

New Major Requirements and Justification

(Updated March, 2011)

Department: Geography, Planning & Recreation

Name of New Major: Geographic Science and Community Planning

Prefix: GSP (all former GGR and PL courses will change to the new prefix.)

THREE OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS:

- Major (stand-alone) = 43-44 hours
- Major + *Geospatial Sciences* focus = 61-62 hours
- Major + *Community Planning and Development* focus = 61-62 hours

MAJOR classes for all students (43-44 units):

Course	Units
ENG 205 The Academic Writer's Workshop (after ENG 105)	2
STA 270 Applied Statistics (including or rather than MAT 114 or MAT 125)	3
GSP 130 Mapping the World (retooled from 230; change to 3 units from 4)	3
GSP 150 Physical Geography	4
GSP 201 Community, Planning and Change	3
GSP 206 Public Participation and Communication	3
GSP 240 World Geography West -OR- GSP 241 World Geography East	3
GSP 303 Community Design and Preservation	3
GSP 371 The Urban Realm: Contexts and Landscapes	3
GSP 375W Community and Global Analysis	3
GSP 239(4) OR 331(4)* OR 432(3)** (a GIS course)	3-4
* required for Geospatial Sciences focus ** required for Community Planning and Development	
Experiential Learning (intern, study abroad, UG research, Independent Study, or thesis)	6
GSP 480C Senior Professional Project (geography-focused) -OR- GSP 405C Senior Professional Project (planning-focused)	4
Total Credits in Core	43-44

Optional Emphasis: Geospatial Sciences (18 units)

Course	Units
GSP 259 Landforms & Regions	3
GSP 320 Intro to Remote Sensing	4
GSP 433 GIS FDTNS II: Mapping and GIS	4
GSP 365 Fundamentals of Weather & Climate	3
Four additional units in geospatial sciences selected with advisor consent	4
Total Credits Emphasis Area	18
Total Credits for Degree (Major + Emphasis)	61-62

Optional Emphasis: Community Planning and Development (18 units)

Course	Units
GSP 276 Planning for Sustainable Tourism	3
GSP 401 Planning Permitting & Review	2
GSP 406 Planning Analysis & Presentation	3
GSP 421 Land Use Planning Law & Ethics	3
GSP 402W Environmental Impact Statements	3
Four additional units in planning or related topics selected with advisor consent	4
Total Credits Emphasis Area	18
Total Credits for Degree (Major + Emphasis)	61-62

Highlights and Outcomes for the Curriculum Redesign: The revised curriculum accomplishes the following goals as specified originally in the rationale for combining majors:

- **Three undergraduate majors are combined into one degree** based on the scaffolding of specific skills and knowledge areas from freshmen to senior level.
- **Reduced external prerequisite courses** to those most essential for student progression within the degree: ENG 205 (to encourage writing across the curriculum), and STA 270 (background in statistics to be applied later in the major).
- **Three junior-level writing courses are reduced to one** (GSP 375W), which will serve as the JLW course that applies to all students. Course curriculum and pedagogy are being adapted to meet the needs of both geography and planning students. (There is an additional JLW course within the optional emphasis for Community Planning and Development.)
- **Approximately 25 undergraduate and graduate courses are being deleted** from the catalog, allowing the full-time faculty to concentrate on teaching the revised major and emphasis areas. Several of these courses are being reconstituted as “new” courses that support the progression of learning outcomes throughout the major.
- **Six credit hours of “experiential learning”** are built into the major, enabling students to choose one or more options from study abroad, internship, undergraduate research, or thesis project. This learner-centered approach follows national and university trends, acknowledging research that reveals enhanced student learning and skills development through practical learning experiences. This further answers the call of the NAU Strategic Plan (Goal #1) to promote greater opportunities for learning-centered education (that is, experiential learning).
- **Increases the number of 100-level core classes from zero to two.** Until recently, geography and planning curricula did not offer any 100-level courses to attract freshmen, despite the growing demand from freshmen students. GGR 250 Physical Geography was recently approved as a 150 course. To engage students in the arena of geo-techniques and mapping, a new course called GSP 130 *Mapping the World*

will be offered as a Liberal Studies and core course for the new curriculum. This is reconstituted from GGR 230 Map and Image, a former core class which is outdated and is being deleted. GSP 130 will triply serve to 1) attract freshmen to what typically is a “discovery major” early in their student careers, 2) introduce timely and contemporary geo-techniques and skills that will be necessary for later courses in the major, and 3) further integrate a global focus into this new Liberal Studies course and early into the new major.

- **Improvement of the capstone courses** to focus more on professional and/or research projects that apply to either planning or geography-related emphases. Two capstone courses (GSP 480C and 405C) will be retained, allowing students to enhance their skills in research or applied projects prior to graduation. Due to the scaffolding of skills and knowledge throughout the revised curriculum, these courses will serve truly as “capstone” courses, allowing students to demonstrate at an advanced level what they have accomplished throughout their undergraduate education.