The Department of Global Studies and Geography offers a wide variety of global studies and geography courses which lead to a BA in Global Studies or a BA in Geography (including a specialization in GIS) or a BS in GIS. Students interested in the Pre-Health program can choose a concentration in Global Studies or Geography. We actively encourage students to double major and many of our students are pursuing additional majors in subjects as varied as Political Science, Economics, Public Policy, Criminology, Sustainability, Journalism, Public Relations, Psychology, and Geology.

Our faculty work with students to tailor programs that meet their interests, needs, and ultimately shape a rewarding post-Hofstra career. Additionally, we guide our students in finding relevant internships and study abroad programs for which they can obtain course credit toward their degree.

Graduates have found employment in a wide variety of occupations, reflecting the width and depth of our programs. Recent graduates have become lawyers, doctors, teachers, urban planners, GIS practitioners, book editors, congressional aides, PR professionals, and journalists - just to name a few! Many of our graduates have pursued further education at prestigious graduate schools while others have been accepted into programs such as the Peace Corps and Teach for America.

Please explore our Department website to find out more about all the exciting academic and career options that we offer.
What is GIS?

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) apply the power of mapping to digital data and computerized analysis. GIS is rooted in the discipline of geography: it takes spatial problems and questions and addresses them using digital maps.

Example: Transportation — City planners use GIS to make neighborhoods more walkable.

GIS skills allow students and professionals to question, visualize, and interpret data to understand spatial patterns, relationships, and trends in the world.

Example: Health — New York City health professionals use GIS to understand the geographic correlation between air pollution and poverty by mapping respiratory health.

The cartographic face of GIS resembles Google Maps, but it is more powerful for trained practitioners: GIS facilitates complex data analysis and modeling as well as custom visualizations such as those that appear in the New York Times and National Geographic Magazine.

Example: Climate Change — Environmental researchers use GIS to combine many kinds of climate data to better understand the geographically uneven consequences of global climate change, from Hurricane Sandy to droughts in Australia.

Everything is somewhere, and GIS uses location to show how different kinds of data are related.

Key Courses in GIS:
- GEOG 007 Fun with Maps & GIS
- GEOG 060 Introduction to GIS
- GEOG 151 Directed Study/Student Research
- GEOG 159 Cartographic Design
- GEOG 160 Intermediate GIS
- GEOG 162 Remote Sensing
- GEOG 170 Advanced GIS
- GEOG 190 Internship

GIS Majors & Minors

The Department of Global Studies and Geography offers several majors and minors that include GIS training. Many students major in both GIS and a related field.

Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Geography with a concentration in GIS

The BA in Geography with a concentration in GIS provides geography majors with a broad understanding of geographic processes combined with technical training in geographic data management, analysis, and communication. Students pursuing this concentration can take a variety of related classes in disciplines such as computer science, engineering, and journalism. This flexibility makes the program a desirable double major for students in a variety of disciplines.

Bachelor of Science (BS) in GIS

The BS in GIS major is an interdisciplinary course of study centered in geography that emphasizes scientific and technological training in geographic data management, analysis, and communication. Students can double major with other BS majors such as geology, biology, and engineering thereby adding GIS training to their work in these fields.

Minor in Geography, GIS

Students completing the Minor in Geography, GIS learn the fundamentals of geographic data management, analysis, and communication without the time required for a major in GIS. This minor is open to all bachelor’s-level Hofstra students including BA, BBA, and BS majors.

Minor in Computer Science & GIS

Students completing the Minor in Computer Science and GIS learn the fundamentals of coding and computer science as well as the basic foundations of geographic data management, analysis, and communication. This minor is open to all bachelor’s-level Hofstra students including BA, BBA, and BS majors.

Careers that use GIS

GIS is considered a high-growth industry that has generated over 330,000 new geo-professional jobs in the last ten years. Federal government sources project 35% future annual growth rate in GIS/geospatial technology.

Careers that use GIS
- Mobile App/Web Developer
- Public Policy
- Marketing
- Data Journalist
- Logistics
- Management
- Environmental Planner
- Data Scientist
- GIS Specialist
- Urban Planner
- Law Enforcement
- Military Intelligence
- Public Health Researcher
- Civil Engineer
- Cartographer
- Tourism Consultant
- Graphic Designer
- Demographic Researcher
- Climatologist
- Emergency Response
- Real Estate

Our undergraduate GIS majors provide excellent grounding for subsequent graduate study in a wide variety of fields. GIS professionals’ undergraduate degrees are almost always based in Geography departments.

Employers who use GIS skills

Companies: Google, Apple, Garmin, Axiom, Citibank, Lyft, Zillow, ESRI (GIS Software), Navteq, Digital Globe, Rand McNally


Organizations: United Nations, National Geographic, World Bank, The Nature Conservancy, Ushahidi, Community NGOs