The Program in Geography offers three types of courses to students who seek a knowledge of the physical earth and its various modes of human occupancy. Introductory courses develop global perspectives on environments that are relevant to many social and physical science fields. Courses in regional geography present a unique way of understanding how nature and culture have interacted over time to give character to specific places or regions. Advanced courses focus on the concepts and techniques of professional geography, especially on the construction of maps and on the uses of maps in solving geographical problems. Coursework may lead to an adjunct major or a minor in geography. Students majoring in geography also must complete a major in a related social or natural science field.

Programs of Study

- Geography Adjunct Major (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/geography/geography-adjunct-major/)
- Geography Minor (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/geography/geography-minor/)

GEOG 211-0 World Biogeography (1 Unit)  Geography of the world’s major ecosystems based on the global climate model. Physical processes of soil formation and vegetation development in various ecosystems. Human impacts on natural systems resulting from past and present land-use practices.  

GEOG 235-0 Atmosphere and Climate (1 Unit)  Nature and composition of the atmosphere, principles of atmospheric motion, global circulation model, cyclonic storms; climates and climatic change.  

GEOG 240-0 Economic Geography (1 Unit)  Population, natural resources, land use, commodity production, and trade, with an emphasis on the world scale. Industrial location theory and global economic structures.  

GEOG 312-0 Geography of Chicago & Its Region (1 Unit)  Chicago as an example and model of city form. Physical environments of the Chicago region and their influence on settlement. Evolution of the geography of Chicago and its suburbs from the 19th century to the present, with an emphasis on recent trends. Prerequisite: junior standing.  

GEOG 313-0 North America (1 Unit)  Detailed study of the regional geography of the United States and Canada. The regional distribution of landform types. Patterns of culture, history, and economic development that underlie the distribution of distinctive lifeways in the two countries.  

GEOG 328-0 The Human Use of the Earth (1 Unit)  Geography of the earth’s natural environments as modified by human agency. Natural versus anthropogenic environmental change. Processes of habitat alteration in hunter-gatherer societies. Impacts of modern agriculture and forestry.  

GEOG 341-0 Principles of Cartography (1 Unit)  Design, construction, and use of thematic maps for effective presentation of spatial data. Typography and symbolization. Coordinate systems and map projections.  

GEOG 343-0 Geographic Information Systems (1 Unit)  Methods and techniques of digital cartography; encoding and analysis of spatial information; applications to archaeology, environmental sciences, and business geographics. Prerequisite: GEOG 341-0.  

GEOG 399-0 Independent Study (1 Unit)  Independent research projects. Open to qualified advanced students with consent of department.