MS Bioregional Planning and Community Design

Academic Requirements

Overview of MS Degree Requirements

Students are required to complete 47 credits and usually do so within four semesters, although more time can be taken. Students may also apply for recognition of previous professional or academic work and graduate courses from other institutions. The program is organized into three categories:

- *Required courses* (22-23 credits): Core courses of the Bioregional Planning Program. The planning methods and GIS courses can be waived if the student has previously taken similar courses, in which case the student should choose additional electives to meet the 47 credit requirement.

- *Restricted electives* (15 credits): Courses which fulfill multi-disciplinary understandings and methods required for effective planning practice. These courses may overlap with specialization electives and some may be 300 or 400-level courses.

- *Specialization electives* (9 credits): Courses that build a marketable area of expertise or student interest. Five specializations are defined below; however students may respond to emerging trends by defining their own specialization in consultation with both their major professor and the faculty who specialize in the area of interest. These courses may overlap with the restricted electives, in which case other electives can be taken to fulfill the requirement of 47 credits.

The following pages list the required courses, restricted electives, and specialization electives. Students are free to take other courses that meet the learning outcomes of the program[1]. To this end, some additional courses are provided below. Students may also choose to take courses that are offered in Boise or other branch campuses, or at collaborating institutions such as WSU. Furthermore, some students may choose to complete one of the many certificate options offered by participating departments and count these courses toward their specialization.

Students have flexibility and should consult with their major professor and/or specialization advisor when choosing electives in order to ensure a cohesive program. Every student must submit their study plan, after approval from their major professor, to the graduate school at the end of the first semester. The plan can be revised, as necessary.

[1] Courses, studios, student projects, and research are intended to meet the standards set by both the professional Planning Accreditation Board and the program description for the Bioregional Planning and Community Design master's degree as approved by the Idaho Board of Education. Reference documents are available from faculty on request.

Required Courses (19-20 credits)

Bioregional Planning Core Courses[2]

BIOP 520 Introduction to Planning and Bioregional Thought (3cr)
BIOP 521 Comprehensive Local and Regional Planning (or approved substitute)(3cr)
BIOP 522 Planners Methods (or approved GIS substitute) (3cr)
BIOP 560 Planning Studio I (4cr)
BIOP 561 Planning Studio II or BIOP 500 Thesis (4 cr)
BIOP 530 Planning Theory and Professional Ethics (2 or 3 cr)
GIS and statistical competency is also required and can be obtained through various courses

Restricted Electives (15 credits)

Human Settlements Elective: to gain understanding about the drivers and patterns of cultural landscapes and urban and regional development
(Choose one)

GEOG 540 Business Location Decisions
GEOG 330 Urban Geography
GEOG 550 Geography of Development
ARCH 584 Urban Morphology
GEOG/LARC 504 Special Topics
AGEC 504 Regional Economic Development Theory

Landscape Dynamics Elective: to gain understanding of bioregional ecological systems
(Choose one)

REM 452 Landscape Ecology
REM 357 Rangeland and Riparian Habitat Assessment
REM 459 Rangeland Ecology
FOR 426 or 429 Fire Ecology and Management
WLF 440 Conservation Biology
Appropriate physical geography, geology or soils course

Legal Studies Elective: to gain understanding about institutional authorities for land use and related decisions
(Choose one)

LAW 944 Local Government and Land Use Law
LAW 947 Environmental Law
LAW 942 Water Law
LAW 949 Indian Law

Policy, Decision-making, and Social Action Elective: to work with politics and differing public interests, processes and governance systems.
(Choose one)

POLS 571 Intergovernmental Relations

[2] New Bioregional planning courses may be numbered as BIOP 504 until finalized. BIOP 522 GIS for Planners and BIOP 523 Planning Methods are not available yet, so in the mean time students should take substitute courses.

POLS 572 Local Government Politics and Policy
POLS 552 Administrative Law and Regulation
WSU CRS 535 Resolving Environmental Disputes
Appropriate conflict management course

Advanced Methods Elective: in addition to basic GIS and statistical skills acquired through GEOG 385, LARC 395, or STAT 251, choose a course that includes quantitative, qualitative, and/or spatial analysis and forecasting.
(Choose one)
POLS 556 Advanced Political Science Research Methods
GEOG 427 Spatial Decision Support Systems
GEOG 507 Spatial Analysis
AGEC 587 Regional Economic Methods
ED 584 Intermediate Quantitative Analysis
CSS 506 Research Methods
STAT 550 Regression and other upper level statistics courses

Specialization (9 credits minimum)

Specialization 1: Regional Planning and Multi-jurisdictional Governance
(Choose three)
POLS 571 Intergovernmental Relations
LAW 944 Local Government and Land Use Law, OR
LAW 947 Environmental Law
LAW 946 Indian Law
LAW 948 Public Land Law
LAW 917 Negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolution
CSS 571 Human Dimensions of Ecosystem Management, OR
CSS 573 Planning and Decision-making for Watershed Management
AGEC 586 Community and Regional Economics
CSS 386 Conservation Management and Planning
CSS 490 International Conservation Management
CSS 486 Public Involvement in Natural Resource Management, OR
COMM 434 Advanced Dispute Resolution,
COMM 436 Conflict Mediation,
COMM 433 Organizational Communication Theory and Research,
WSU CRS 535 Resolving Environmental Conflicts
FOR 586 Social Ecology of Natural Resources Seminar, or appropriate others

Specialization 2: Community and Bioregional Design
(Choose three)
LARC 480 The Emerging Landscape
LARC 495 Computer-aided Regional Landscape Planning
PEP 532 Health and Community Development
ARCH 504 Native American Architecture
ARCH 584 Urban Morphology
ARCH 504 Sustainable Development
ANTH/SOC/JS Course in professional ethics, diversity, and participation.
Project-Related course (1-3 credit hours)

Specialization 3: Community and Economic Development Electives
(Choose three)

POLS 504 Community Development Planning
AGEC 586 Regional Economic Development Theory
AGEC 587 Regional Economic Methods
GEOG 409 Rural Development
GEOG 550 Geography of Development
GEOG 340 Business Location Decisions
POLS 557 Governmental Budgeting

Specialization 4: Transportation and Sustainable Infrastructure Electives
(Choose three)

CE 474 Traffic Systems Design
CE 571 Traffic Flow Theory
CE 573 Transportation Planning
CE 574 Public Transportation
CE 504 Sustainable Transportation and Community Design
LAW 947 Environmental Law
LAW 944 Local Government and Land Use Law
GEOG 346 Transportation Systems Analysis
GEOG 444 Environmental Assessment
GEOG 507 Spatial Analysis and Modeling

Specialization 5: GIS and Spatial Analysis Electives
(Choose three)

GEOG 475 Advanced GIS
GEOG 390 Geographic Visualization
GEOG 507 Spatial Analysis and Modeling
GEOG 427 Spatial Decision Support Decision Techniques
GEOG 483 Remote Sensing/GIS Integration
FOR 427 Remove Sensing and the Environment
FOR 375 Air Photo Interpretation and Mapping
REM 402 Applied Spatial Analysis in Natural Resources

Specialization 6: Student-designed Other

Additional Electives
(consult with program learning outcomes, your major and specialization professors)

ARCH 483 Urban Theory and Issues
GEOG 544 Environmental Assessment
GEOG 360 Population Dynamics and Distribution
GEOG 544 Environmental Assessment
AGEC 577 Land, Natural Resources and Environment
AGEC 451 Land and Natural Resource Economics
AIST/ANTH/SOC 404 Contemporary American Indian Issues
GEOG 550 Geography of Development
GEOG 504 Special topics classes
POLS 579 Introduction to Environmental Regulation

LAW 917 Negotiation and Alternative Dispute Resolution (others at WSU)
LAW 906 Seminar on Natural World Law
LAW 948 Public Lands Law
LAW 937 Natural Resource Law and Legal History
ENVW 582 Natural Resource Policy and Law
CSS 486 Public Involvement in Natural Resource Management
CSS 386 Conservation Management & Planning I II
CSS 471 Human Dimensions of Ecosystem Management
POLS 564 Environmental Politics and Policies
POLS 554 Public Organizational Theory
POLS 557 Government Budgeting
POLS J550 Nonprofit Organization and Management
POLS 579 Introduction to Environmental Regulation
POLS 564 Environmental Politics and Policy
POLS 571 Ecological Jurisprudence
PHIL 552 Environmental Philosophy
PHIL 475 Natural Resource Ethics
PEP 570 Ethical Practice and Communication
PHIL 556 Religion and the Environment
COMM 434 Advanced Dispute Resolution
COMM 436 Conflict Mediation (others at WSU)
BUS 504 Leadership and Organizational Behavior
BUS 418 Organizational Design
ENVS 550/WSU ESRP 550 System Dynamics Models of Environmental Systems
Other courses as developed or proposed at WSU and UI or at branch campuses

Specialization Descriptions

Specialization 1: Regional Planning and Multi-jurisdictional Governance

Advisors: Sandra Pinel and Tammi Laninga

This specialization prepares students to understand regional human and ecological systems and to develop trans-boundary approaches to planning, decision making, and governance of natural, social, and cultural places in different political and legal contexts. Regional planning seeks to manage places and resources that transcend political boundaries. Although each federal, state, Native American tribal, city, county, or private institution may develop a land use, services, or development plan for its respective jurisdiction, conflicting values or rules often leave culturally and naturally important landscapes fragmented or result in social and economic inequities. Many voluntary and regulatory approaches have been used in urban and rural regions within the USA and internationally to address these problems including the development of metropolitan planning organizations; recognition and management of national Wild and Scenic Rivers, heritage areas, and regional trails; collaborative planning and co-management between national and local agencies and nonprofit organizations (e.g., conservation easements, watershed-level planning); regional scenario modeling; and joint service agreements to name a few. With training in natural and cultural landscape assessment, conflict management, collaborative and participatory planning, intergovernmental institutions, environmental justice, and related fields, graduates will be prepared for public or private sector careers requiring creative and careful approaches to multi-jurisdictional governance of place.

Specialization 2: Community and Bioregional Design

Advisors: Rula Awwad-Rafferty, Wendy McClure, and Sherry McKibben

This specialization adopts the studio model of education as a vehicle for mutual learning, integration, capacity building, outreach and scholarship. Program participants will learn diverse and multi-faceted approaches to stewarding contextual and sustainable community building. An integrated system, and hands on experiences are central to curriculum delivery and skill development. The studio employs strategies for engaged learning, community outreach, and inclusive, participatory design processes with public partners and stakeholders. A team-based problem solving methodology is used throughout the specialization electives to reinforce collaborative and integrative approaches requisite for successful community oriented practice. The courses are designed to cultivate skills necessary to identify, analyze, interpret, and address problems within community contexts in an increasingly interdependent world. The studio, connecting community and bioregional scales, provides a forum for synthesis, application, and creative problem solving in partnership with communities to help envision more socially, culturally, economically and ecologically sustainable development. Students in this specialization are expected to complete a summer field-based internship experience between their first and second year. They may register for three credit hours-to be taken as part of their free electives or part of their thesis/capstone project credit hours). Please note that students are also expected to complete a summer field based experience/internship between their first and second year (enroll for three internship credit hours—to be taken out of the free electives or be part of the thesis/project hours).

Specialization 3: Community and Economic Development

Advisors: Phil Watson and Manoj Shrestha

This specialization is designed to study the economic and social forces that shape communities and contribute to making a community "better off". Local decision makers must respond appropriately to the complex economic and social environment in which the community resides; at a global, regional, and local level. This specialization is intended to give students the theories, concepts, tools, and practices necessary to design a strategy for effective economic and community development. Concepts discussed include utility theory, social welfare maximization, asset based development, capitals framework, sustainable development, and the role of planners or agents in local environment. This specialization will provide strong analytical skills in the theory and practice of community and economic development planning. Students will this specialization will be able to work in the government, non-profit, and private sectors in the field of community and regional planning, community development, urban renewal, local governance and economic and community consulting.

Specialization 4: Transportation and Sustainable Infrastructure

Advisors: Michael Lowry and Michael Kyte

Transportation planning is the process of analyzing and forecasting travel patterns in order to locate or improve transportation facilities, such as roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transit lines. Transportation planners work for private consulting firms or public agencies. The electives for this specialization examine critical transportation planning issues, such as the relationship between land use and travel demand, the characteristics of different transportation modes, the planning and operation of public transportation

systems, forecasting methods, urban design, the social, economic and environmental impacts of transportation, and the legal and political framework that underpins transportation improvements.

Specialization 5: GIS and Spatial Analysis

Advisors: Ray Dezzani

(Until published, see GIS Certificate in Geography for Guidance).

Student-initiated Specializations

Advisors: Stephen Drown, David Paul, Tim Frazier and others

The field of urban, rural, and bioregional planning is changing rapidly in response to global and national challenges of climate change, natural disasters, health epidemics, energy and food prices, technology, migration, ethnic and national boundary conflicts, water shortages, and emerging issues. Therefore, students who want to develop skills to address these issues are encouraged to investigate their field on interest and develop their own specialization that draws on the expertise of both bioregional faculty and participating colleges, departments and collaborating institutions. Students interested in developing their own specialization or in training as a general small town or rural planner should consult with faculty and propose both a description of the specialization and courses totaling at least nine credits. Other restricted electives can also be chosen to contribute to this specialization. The University of Idaho has strengths in fire and natural hazard management, climate change, Native American law, food systems, justice studies, urban design (Boise), and many other areas for which a planning focus could be created. For example, for a specialization in "Healthy Communities Planning" related to walkable community design, a student might choose PEP 532 as well as courses in architecture and transportation or civil engineering or create a focus on health policy with a different set of courses. For "Hazard and Mitigation Planning", a student could take GIS Applications in Fire Ecology and Management and other courses in geography, geology, or engineering. For a specialization in "Tribal Planning", a student could choose American Indian Law, American Indian Architecture, and Natural Resource Policy Development courses and supplement these with courses at WSU.

Example Course Sequences

The following is an example course sequence. Students should devise a sequence that best meets their professional employment needs and interests. Major professors and/or specialization advisors can help in this process.

Example Sequence

Semester	Course	Credits
Fall	BIOP 520 Introduction to Planning and Bioregional Thought	3
1st year	BIOP 521 Comprehensive Local and Regional Planning	3
	GEOG XXX GIS for Planners (or GIS substitute, if needed)	3
	Human Settlements or other Restricted Elective	3
Spring	BIOP 522 Planning Methods	3
1st year	BIOP 560 Planning Studio I	4
	Landscape Dynamics or other Restricted Elective	3
Summer	Internship	
Fall	Policy, Decision-making, and Social Action Elective	3
2nd year	Advanced Methods Restricted Elective	3
	Specialization Course	3
	Specialization Course	3
Spring	BIOP 551 Planning Studio II or BIOP 500 Thesis	4
2nd year	BIOP 560 Planning Theory and Professional Ethics	3
	Legal Studies Restricted Elective	3
	Specialization Course	3
	Total	*47*