In 2013 we will be introducing significant changes to the undergraduate Geography program. These changes are designed to ensure students receive the benefits of clearer pathways between semesters, so that they complete their undergraduate studies with an improved mix of knowledge, skills and experiences. The changes will involve new combinations of Units of Study, new rules about what constitutes a Major in Geography, and new crossovers between Geography, Environmental Studies and units offered by the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment.

**WHY THE CHANGES?**

The new program is the culmination of extensive discussions and planning. During the past decade, the number of students enrolled in Geography units has continued to grow, resulting in new challenges to the delivery of teaching content. In these contexts, changes are required to ensure that all students majoring in Geography leave the University of Sydney with a coherent knowledge base and skill set. We will do this through specifying that a Major in Geography requires completion of either the new 'Capstone' unit of study (Geographical Concepts, Skills & Methods; GEOS 3333) or the Southeast Asian Field School (GEOS 3053). The changes are designed to strike a balance between a need to streamline the program (and thereby ensure that all students majoring in Geography are well-equipped for Graduate employment or research) and the important requirement to provide students with optimal choice (thereby allowing students to follow their interests). The new program continues to enable students to follow either the human-environmental or physical-environmental branches of the discipline for most of their studies, and then brings together these branches in the final semester of the program.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

From 2013, the Geography Major will be constituted as follows:

The Geography Major consists of 24 credit points, to be made up of:

- Geographical Concepts, Skills & Methods (GEOS 3333/3933) AND/OR the Southeast Asian Field School (GEOS 3053/3953)

plus any of the following units:

- Urban Citizenship & Sustainability (GEOS 3520/3920); Global Development and Livelihoods (GEOS 3524/3924) (note, not offered in 2013 due to transitional arrangements); Coastal Environments and Processes (GEOS 3009/3909); GIS in Coastal Management (GEOS 3014/3914); Environmental & Sedimentary Geology (GEOS 3103/3903); Environmental Law & Ethics (ENVI 3111/3911); Environmental Assessment (ENVI 3112/3912).

‘Geographical Concepts, Skills & Methods’ and the ‘Southeast Asian Field School’ are both offered in second semester. The Southeast Asian Field School (worth 6cp) will be taught in an intensive format over three weeks in July, prior to the formal commencement of the semester. It will be held in Indonesia and mainland Southeast Asia in alternate years.

Any student concerned about how these changes will affect her/his degree should contact the School of Geosciences Office. As a matter of principle, we do not want these changes to cause problems to the degree plans of any current student, and will be amenable to discussing variations on an individual basis to accommodate particular student circumstances.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT**

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MAJORING IN GEOGRAPHY THROUGH THE HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL PATHWAY:

Intermediate (2nd) year options emphasise the two core elements of a geographical perspective: the way human activities are spatially organised (‘The Geography of Cities and Regions’, GEOS 2124, in 1st semester), and humanity’s connection with the natural environment (‘Environment & Resource Management’, GEOS 2121, in 2nd semester). GEOS 2124 introduces spatial concepts and frameworks in lectures, and then applies these through GIS prac classes and field excursions. GEOS 2121 addresses core analytical and philosophical aspects of how humans relate to the natural environment. An understanding of these principles provides a vital platform as students progress into their Senior year.

At the Senior level, students need 24 cp (4 Units of Study) for a Major. Assuming students complete 12cp in each semester, we recommend that in 1st semester, students enrol in ‘Urban Citizenship & Sustainability’ (GEOS 3520) and ‘Environmental Law & Ethics’ (ENVI 3111). GEOS 3520 asks what it means to be urban, and what ‘being urban’ means for the planet. The unit examines contemporary cities in terms of contestations over citizenship, public/private spaces, and social and environmental sustainability. ENVI 3111 applies the principles introduced in GEOS 2121 to questions about how societies seek to manage and regulate the natural environment.

In 2nd semester, students need to complete either GEOS 3053 (‘Southeast Asian Field School’) or GEOS 3333 (‘Geographical Concepts, Skills & Methods’); for a Major. GEOS 3053 is taught intensively over three weeks in July, finishing just prior to the commencement of the first week of 2nd semester. Due to the logistics of managing the Field School, there is a cap on student numbers. GEOS 3333 brings together the core concepts within the discipline; connects these to methodological practices, and further develops the field-based skills associated with geographical research. This unit is a requirement for students progressing to Honours in Geography. Students may also enrol in ‘Environmental Assessment’ (ENVI 3112), which provides a critical understanding of the theory and practice of environmental impact assessment processes, including social components, from both positive (scientific) and normative (value) perspectives.

Note that in the year 2013, ‘Global Development and Livelihoods’, (GEOS 3524) will not be offered. This is because a considerable proportion of its content overlaps with GEOS 2112, which it replaces. From 2014 it will be offered as a direct feeder into the Southeast Asian Field School.

MAJORING IN GEOGRAPHY THROUGH THE PHYSICAL-ENVIRONMENTAL PATHWAY

At the intermediate (2nd) year, students have three options in 1st semester. ‘Natural Hazards & GIS’ (GEOS 2111) provides students with an opportunity to gain detailed knowledge of GIS, with specific application to its deployment to better understand the risk and management systems associated with natural hazards. ‘Oceans, Coasts and Climate Change’ (GEOS 2115) introduces core concepts about how the formation of ocean basins and their influence on climate govern the development of coasts and continental margins. ‘Soil Properties and Processes’ (SOIL 3003) offers through the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment, introduces students to the fundamental concepts within pedology, soil physics and soil chemistry. In 2nd semester, students are encouraged to enrol in ‘Environment & Resource Management’ (GEOS 2121), which addresses core analytical and philosophical aspects of how humans relate to the natural environment. An understanding of these principles provides a vital platform for progression into the Senior year. Alternately, students may consider ‘The Soil Resource’ (SOIL 2004) or ‘Introductory Hydrology’ (LWSC 2002).

At the Senior level, students need 24 cp (4 Units of Study) for the Major. 1st semester options are ‘Coastal Environments and Processes’ (GEOS 3009), ‘Environmental Law & Ethics’ (ENVI 3111) and two Physical Geography Senior units offered through the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment: ‘Advanced Hydrology and Modeling’ (LWSC 3007) and ‘Contemporary Field and Lab Soil Science’ (SOIL 3009). Special permission is required to count these towards the Geography Major, however as a matter of principle, we will adopt a flexible and sympathetic attitude towards any student wishing to incorporate these Units within their Major.

In 2nd semester, students would typically complete ‘Geographical Concepts, Skills & Methods’ (GEOS 3333), plus one other Unit of Study. These other options include ‘GIS in Coastal Management’ (GEOS 3014), ‘Environmental & Sedimentary Geology’ (GEOS 3103) or ‘Environmental Assessment’ (ENVI 3112).

MAJORING IN GEOGRAPHY: OTHER COMBINATIONS

It is not mandatory that students precisely follow the two pathways recommended above. Subject to the overall rules of the Major being adhered, students may ‘mix and match’ individual Units of Study to meet their interests.

LEGEND:
RED: HUMAN-ENVIRONMENTAL PATHWAY
BLUE: PHYSICAL-ENVIRONMENTAL PATHWAY