

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SAN BERNARDINO  
OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN  
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
BACHELOR OF ARTS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Geography Department is to foster an understanding of the processes and spatial relationships that produce geographic patterns in Earth's human and natural environments. Geography's programs are designed to develop knowledge and skills that students need to evaluate the geographic (spatial) character of societies, ecosystems and landscapes on Earth and prepare for careers or graduate education in Geography and related fields. The Department will maintain a curriculum, faculty, learning environment and community relationships which foster curiosity, scholarship, enhanced teaching and learning, and service to the region.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Department of Geography expects that each Geography major should achieve the following goals and objectives:

**GOAL 1: Develop an awareness of place within a geographical/spatial perspective at local, regional and global scales;**

- Objective 1.1: apply concepts and models of spatial organization to analyze relationships within and between places;
- Objective 1.2: analyze relevant contemporary issues and policies using maps, geographic concepts and models;

**GOAL 2: Develop an understanding of the spatial characteristics of natural landscapes and ecosystems;**

- Objective 2.1: identify and describe the components and processes that shape the Earth's lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere at various scales;
- Objective 2.2: explain how Earth's physical processes are dynamic and interactive;

**GOAL 3: Develop an understanding of the diversity and geographic variations of human landscapes and societies;**

- Objective 3.1: describe and explain how cultural landscapes evolve and how they vary geographically;
- Objective 3.2: describe the criteria used to define regions and explain why places and regions are important;
- Objective 3.3: demonstrate an understanding of cross-cultural dynamics;

**GOAL 4: Recognize and understand geographic relationships between humans and the environment;**

- Objective 4.1: identify and describe ways in which human systems and settlement patterns develop in response to conditions in the physical environment;
- Objective 4.2: explain how human use of the physical environment is affected by culture;
- Objective 4.3: explain how humans alter Earth systems and how change in one location may impact other locations;

**GOAL 5: Learn skills and the utility of important tools needed to analyze and communicate geographic information.**

- Objective 5.1: formulate geographical research questions; apply appropriate data collection methods and analytical techniques;
- Objective 5.2: analyze geographic data, draw conclusions and identify questions warranting further research;
- Objective 5.3: communicate geographic ideas and information through maps, graphs, tables, written and oral reports;
- Objective 5.4: use maps to navigate and interpret scale, distance, terrain and other spatial information

## GEOGRAPHY OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT PLAN

### **ASSESSMENT METHODS OR MEASURES TO BE USED (How students will demonstrate or complete objectives):**

Geography majors must complete **GEOG 500 Senior Seminar** which requires each student to: 1) submit a **portfolio** of work, completed for other geography courses, comprised of a minimum of at least six items (e.g., some combination of term papers, projects, lab journals, essay exams or problem sets) which illustrate achievement of the Department's goals and objectives; and 2) develop and complete a **senior research project** involving both a written report and an oral presentation. The Portfolio will be used to assess the development of geographic knowledge and skills over the course of the degree program (**formative assessment**). The Senior Project will be used to assess how effectively students can apply their geographic knowledge and skills at or near the culmination of their degree program. The Senior Project and portfolio items submitted will be rated (Superior, Satisfactory or Needs Improvement) in a matrix to evaluate how well they achieve each of the Goals and Objectives outlined in Geography's Outcomes Assessment Plan. **Evaluation matrices** will be used to assess how well **GEOG 500** students are achieving the Department's Goals and Objectives (**summative assessment**) and identify any strengths or weaknesses in the curriculum.

- 1) The **portfolio** will provide evidence of written communication skills as well as the level at which the Department's goals and objectives have been achieved. The **portfolio** will include:
  - a. an initial writing sample (e.g., term paper, literature review, essay exam related to any of Geography's goals & objectives) submitted/graded during the first year of residence in the major;
  - b. a term paper/project which the student considers among the best work they have done that illustrates an awareness of place and spatial perspective (**Goal 1, Objectives 1.1 & 1.2**);
  - c. a term paper/project which provides evidence of understanding natural landscapes and ecosystems (**Goal 2, Objectives 2.1 & 2.2**);
  - d. a term paper/project which provides evidence of understanding geographic variations in human landscapes and societies (**Goal 3, Objectives 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3**);
  - e. a term paper/project which provides evidence of understanding relationships between humans/society and the environment (**Goal 4, Objectives 4.1, 4.2 & 4.3**); and
  - f. a project and some combination of exercises that illustrate evidence of analytical skills and competence with geographic tools and techniques (e.g., remote sensing, GIS, mapping, field techniques, quantitative methods &/or geographic research methods) (**Goal 5, Objectives 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4**).
- 2) The **senior research project** involves both a written paper and an oral presentation which illustrate the following:
  - a. analytical skills from a geographical perspective (problem identification, research design, logic and strength of analysis) (**Goal 1, Objective 1.1, Goal 5, Objectives 5.1, 5.2, 5.3**);
  - b. competence with geographic tools and techniques (maps must be produced; remote sensing, mapping, field techniques, geographic information systems [GIS], &/or quantitative methods must be used to complete the senior project (**Goal 5, Objectives 5.1, 5.2, 5.3**);
  - c. awareness of place and a spatial perspective (**Goal 1, Objectives 1.1, 1.2**);
  - d. understanding of natural landscapes, human landscapes or relationships between humans and environment (**Goal 2, Objectives 2.1, 2.2; Goal 3, Objectives 3.1, 3.2; Goal 4, Objectives 4.1, 4.2, 4.3**).

### **TIME FRAME (When will assessment be done?)**

From the time they begin the geography major at CSUSB, students must take geography courses which cover various Department goals and objectives and provide potential portfolio items. A

matrix of geography courses and the goals and objectives that each course covers will be provided to students as soon as they declare the Geography major (so they may begin to build their portfolio) . Students must complete Geog 500 during spring term of their senior year. Student Portfolios will be submitted for evaluation by the third week of the term in which they enroll in Geog 500. Portfolios will be evaluated and returned with evaluation summaries by the fifth week of Geog 500. The senior research project will be completed by the ninth week of Geog 500 and students will give oral presentations of their research during the ninth and tenth weeks. The senior projects will be evaluated then returned to students during final exam period.

#### WHO WILL DO THE ASSESSMENT.

Two geography faculty (one physical geographer and one cultural geographer) will team teach Geog 500 each spring. They both will evaluate the portfolios, supervise and grade the senior research projects (written & oral presentations), and provide each student with a written summary of the strengths and weaknesses of their portfolios and projects. In the case of disagreements, the Department Chair will review the disputed work and consult with the instructors/evaluators to arbitrate a final assessment. Responsibility for Geog 500 will rotate between faculty.

#### TYPE OF FEEDBACK.

At the end of each evaluation the team of faculty teaching Geog 500 will write a report describing the strengths and weaknesses of each portfolio and provide a ranking of superior, satisfactory or needs improvement for each item in the portfolio as to how effectively it achieves specific program objectives. Students will be encouraged to meet with the faculty to discuss the written comments. The same type of feedback will also be provided for the senior project.

The number and percent of students scoring superior, satisfactory or needs improvement for each outcomes objective will be tabulated in evaluation matrices for Department review.

#### HOW DATA WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS OR REVISE CURRICULA

The department will meet as a group during the following quarter to discuss the summary of outcomes. Based on comments from the team of Geog 500 instructors and tabulations of student performance with regard to each goal and objective, the Department will identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. Courses and/or curriculum would be revised if necessary; or, the goals and objectives could be modified.

## DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY ASSESSMENT MATRIX

**GOAL 1: Develop an awareness of place within a geographical/spatial perspective at local, regional and global scales**

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT		Superior		Satisfactory		Needs Improvement	
Objective	Course # Assessment tool	# of stud	%	# of stud	%	# of stud	%
1.1 apply concepts & models of spatial organization to analyze relationships within and between places	Portfolio item* (see list below)  Geog 500 Senior Project						
1.2 analyze relevant contemporary issues & policies using maps, geographic concepts & models	Portfolio Item** (see list below)  Geog 500 Senior Project? (depending on topic chosen)						

\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective I.1: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, Geog 205, Geog 301, Geog 302, Geog 305, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 323, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 380, Geog 401, Geog 402, Geog 403, Geog 420, Geog 440, Geog 595

\*\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 1.2: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, SSCI 165, Geog 301, Geog 302, Geog 305, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 350, Geog 360, Geog 365, Geog 380, Geog 401, Geog 402, Geog 403, Geog 415, Geog 420, Geog 440, Geog 470, Geog 480, Geog 595

NOTE: choose only the paper, project or exam for the portfolio which best and fully illustrates that a particular objective has been achieved. You may combine two or more items to illustrate achievement of a specific objective if no single paper, project or exam, by itself, fully illustrates accomplishment of that objective.

**GOAL 2: Develop an understanding of the spatial characteristics of natural landscapes & ecosystems**

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT		Superior		Satisfactory		Needs Improvement	
Objective	Course # Assessment Tool	# of Stud	%	# of stud	%	# of Stud	%
2.1 identify & describe the components & processes that shape Earth's lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere & biosphere at various scales	Portfolio (see list below)  Geog 500 Sr. Project? (depending on topic chosen)						
2.2 explain how Earth's physical processes are & interactive	Portfolio (see list below)  Geog 500 Sr. Project? (depending on topic chosen)						

\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 2.1: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 103, Geog 360, Geog 365, Geog 460, Geog 470, Geog 480

\*\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 2.2: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 103, Geog 360, Geog 365, Geog 460, Geog 470, Geog 480, Geog 595

NOTE: Choose only the paper, project or exam for the portfolio which best/fully illustrates that a particular objective has been achieved. You may combine two or more items to illustrate achievement of a specific objective if no single paper, project or exam, by itself, fully illustrates accomplishment of that objective.

**GOAL 3: Develop an understanding of the diversity & geographic variations of human landscapes & societies**

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT		Superior		Satisfactory		Needs Improvement	
Objective	Course # Assessment Tool	# of stud	%	# of Stud	%	# of Stud	
3.1 describe & explain how cultural landscapes evolve how they vary geographically	Portfolio (see list below)						
3.2 describe the criteria used to define regions & explain why places & regions are important	Portfolio Item** (see list below)						
3.3 demonstrate an understanding of cross-cultural dynamics	Portfolio (see list below)						

\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 3.1: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, SSCI 165, Geog 302, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 350, Geog 380

\*\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 3.2: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, SSCI 165, Geog 302, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 340, Geog 380

#Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 3.3: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, SSCI 165, Geog 302, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 350, Geog 380

NOTE: Choose only the paper, project or exam for the portfolio which best/fully illustrates that a particular objective has been achieved. You may combine two or more items to illustrate achievement of a specific objective if no single paper, project or exam, by itself, fully illustrates accomplishment of that objective

GOAL 4: Recognize and understand geographic relationships between humans and the environment

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT		Superior		Satisfactory		Needs Improvement	
Objective	Course # Assessment tool	# of Stud	%	# of Stud	%	# of Stud	%
4.1 identify & describe ways in which human systems & settlement patterns develop in response to conditions in the physical environment	Portfolio Item* (see list below)						
4.2 explain how human use of the physical environment is affected by culture	Portfolio (see list below)						
4.3 explain how humans alter Earth systems & how change in one location may impact other locations	Portfolio Item# (see list below)						

\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 4.1: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, SSCI 165, Geog 302, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 340, Geog 350, Gong 380

\*\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 4.2: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, SSCI 165, Geog 302, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 340, Geog 350, Geog 380

#Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 4.3: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 103, SSCI 165, Geog 302, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 323, Geog 340, Geog 350, Geog 360, Geog 365, Geog 380, Geog 460, Geog 470 Geog 480

NOTE: Choose only the paper, project or exam for the portfolio which best/fully illustrates that a particular objective has been achieved. You may combine two or more items to illustrate achievement of a specific objective if no single paper, project or exam, by itself, fully illustrates accomplishment of that objective.

**GOAL 5: Learn skills and the utility of important tools needed to analyze & communicate geographic information**

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT		Superior		Satisfactory		Needs Improvement	
Objective	Course # Assessment Tool	# of Stud	9c	# of Stud	%	# of Stud	%
5.1 formulate geographical research questions; apply appropriate data collection methods & analytical techniques	Portfolio Item* (see list below)  Geog 500 Sr.  Project						
5.2 analyze geographic data, draw conclusions & identify questions warranting further research	Portfolio (see list below)  Geog 500 Sr.  Project						
5.3 communicate geographic ideas & information through maps, graphs, tables, written oral reports	Portfolio Item# (see list below)  Geog 500 Sr.  Project						
5.4 use maps to navigate & interpret scale, distance, terrain & other spatial information	Portfolio (see list below)						

\* Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 5.1: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 103, Geog 100, Geog 205, Geog 301, Geog302, Geog 304, Geog 305, Geog 306, Geog 309, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 380, Geog 390, Geog 401, Geog 402, Geog 403, Geog 406, Geog 470, Geog 575, Geog 595 \*\*Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 5.2: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, Geog 103, Geog 205, Geog 301, Geog 302, Geog 304, Geog 305, Geog 306, Geog 309, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 360, Geog 380, Geog 390, Geog 401, Geog 402, Geog 403, Geog 406, Geog 470, Geog 575, Geog 595

#Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 5.3: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 100, Geog 103, SSCI 165, Geog 205, Geog 301, Geog 302, Geog 304, Geog 305, Geog 306, Geog 309, Geog 310, Geog 321, Geog 323, Geog 330, Geog 340, Geog 350, Geog 360, Geog 365, Geog 380, Geog 401, Geog 402, Geog 403, Geog 406, Geog 415, Geog 470, Geog 480, Geog 595

##Possible Portfolio Items for Objective 5.4: Essay exams, research papers, exercises/projects from Geog 103, Geog 201, Geog 301, Geog 304, Geog 306, Geog 403

NOTE: Choose only the paper, project or exam for the portfolio which best/fully illustrates that a particular objective has been achieved. You may combine two or more items to illustrate achievement of a specific objective if no single paper, project or exam, by itself, fully illustrates accomplishment of that objective.