

M.S. in Earth Sciences

Master of Science degrees in the Department of Earth Sciences are primarily thesis-based (Plan A). The department requires students pass a Comprehensive Exam, undertake research, and write and defend a Dissertation.

Program Requirements

Students are expected to develop a solid curricular foundation in geography, geology or geobiology. Graduate programs include a core of geography, geology, or geobiology courses and are further tailored in consultation with the advisor and graduate committee to the specific talents and interests of the individual student. Coursework in disciplines outside the department is encouraged to support and enhance specific research areas in the Earth Sciences.

Graduate and 400-level (senior) courses in earth science include: snow dynamics, physiography, geobiology, geomicrobiology, Quaternary Environments of the Western US, Quaternary paleoecology, and Quaternary environments. Graduate and 400-level (senior) courses of study in geography include: historical geography, geographic thought, population geography, water and society, vulnerability and environmental hazards, advanced topics in resource geography, topics in political ecology, mountain geography, applied GIS and spatial analysis, tourism planning, advanced regional geography, East Asia in the global system, GIS research fundamentals, settlement geography, and land use planning. All graduate students with a concentration in Geography are required to complete a 1-credit (500 level) course entitled Current Research and Applications in Geography in the Fall of their first year. Graduate and 400-level (senior) courses of study in geology include: glacial geology, sedimentology, applied geological hydrology, advanced stratigraphy, clastic sedimentology, ancient ocean systems, tectonics of sedimentary basins, petroleum geology, depositional systems, vertebrate paleontology, macroevolution and the fossil record, taphonomy, comparative vertebrate anatomy, Hell Creek paleontology, geology of the northern Rocky Mountains, structural analysis, tectonics, igneous geochemistry, igneous geochemistry, and volcanology. All graduate students take our graduate seminar, EARTH 594 (2 credits), during their first fall semester.