example, geospatial analysis and resource/land management.

H. OTHER CHANGES, IF ANY, AND JUSTIFICATION:

APPROVALS:

_____ Date _____
Director, UA Geography Program

_____ Date _____
Chair, SNRAS Curriculum Council

_____ Date _____
Dean, School of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

ALL SIGNATURES MUST BE OBTAINED PRIOR TO SUBMISSION TO GOVERNANCE OFFICE

_____ Date _____
Chair, Senate Curriculum Review Committee