Twin Cities Campus

Urban Studies B.A.

Geography, Environment, Society

College of Liberal Arts

- Program Type: Baccalaureate
- Requirements for this program are current for Fall 2023
- Required credits to graduate with this degree: 120
- Required credits within the major: 36 to 44
- Degree: Bachelor of Arts

The University established the urban studies program in 1969. In the 1960s, studying cities and urban life and form was considered avant-garde in all disciplines. Urban studies is an explicitly cross-disciplinary major rooted in College of Liberal Arts but accepting courses from a diversity of undergraduate colleges. The program offers students a mix of academic, hands-on, experiential, and skill-based coursework focused on a common theme of urban social/cultural issues, urban political economy and planning, urban infrastructure and environment, or international urban issues. Through required urban studies coursework students are exposed to local practitioners who teach courses based around their areas of expertise such as homeless youth, public-private partnerships, transit development, or housing in an international perspective. These local practitioners expose students to the diverse careers that can come from a degree on urban studies. Students are encouraged to study abroad.

Students who major in urban studies come to understand the way cities work and use the vast resources of the Twin Cities to explore their interests. All students complete one required 140 hour internship as part of their exploration of careers they might pursue. Finding an internship is great practice for a job hunt. With the vast local network of alumnus of the program, there are many internship possibilities each term.

The program offers one-on-one advising and students come to know one another through shared classes and through the student group: Minnesota Urban Studies Student Association.

Post graduation some students go on to graduate school in fields as diverse as social work, law, finance, geography, and medicine. Other students elect to spend their post-graduate year in a service based organization such as Teach for America, Peace Corps, Reading Corps, Americorps etc. The majority go on to get some on-the-job experience.

Urban studies gives students a breadth of knowledge and the knowledge of how to be engaged in urban issues often leading to long-term careers in public service.

Program Delivery

This program is available:

- via classroom (the majority of instruction is face-to-face)

Admission Requirements

For information about University of Minnesota admission requirements, visit the Office of Admissions website.

General Requirements

All students are required to complete general University and college requirements including writing and liberal education courses. For more information about University-wide requirements, see the liberal education requirements.Required courses for the major or minor in which a student receives a D grade (with or without plus or minus) do not count toward the major or minor (including transfer courses).

Program Requirements

Students are required to take 4 semester(s) of any second language.

CLA BA degrees require 18 upper division (3xxx-level or higher) credits outside the major designator. These credits must be taken in designators different from the major designator and cannot include courses that are cross-listed with the major designator. The major designator for the urban studies BA is URBS.

At least 15 upper division credits in the major must be taken at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus.

Students may earn up to one undergraduate degree in the urban studies program: a BA, a BS, or a minor. Students who major or minor in urban studies may combine those degrees with a major or minor in geography, or the other departmental minors: public health, geographic information science.

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All incoming CLA first-year (freshmen) must complete the First-Year Experience course sequence.

All incoming CLA first-year (freshmen) students earning a BA, BS, or BIS degree must complete the second-year career management course CLA 3002.

All students must complete a capstone in at least one CLA major. The requirements for double majors completing the capstone in a different CLA major will be clearly stated. Students must also complete all major requirements in both majors to allow the additional capstone to be waived. Students completing an additional degree must complete the capstone in each degree area.

Introductory Course

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling exactly 3 credit(s) from the following:

- URBS 1001W - Introduction to Urban Studies: The Complexity of Metropolitan Life [WI] (3.0 cr)
  or URBS 3001W - Introduction to Urban Studies: The Complexity of Metropolitan Life [WI] (3.0 cr)

Skills and Methods Courses

For the BS and BA all students are required to take an introductory course in statistics.

Some 5xxx-level courses will require departmental consent.

Take 2 or more course(s) totaling 6 - 8 credit(s) from the following:

Introductory Courses in Statistics

Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling 3 - 4 credit(s) from the following:

- ESPM 3012 - Statistical Methods for Environmental Scientists and Managers [MATH] (4.0 cr)
- PA 5031 - Statistics for Public Affairs (4.0 cr)
- POL 3085 - Quantitative Analysis in Political Science [MATH] (4.0 cr)
- SOC 3811 - Social Statistics [MATH] (4.0 cr)
- STAT 1001 - Introduction to the Ideas of Statistics [MATH] (4.0 cr)
- STAT 3011 - Introduction to Statistical Analysis [MATH] (4.0 cr)
- STAT 3021 - Introduction to Probability and Statistics (3.0 cr)
- EPSY 3264 - Basic and Applied Statistics [MATH] (3.0 cr)
  or EPSY 5261 - Introductory Statistical Methods (3.0 cr)

Introductory Courses in Research & Spatial Analysis

Take 0 or more course(s) from the following:

- CEGE 3101 - Computer Applications I (3.0 cr)
- FNRM 3131 - Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for Natural Resources [TS] (4.0 cr)
- GEOG 3511 - Principles of Cartography (4.0 cr)
- GEOG 3541 - Principles of Geocomputing (3.0 cr)
- GEOG 3561 - Principles of Geographic Information Science (4.0 cr)
- GEOG 3573 - Introduction to Digital Mapping: ArcGIS Basis (2.0 cr)
- SOC 3801 - Sociological Research Methods (4.0 cr)
- GEOG 3531 - Numerical Spatial Analysis (4.0 cr)
  or GEOG 5531 - Numerical Spatial Analysis (4.0 cr)
- PSY 3001W - Introduction to Research Methods [WI] (4.0 cr)
  or PSY 3001V - Honors Introduction to Research Methods [WI] (4.0 cr)

Intermediate Courses in Statistics & Spatial Analysis

Take 0 or more course(s) from the following:

- ESPM 4295W - GIS in Environmental Science and Management [WI] (4.0 cr)
- GEOG 5562 - GIS Development Practicum (3.0 cr)
- GEOG 5563 - Advanced Geographic Information Science (3.0 cr)
- GEOG 5564 - Urban Geographic Information Science and Analysis (3.0 cr)
- GIS 5571 - ArcGIS I (3.0 cr)
- GIS 5576 - Spatial Digital Humanities (3.0 cr)
- PA 5022 - Applications of Economics for Policy Analysis (1.5 - 3.0 cr)
- PA 5271 - Geographic Information Systems: Applications in Planning and Policy Analysis (3.0 cr)
- STAT 3022 - Data Analysis (4.0 cr)
- STAT 4101 - Theory of Statistics I (4.0 cr)
- STAT 5021 - Statistical Analysis (4.0 cr)
- STAT 5201 - Sampling Methodology in Finite Populations (3.0 cr)
- STAT 5401 - Applied Multivariate Methods (3.0 cr)
- STAT 5421 - Analysis of Categorical Data (3.0 cr)
- STAT 4102 - Theory of Statistics II (4.0 cr)
  or STAT 5102 - Theory of Statistics II (4.0 cr)

Other Methods Courses

Take 0 or more course(s) from the following:

- MKTG 3011 - Marketing Research (4.0 cr)

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•PA 3002 - Basic Methods of Policy Analysis [SOCS] (3.0 cr)
•PA 3003 - Nonprofit and Public Financial Management (3.0 cr)
•PA 4101 - Nonprofit Management and Governance (3.0 cr)
•PA 5113 - State and Local Public Finance (3.0 cr)
•PA 5221 - Private Sector Development (3.0 cr)
•PA 5511 - Community Economic Development (3.0 cr)
•PA 5521 - Development Planning and Policy Analysis (4.0 cr)
•WRIT 4573W - Writing Proposals and Grant Management [WI] (3.0 cr)
•AMIN 3001 - Public History (3.0 cr)
or AMST 3003 - Public History (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3001 - Public History (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3401W - Geography of Environmental Systems and Global Change [ENV, WI] (3.0 cr)
or GEOG 5401W - Geography of Environmental Systems and Global Change [ENV, WI] (3.0 cr)

•Communication Courses
Take 0 - 1 course(s) from the following:
•COMM 3411 - Introduction to Small Group Communication (3.0 cr)
•COMM 5411 - Small Group Communication Research (3.0 cr)
•COMM 5441 - Communication in Human Organizations (3.0 cr)
•SW 3501 - Theories and Practices of Social Change Organizing (4.0 cr)

Urban Form and Society Courses
Take 2 or more course(s) totaling 6 or more credit(s) from the following:
•ARCH 3412W - Architectural History Since 1750 [HIS, GP, WI] (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 4701W - Introduction to Urban Form and Theory [WI] (3.0 cr)
•DES 3331 - Street Life Urban Design Seminar (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3161 - Europe: A Geographic Perspective [GP] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3371W - Cities, Citizens, and Communities [DSJ, WI] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3373 - Changing Form of the City [HIS, GP] (3.0 cr)
•HSG 3462 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•HSG 4465 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•SOC 3461 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•URBS 3861 - Financing Cities (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3871 - A Suburban World (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 1973 - Geography of the Twin Cities [SOCS] (3.0 cr)
or GEOG 3973 - Geography of the Twin Cities [SOCS] (3.0 cr)

Urban Studies Colloquia
Take 2 or more credit(s) from the following:
•URBS 3200 - Urban Studies Colloquium (1.0 cr)

Urban Studies Workshop
Take 6 or more credit(s) from the following:
•URBS 3500 - Urban Studies Workshop (3.0 cr)

Urban Studies Internship Seminar
Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling exactly 2 credit(s) from the following:
•URBS 3896 - Urban Studies Internship Seminar (2.0 cr)

Capstone
The Capstone Project is a culmination of the major and should reflect a students best work. It is a process of data collection, reading, reflection, collaboration, interpretation, and writing. As the culmination of undergraduate training, each project develops from an interest or specialization deriving from previous courses. Students complete an academic research paper that is at least 15 pages of text and uses a minimum of 8 academic sources.
Take exactly 1 course(s) totaling exactly 2 credit(s) from the following:
Students who double major and choose to complete a capstone requirement of at least 2 credits in their other major may waive the Urban Studies BA capstone, and they do not need to replace the 2 credits.
•URBS 3955W - Senior Paper Seminar [WI] (2.0 cr)

Upper Division Writing Intensive within the major
Students are required to take one upper division writing intensive course within the major. If that requirement has not been satisfied within the core major requirements, students must choose one course from the following list. Some of these courses may also fulfill other major requirements.
Take 0 - 1 course(s) from the following:
•APEC 3611W - Environmental and Natural Resource Economics [ENV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 4701W - Introduction to Urban Form and Theory [WI] (3.0 cr)
•COMM 3451W - Intercultural Communication: Theory and Practice [WI] (3.0 cr)

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•COMM 5451W - Intercultural Communication Processes [WI] (3.0 cr)
•ESPM 3011W - Ethics in Natural Resources [CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3371W - Cities, Citizens, and Communities [DSJ, WI] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3374W - The City in Film [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
•GEOG 3381W - Population in an Interacting World [SOCS, GP, WI] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3401W - Geography of Environmental Systems and Global Change [ENV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•HSG 4467W *{Inactive}*[WI] (4.0 cr)
•POL 3451W - Politics and Society in the New Europe [GP, WI] (3.0 cr)
•SOC 3451W - Cities & Social Change [WI] (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3001W - Introduction to Urban Studies: The Complexity of Metropolitan Life [WI] (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3955W - Senior Paper Seminar [WI] (2.0 cr)
•WRIT 4573W - Writing Proposals and Grant Management [WI] (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 3711W - Environmental Design and the Sociocultural Context [SOCS, CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
or ARCH 3711V - Honors: Environmental Design and the Sociocultural Context [SOCS, CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•HIST 3402W - Modern Latin America 1825 to Present [HIS, GP, WI] (4.0 cr)
or LAS 3402W - Modern Latin America 1825 to Present [HIS, GP, WI] (4.0 cr)
•PSY 3001V - Honors Introduction to Research Methods [WI] (4.0 cr)
or PSY 3001W - Introduction to Research Methods [WI] (4.0 cr)

Urban Studies Concentrations
Students are required to complete three courses for a minimum of 9 credits from one of the four concentrations. Some 5xxx-level courses will require departmental consent.

Social and Cultural Analysis of Urban Life
Take 3 or more course(s) totaling 9 - 12 credit(s) from the following:
•AFRO 5910 - Topics in African American and African Studies (3.0 cr)
•AMIN 4511 - Indigenous Political Economies (3.0 cr)
•CHIC 4275 - Theory in Action: Community Engagement in a Social Justice Framework [CIV] (3.0 cr)
•COMM 3451W - Intercultural Communication: Theory and Practice [WI] (3.0 cr)
•COMM 5451W - Intercultural Communication Processes [WI] (3.0 cr)
•ENGL 3013 - The City in Literature [LITR] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3341 - Black Geographies (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3371W - Cities, Citizens, and Communities [DSJ, WI] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3374W - The City in Film [AH, WI] (4.0 cr)
•GEOG 3377 - Music in the City [DSJ, AH] (3.0 cr)
•HIST 3821 - United States in the 20th Century to 1945 [HIS] (3.0 cr)
•HIST 3822 - Making America Modern: 1945 to Present (3.0 cr)
•HSG 4467W *{Inactive}*[WI] (4.0 cr)
•PA 5290 - Topics in Planning (0.5 - 4.0 cr)
•PA 5401 - Poverty, Inequality, and Public Policy (3.0 cr)
•PA 5601 - Global Survey of Gender and Public Policy (3.0 cr)
•POL 3462 - The Politics of Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the United States, South Africa and Cuba (3.0 cr)
•PSY 3201 - Introduction to Social Psychology (3.0 cr)
•SOC 3451W - Cities & Social Change [WI] (3.0 cr)
•SOC 3721 - Principles of Social Psychology (3.0 cr)
•SOC 4108 - Current Issues in Crime Control (3.0 cr)
•SW 5101 - Historical Origins and Contemporary Policies in Social Welfare (3.0 cr)
•AAS 4231 - Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans & Chicanos in the U.S. (3.0 cr)
or AFRO 4231 - Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans & Chicanos in the U.S. (3.0 cr)
or AMIN 4231 - Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, & Chicanos in the U.S. (3.0 cr)
or CHIC 4231 - Color of Public Policy: African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans & Chicanos in the U.S. (3.0 cr)
•AFRO 3865 - African American History: 1865 to the Present (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3865 - African American History, 1865 to Present (3.0 cr)
•AFRO 3866 - The Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, 1954-1984 (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3856 - The Civil Rights and Black Power Movement, 1954-1984 (3.0 cr)
•AMIN 3872 - American Indian History: 1830 to the Present [HIS, DSJ] (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3872 - American Indian History: 1830 to the Present [HIS, DSJ] (3.0 cr)
•AMST 3212 - Dissident Sexualities in U.S. History (3.0 cr)
or GLBT 3212 - Dissident Sexualities in U.S. History (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3212 - Dissident Sexualities in U.S. History (3.0 cr)

-OR-

Urban Political Economy
Take 3 or more course(s) totaling 9 - 12 credit(s) from the following:
•APEC 3611W - Environmental and Natural Resource Economics [ENV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•ECON 4821 - Public Economics (3.0 cr)

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•GEOG 3605 - Geographic Perspectives on Planning (3.0 cr)
•HSG 5463 - Housing Policy (3.0 cr)
•LA 3004 *{Inactive}*(4.0 cr)
•PA 4200 - Urban and Regional Planning (3.0 cr)
•PA 5013 - Law and Urban Land Use (1.5 cr)
•PA 5209 - Urban Planning and Health Equity (3.0 cr)
•PA 5211 - Land Use Planning (3.0 cr)
•PA 5221 - Private Sector Development (3.0 cr)
•PA 5261 - Housing Policy (3.0 cr)
•PA 5290 - Topics in Planning (0.5 - 4.0 cr)
•PA 5421 - Racial Inequality and Public Policy (3.0 cr)
•PA 5511 - Community Economic Development (3.0 cr)
•POL 3462 - The Politics of Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the United States, South Africa and Cuba (3.0 cr)
•POL 3477 - Political Economy of Development [SOCS, GP] (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3771 - Fundamentals of Transit (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3861 - Financing Cities (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3871 - A Suburban World (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3331 - Geography of the World Economy [SOCS, GP] (3.0 cr)
or GLOS 3231 - Geography of the World Economy [SOCS, GP] (3.0 cr)
•LA 3514 *{Inactive}*[CIV] (3.0 cr)
or LA 5514 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)

-OR-

Urban Infrastructure and Environment
Take 3 or more course(s) totaling 9 - 12 credit(s) from the following:
•APEC 3611W - Environmental and Natural Resource Economics [ENV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 4701W - Introduction to Urban Form and Theory [WI] (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 5672 - Historic Building Conservation (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 5673 - Historic Property Research and Documentation (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 5711 - Theory and Principles of Urban Design (3.0 cr)
•CEGE 3201 - Transportation Engineering [TS] (3.0 cr)
•CEGE 4502 - Water and Wastewater Treatment (3.0 cr)
•ESPM 3011W - Ethics in Natural Resources [CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•ESPM 3245 - Sustainable Land Use Planning and Policy [ENV] (3.0 cr)
•ESPM 3251 - Natural Resources in Sustainable International Development [GP] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3379 - Environment and Development in the Third World [SOCS, ENV] (3.0 cr)
•LA 3003 - Climate Change Adaptation (3.0 cr)
•LA 3501 - Environmental Design and Its Biological and Physical Context [ENV] (3.0 cr)
•LA 4755 *{Inactive}*[TS] (3.0 cr)
•LA 5204 - Metropolitan Landscape Ecology (3.0 cr)
•LA 5401 - Directed Studies in Emerging Areas of Landscape Architecture (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
•PA 4200 - Urban and Regional Planning (3.0 cr)
•PA 5013 - Law and Urban Land Use (1.5 cr)
•PA 5212 - Managing Urban Growth and Change (3.0 cr)
•PA 5421 - Racial Inequality and Public Policy (3.0 cr)
•PA 5722 - Economics of Environmental Policy (3.0 cr)
•SUST 4004 - Sustainable Communities (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3751 - Understanding the Urban Environment [ENV] (3.0 cr)
•URBS 3771 - Fundamentals of Transit (3.0 cr)
•ARCH 3711W - Environmental Design and the Sociocultural Context [SOCS, CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
or ARCH 3711V - Honors: Environmental Design and the Sociocultural Context [SOCS, CIV, WI] (3.0 cr)
•CEGE 4211 - Highway Design and Traffic Operations (4.0 cr)
or CEGE 5211 - Highway Design & Traffic Operations (4.0 cr)
•CEGE 5212 - Transportation Policy, Planning, and Deployment (3.0 cr)
or PA 5232 - Transportation Policy, Planning, and Deployment (3.0 cr)
•CEGE 5213 - Transit Planning and Management (3.0 cr)
or PA 5231 - Transit Planning and Management (3.0 cr)
•LA 3514 *{Inactive}*[CIV] (3.0 cr)
or LA 5514 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)

-OR-

International Urban Issues
Take 3 or more course(s) totaling 9 - 12 credit(s) from the following:
•ARCH 4674 - World Heritage Conservation (3.0 cr)
•ARGN 3009 - Argentina: Stereotypes and Identity (3.0 cr)
•CHIC 3352 - Transborder Theory: Global Views/Borderland Spaces (3.0 cr)

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•GEOG 3373 - Changing Form of the City [HIS, GP] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3379 - Environment and Development in the Third World [SOCS, ENV] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3381W - Population in an Interacting World [SOCS, GP, WI] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3388 - Going Places: Geographies of Travel and Tourism [CIV] (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 5385 - Globalization and Development: Political Economy (4.0 cr)
•HIST 3722 - Studies in 20th-Century Europe From the End of World War II to the End of the Cold War: 1945-91 [HIS, GP] (3.0 cr)
•HSG 4465 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
•PA 5522 - International Development Policy, Families, and Health (3.0 cr)
•PA 5561 - Gender and International Development (3.0 cr)
•PA 5880 - Exploring Global Cities (1.0 - 3.0 cr)
•POL 3451W - Politics and Society in the New Europe [GP, WI] (3.0 cr)
•POL 3462 - The Politics of Race, Class, and Ethnicity in the United States, South Africa and Cuba (3.0 cr)
•POL 3464 - The Politics of Economic Inequality [DSJ] (3.0 cr)
•AFRO 3432 - Modern Africa in a Changing World [HIS, GP] (3.0 - 4.0 cr)
or HIST 3432 - Modern Africa in a Changing World [HIS, GP] (3.0 - 4.0 cr)
•AFRO 3433 - Economic Development in Contemporary Africa [SOCS, GP] (3.0 cr)
or APEC 3061 - Economic Development in Contemporary Africa [GP, SOCS] (3.0 cr)
•ANTH 3009 - Prehistoric Pathways to World Civilizations [HIS] (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3066 - Prehistoric Pathways to World Civilization [HIS] (3.0 cr)
•EAS 3468 - Social Change in Modern China (3.0 cr)
or HIST 3468 - Social Change in Modern China (3.0 cr)
•GEOG 3331 - Geography of the World Economy [SOCS, GP] (3.0 cr)
or GLOS 3231 - Geography of the World Economy [SOCS, GP] (3.0 cr)
•GLOS 3145 - Global Modernity, the Nation-State, and Capitalism (3.0 cr)
or GLOS 3145H - Honors: Global Modernity, the Nation-State, and Capitalism (3.0 cr)
•GLOS 3278 *{Inactive}*(3.0 cr)
or HIST 3478 - Tigers and Dragons: The Rise of the East Asian Economies, 1930-Present (3.0 cr)
•HIST 3402W - Modern Latin America 1825 to Present [HIS, GP, WI] (4.0 cr)
or LAS 3402W - Modern Latin America 1825 to Present [HIS, GP, WI] (4.0 cr)

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