Committee on Geographical Studies

Professors

- Michael P. Conzen
- Neil Harris, History
- Marvin W. Mikesell

Associate Faculty

- Virginia Parks, Social Service Administration
- Todd Schuble, Manager of GIS Research/Lecturer

Emeritus Faculty

- Gerald Suttles, Sociology

The Committee on Geographical Studies offers course work and research opportunities for graduate students in the University. Students from many degree programs in different divisions work through the committee for specialized training. The committee does not admit students for degree work.

Unique resources for geographical research exist both at the University and in the Chicago area. On campus, the Joseph Regenstein Library contains a geography monograph collection considered one of the four best in the world; a main map collection of over a quarter of a million maps covering all regions of the globe; and over 1,000 geography serial titles from all over the world. Among the holdings in the distinguished John Crerar Science Library are significant materials on the environment in general, agriculture, land use, housing, social welfare, and urban growth in Europe and the United States. Area research centers at the University devoted to the Middle East, East Asia, South Asia, Slavic regions, and Latin America provide further specialist interdisciplinary research opportunities, some including additional library collections.

Among the major libraries and museums in the Chicago area, the Newberry Library has special strength in American local materials and is home to the Hermon Dunlap Smith Center for the History of Cartography with its world class collection of antique and historical maps. Research and policy organizations, such as the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission and Chicago Area Transportation Study, maintain specialized libraries and data repositories, and from time to time offer internship opportunities.

Students who wish to inquire further about the Committee on Geographical Studies should write or call: Chair, Committee on Geographical Studies, The University of Chicago, 1130 East 59th Street Chicago, IL 60637, telephone: (773) 702-8301.

Fields of Study

The principal objectives of the committee are the investigation of the organization of area, exploration of the earth environment and of its interactions with human life, and inquiry into the geographical dimensions of cultures and societies. The research interests of the committee’s faculty include:

Urban organization and change

Urban origins; the evolution of urban networks and systems of cities, ancient and modern, western and non western; the changing spatial structure, social organization, and morphology of urban areas; problems of urban allocation and planning; regionalism in American urban life; emergence of new metropolitan and non metropolitan settlement patterns in advanced societies.

Regional studies

Historical and thematic approaches to regional structure, particularly of North America and the Middle East; theory of the region; the origin and development of regional character; locality and place making; nature and culture in regional settings; comparative study of regions.

Cultural foundations of nation building

The ethno religious bases of the nation state; evolving regionalism and culture; the geographical significance of territoriality; national and regional boundary conflicts; minorities and cultural autonomy; linguistic policies of the state; multicultural development strategies; international and transnational management of ethnic conflict; cultural roots of self determination.

Landscape studies

Landscape as an embodiment and shaper of social values and attitudes towards environment; theories of landscape structure and change; the historical development and regional construction of landscapes; thematic landscapes; the role of institutions in environmental design and management; aesthetic landscape values; landscape and the sense of place; comparative landscape analysis.
Courses

The following list is representative of courses which have been offered by committee faculty members in recent years. Individualized reading and research courses on topics of faculty expertise may be arranged as well. The committee also maintains information on related courses in other disciplines.

Geographical Studies Courses

GEOG 30100. Cultural Geography. 100 Units.
This course examines the two main concerns of this field of geography: (1) the logic and pathology revealed in the record of the human use and misuse of the Earth, and (2) the discordant relationship of the world political map with more complicated patterns of linguistic and religious distribution.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): ENST 25900, GEOG 20100

GEOG 31900. Historical Geography of the United States. 100 Units.
This course examines the spatial dynamics of empire, the frontier, regional development, the social character of settlement patterns, and the evolution of the cultural landscapes of America from pre-European times to 1900. All-day northern Illinois field trip required.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course offered in even years.
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 21900, HIST 28800, HIST 38800

GEOG 32100. Changing America in the Twentieth Century. 100 Units.
This course explores the regional organization of U.S. society and its economy during the pivotal twentieth century, emphasizing the shifting dynamics that explain the spatial distribution of people, resources, economic activity, human settlement patterns, and mobility. We put special focus on the regional restructuring of industry and services, transportation, city growth, and cultural consumption. Two-day weekend field trip to the Mississippi River required.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course offered odd years.
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 22100, HIST 27506, HIST 37506

GEOG 32700. Urban Structure and Process. 100 Units.
This course reviews competing theories of urban development, especially their ability to explain the changing nature of cities under the impact of advanced industrialism. Analysis includes a consideration of emerging metropolitan regions, the microstructure of local neighborhoods, and the limitations of the past American experience as a way of developing urban policy both in this country and elsewhere.
Instructor(s): F. Stuart Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): CRES 20104, GEOG 22700, SOCI 30104, SOSC 25100, SOCI 20104

GEOG 33500. Urban Geography. 100 Units.
This course examines the spatial organization and current restructuring of modern cities in light of the economic, social, cultural, and political forces that shape them. It explores the systematic interactions between social process and physical system. We cover basic concepts of urbanism and urbanization, systems of cities urban growth, migration, centralization and decentralization, land-use dynamics, physical geography, urban morphology, and planning. Field trip in Chicago region required.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course offered in even years.
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 23500

GEOG 34000. Chicago Neighborhoods. 100 Units.
This course is an applied learning experience in which students explore the many dimensions of Chicago neighborhoods, with a particular focus on the built environment and how it impacts—and is impacted by—the social and economic life of the city. Students will observe, interpret, and represent neighborhoods through a series of exercises designed to deepen knowledge about the significance and meaning of neighborhood form. Readings and fieldwork will engage students in neighborhood analysis and observation techniques that explore contemporary issues about public life, diversity, and social equity.
Instructor(s): E. Talen Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 24000, SOSC 36000, PBPL 24000, SOSC 26000

GEOG 35300. Urban Geography. 100 Units.
This course examines the spatial organization and current restructuring of modern cities in light of the economic, social, cultural, and political forces that shape them. It explores the systematic interactions between social process and physical system. We cover basic concepts of urbanism and urbanization, systems of cities urban growth, migration, centralization and decentralization, land-use dynamics, physical geography, urban morphology, and planning. Field trip in Chicago region required.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This course offered in even years.
GEOG 35500. Biogeography. 100 Units.
This course examines factors governing the distribution and abundance of animals and plants. Topics include patterns and processes in historical biogeography, island biogeography, geographical ecology, areography, and conservation biology (e.g., design and effectiveness of nature reserves).
Instructor(s): B. Patterson (odd years, lab), L. Heaney (even years, discussion) Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Three quarters of a Biological Sciences Fundamentals sequence and a course in either ecology, evolution, or earth history; or consent of instructor
Equivalent Course(s): ENST 25500, EVOL 45500, GEOG 25500, BIOS 23406

GEOG 36100. Roots of the Modern American City. 100 Units.
This course traces the economic, social, and physical development of the city in North America from pre-European times to the mid-twentieth century. We emphasize evolving regional urban systems, the changing spatial organization of people and land use in urban areas, and the developing distinctiveness of American urban landscapes. All-day Illinois field trip required.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): This course offered in odd years.
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 26100, ENST 26100, HIST 28900, HIST 38900

GEOG 36201. Intro to Geographic Information Systems. 100 Units.
This course introduces students to the concepts and applications of geographic information systems (GIS). The course provides a basic foundation of spatial analysis and GIS with laboratory applications in particular techniques and methodology utilizing ESRI’s ArcGIS 10. Students will learn to perform spatial analyses and communicate their results through cartography, along with introduction to such concepts as spatial data collection, remote sensing, and database design.
Instructor(s): T. Schuble Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Graduate students will be allowed to enroll for section 2
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 28201

GEOG 38400. Intermediate GIS. 100 Units.
This course covers the development of cartographic and computer-based geographic information system techniques applicable to student research topics.
Instructor(s): R. Greene Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): GEOG 28201, GEOG 38201
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 28400

GEOG 38800. History of Cartography. 100 Units.
This course offers a grand overview of the key developments in mapmaking throughout history worldwide, from pre-literate cartography to the modern interactive digital environment. It looks at the producers, their audience, the technologies and artistic systems used, and the human and global contexts in which they developed. The course also draws on the extensive map collections of Regenstein Library.
Instructor(s): G. Danzer Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): GEOG 28800

GEOG 41700. History of Geography. 100 Units.
A broad introduction to the intellectual development of the discipline of geography. Students will undertake a program of collective reading and discussion, and individually select a specific topic for research, with the instructors consent, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Mikesell Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Note(s): Consent of instructor. Must be taken for a quality grade.

GEOG 42400. Urban Landscapes as Social Text. 100 Units.
This seminar explores the meanings found in varieties of urban landscapes, both in the context of individual elements and composite structures. These meanings are examined in relation to three fundamental approaches that can be identified in the analytical literature on landscapes: normative, historical, and communicative modes of conceptualization. Emphasis is placed on analyzing the explicitly visual features of the urban landscape. Students pursue research topics of their own choosing within the general framework.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Advanced standing and consent of instructor.
Equivalent Course(s): SOCI 30303

GEOG 51300. Cultural Geography. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in cultural geography, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Mikesell Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Note(s): Consent of instructor. Must be taken for a quality grade.

GEOG 51500. Urban Geography. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in urban geography, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen, E. Talen. Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Note(s): Consent of instructor.
GEOG 51700. Rsch: History of Geography. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in the history of geography, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Mikesell Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Note(s): Consent of instructor

GEOG 51800. Rsch: Historical Geography. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in historical geography, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor

GEOG 51900. Rsch: Historical Geography of the U.S. and Canada. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in the historical geography of the United States and Canada, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor

GEOG 52500. Rsch: American Urbanization. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in American urbanization, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Conzen, E. Talen Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor

GEOG 59800. Rsch: Topics in Geography. 100 Units.
This course is intended for individual study of selected problems in geography, with periodic meetings with the instructor to discuss progress, leading to a final research paper.
Instructor(s): M. Mikesell, M. Conzen, L. Anselin, E. Talen. Terms Offered: Autumn, Spring, Winter
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.