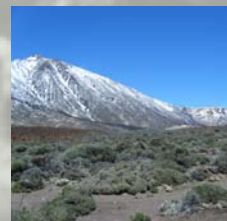




Experience the unique and integrative undergraduate geography course at a university leading the way in geographical teaching and research

Geography (L700)

BA in Geography



www.geog.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate



Geography has never been more relevant, as the world faces increasing challenges, and solutions to human and environmental problems are urgently being sought. Our course here at Oxford provides undergraduate students with a wide range of experience and skills across the breadth of geography, taught through tutorials and lectures by academic staff who are at the forefront of the discipline.

Why study Geography at Oxford?



Greg Smolensky



NASA, 2000

As the oldest Geography department in the UK, Oxford has an outstanding tradition in geographical teaching and research and is currently ranked top (with Bristol, Cambridge and Durham) for research. Students studying for the undergraduate course will become part of a dynamic department, which includes 100 postgraduate students studying for the department's four MSc courses and a large postgraduate research community.

The course provides an intellectually stimulating environment which will introduce you to contemporary issues and debates in both human and physical geography. You will be taught to think independently and critically about the geographical literature and each week you will have a chance to explore theories and concepts in a tutorial with a tutor and one or two other students. The tutors are experts in their field and will be using their own research to illustrate both lectures and tutorial discussions.



At the heart of the Oxford Geography course is an integrated view of the discipline and in the first year you will study both human and physical geography. From the second year you can begin to specialise and, if you choose, concentrate on physical or human geography. However, many students maintain broad interests across the discipline and in the Geographical Research paper and in a number of the options an inter-disciplinary perspective is encouraged.

The department offers excellent facilities for undergraduates including the Oxford Rock Breakdown Laboratory and the Oxford Luminescence Dating Laboratory. Students are welcome to use the labs for their own research during the course, and also have access to the Radcliffe Science Library (RSL) and the Bodleian Library, which house over 11 million volumes. In the RSL there is a specialist librarian for Geography, who is available to help and train undergraduates in their search for, and use of, bibliographical and data sources.



Matt Mangum



“Oxford provides a holistic approach to geography, instead of focusing on purely human or physical geography. Each week you have a tutorial with a leading academic – it is a challenging and rewarding experience that can’t be found in many universities. The workload is high, but manageable.”

How is the course structured?

The broad first year will provide you with a strong grounding in the key principles underpinning human and physical geography, alongside training in relevant study skills and practical techniques. There are four papers in the first year, each of which is compulsory to ensure that all students have the same foundation on which to build in the second year. The course is delivered through lectures, a weekly practical class on Geographical Techniques and tutorials for which you write essays which you will discuss with a tutor. Practical techniques in social and physical sciences will also be taught through field days in the local area.

After the Preliminary Examination at the end of the first year you will start work on what is known as the ‘Final Honour School’. The work for the Honour School is spread over the second and third years and, since

there are no examinations at the end of the second year, you will be able to develop your knowledge and skills over two years.

In the second year you will begin to specialise by choosing two of the three Foundational courses to build your knowledge of key concepts in physical, human and environmental geography. You will then choose three specialist options to study in detail. During the second year you will also start planning for your dissertation, a 12,000 word independent research project which you will undertake in the vacation at the end of your second year. Underpinning the Honour School course is the compulsory course in Geographical Research which explores the relationship between conceptual and methodological issues in the practice of research.

YEAR 1 (Prelims)	YEARS 2 & 3 (Final Honour School)														
<p style="text-align: center;">COURSES</p> <p>Four papers (all compulsory):</p> <p>Earth Systems Processes Climatology Geomorphology Ecology of the biosphere</p> <p>Human Geography Economy and transformation Culture and society Territories and identities</p> <p>Geographical Controversies</p> <p>Geographical Techniques Earth observation Quantitative techniques Qualitative techniques Fieldwork</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COURSES</p> <p>Geographical Research (core course)</p> <p>Foundational Courses (choose two) Earth Systems Dynamics Environmental Geography Space, Place and Society</p> <p>Options (choose three, free choice)</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>Biogeography, Biodiversity and Conservation</td> <td>Contemporary India</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Climate Change and Variability</td> <td>Contemporary China</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dryland Environments</td> <td>European Integration</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Quaternary Environments</td> <td>Geographies of Finance</td> </tr> <tr> <td>African Environments</td> <td>Spaces and Power in Africa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Forensic Geography</td> <td>Spaces of Politics</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heritage, Conservation and Management</td> <td>Transport</td> </tr> </table> <p><i>This is an indicative list of options. The University reserves the right to determine which options are available in any year and to place a cap on the number of students who may take any particular option.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Fieldwork Berlin or Tenerife (Easter Vacation Year 2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Dissertation</p>	Biogeography, Biodiversity and Conservation	Contemporary India	Climate Change and Variability	Contemporary China	Dryland Environments	European Integration	Quaternary Environments	Geographies of Finance	African Environments	Spaces and Power in Africa	Forensic Geography	Spaces of Politics	Heritage, Conservation and Management	Transport
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<p style="text-align: center;">ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Written exams: 4</p> <p>Submitted work: 1500 word essay (Geographical Controversies) 4000 word fieldwork report</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ASSESSMENT</p> <p>Written exams: 6</p> <p>Submitted work: 3 extended essays (each 5000 words) Fieldwork report (5000 words) Dissertation (12000 words)</p>														



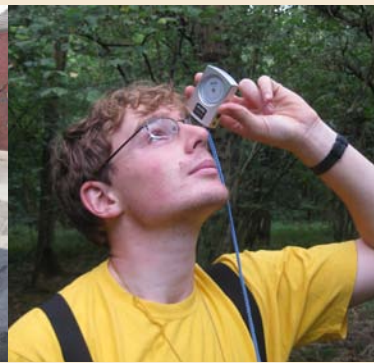
"For my dissertation I investigated the impacts of a motorway on the surrounding vegetation. My fieldwork consisted of taking cores from trees, collecting moss samples, surveying lichen, and passively sampling nitrogen levels with diffusion tubes. I used a specially adapted microscope to analyse tree ring growth, and studied heavy metal concentrations in moss samples using atomic absorption spectroscopy. I learned to use the specialised instruments in the department's Rock Breakdown Laboratory and as a result have developed a new set of transferable skills."

Training in research skills

Training in a broad range of research skills is an important part of a geography degree course and these transferable skills make geographers particularly employable. In the first year you will attend lectures and practical classes on qualitative and quantitative techniques and carry out small research projects in the local area. In the second year you will attend a range of advanced skills workshops on topics such as ethnographic research, the use of video and photography in research, multivariate statistics, climate modelling and laboratory methods. In the Easter vacation of the second year you will participate in a week

long fieldtrip (to either Berlin or Tenerife) during which you will put these skills into practice.

The dissertation involves independent research using primary data sources. You will have a free choice about the kind of project you choose. Some students travel overseas and collect data in the field, other students choose projects based in archives or undertake laboratory based modelling. Most students say that completing this independent research is the most rewarding part of their whole degree course.



What do the colleges do?

College life is one of the University of Oxford's greatest assets, since a close college community provides a friendly and welcoming home for students. Tutors get to know students individually, enabling them to respond to their particular academic needs. You therefore receive all the benefits of being educated at a large university while living and studying in a small, friendly community. The geography course is organised and co-ordinated centrally by the department and is the same for all students, so in terms of the quality of teaching you will receive, all colleges are identical.

Tutorials are weekly meetings with a tutor and typically two or three students, to discuss an essay or other written work. These complement lectures and practical classes delivered in the department which all students attend, irrespective of their college.

You can choose a college at the application stage, or alternatively submit an Open Application and a college will be selected for you. There are only 14 colleges at Oxford which admit Geography students and you must apply to one of those colleges. The colleges are:

Brasenose, Christ Church, Hertford, Jesus, Keble, Mansfield, St. Anne's, St. Catherine's, St. Edmund Hall, St. Hilda's, St. John's, St. Peter's, Regent's Park, Worcester.

For further information on these colleges please visit their individual websites.



PA Photocall



"I was always a bit scared of applying to Oxford; I worried that everyone would be far cleverer than me and that I would be way out of my comfort zone. Instead I've found that both the course and the tutors have pushed me academically whilst never expecting the impossible. Applying here may appear daunting, but the rewards you get are second to none."

What are the tutors looking for?

We are looking for able and well-motivated students. In our selection criteria we are looking for your potential for independent thinking, ability to follow an argument, comprehension, problem-solving and a spirit of enquiry.

will need to display evidence of a strong academic record and an ability to deploy their knowledge in ways that show initiative and enthusiasm. Interviews are not a test of knowledge but give candidates the opportunity to respond in a thoughtful way to unpredictable questions and ideas.

Competition for a place for Geography at Oxford is expected to be very strong. You should have achieved, or be predicted to achieve, AAA at A-level or 38-40 points in the IB. There are no required subjects you must have studied, although nearly all applicants have studied Geography. Applicants

Arrangements for a pre-interview test are currently under review. Please see the department website for further details at www.geog.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/

What can I do after a Geography degree?

Geography students are highly employable, whether in careers directly related to their geographical knowledge (such as planning, development work and environmental management), or careers which use the range of transferable skills, including IT, data interpretation and communications skills, which a geography course provides. Many geography students go on to study postgraduate courses, for example in development studies, environmental management or politics.



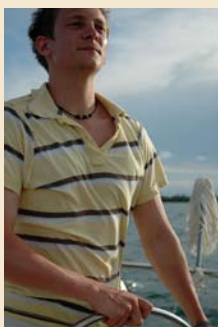
Rachel Hughes

While studying geography at Oxford I particularly enjoyed the climatology option and became interested in climate change mitigation and how it applies to business. I then studied for an MSc in Carbon Management at Edinburgh University which provided me with high-level interdisciplinary skills and training in the business, economics and science of carbon management. After graduating from Edinburgh I joined a specialist company in ecological footprinting and carbon accounting and am now a sustainability consultant working for ADAS, who provide environmental consultancy, rural development services and policy advice.



Chris Kyriacou

After finishing my degree in Geography I decided I wanted to pursue a career in international affairs and went to the London School of Economics to study for the MSc in International Relations. I now work for AMAR International Charitable Foundation which is a not-for profit organisation that helps people in areas of conflict, civil disorder and disruption, rebuilding lives within communities under stress by creating services in medicine, public health, education and basic need provision. Initially I worked as a Projects Officer managing programmes in Iraq and I now manage the AMAR office in Washington.



Tom Cebula

After completing the BA in Geography and an MSc in the School of Geography and Environment, I became a freelance researcher, working mostly at the BBC, but also for American channels and Channel 4, on 'specialist factual' documentaries - essentially history and science. I have learnt a huge amount about a lot of different things, from astrophysics to anthropology, I have spoken to world experts in disciplines from cancer treatment to forensic investigation and I have even managed to revisit my Geography lectures with a series on the history of maps. It's a great job for the curious.



Find out more

If you are interested in finding out more we recommend that you visit the Department's website which provides more details about the course, as well as podcasts of taster lectures and some suggested reading linked to the course. The website also provides details about the current research being undertaken by members of the department.

For more information on applying to Oxford, please visit www.admissions.ox.ac.uk. The University's Admissions Information Centre (*admissions i*) at 55 Little Clarendon Street

can help answer questions about applying to undergraduate or graduate degrees offered by Oxford. Please contact: +44 (0) 1865 288000 or undergraduate.admissions@admin.ox.ac.uk.

Open Days

The best way to find out what Oxford is really like is to visit the School of Geography and the University of Oxford on one of our Open Days. We have a Departmental Open Day in May each year (booking required) and there are three University Open Days in July and September. At these open days you will get a chance to talk directly to tutors and students and also sit in on taster lectures to give you an idea what studying geography at Oxford would be like.

Get in touch

If you have any further questions regarding studying Geography at Oxford, please do contact us at:

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Or: undergraduate.enquiries@ouce.ox.ac.uk



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