Major Program

B.S. Geology – Students’ geology training will begin with an introduction to the earth’s physical processes and materials and a survey of the earth’s geologic history. Geology courses emphasize the various fields of study within the discipline, including mineralogy, petrology, sedimentology, structure, field methods and paleontology. Field geology teaches you techniques used in field mapping, such as use of a pocket transit, GPS receiver, laser transit and other specialized equipment. Upper-level courses include the study of geologic maps, earth structures and the rock and fossil record. As a geology major, students will also take courses such as introductory calculus, chemistry and physics or biology.

B.S. Geology: Paleontology Option – The paleontology option gives motivated students a chance to combine a solid foundation in geology with an exploration of its interdisciplinary connections with botany or zoology (see paleontology flat sheet).

Real-World Experience

Many courses include field trips that last from one to four days. Our required biennial, six-week Geology Summer Field Camp in South Dakota is considered by most students to be the unifying highlight of their studies. Knowledge from the classroom is put into practice here. Students look forward to sharing the learning experience with their fellow majors in South Dakota, Yellowstone and the Tetons.

General Education

The WIU Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences offers studies based on the broad foundation of the general education curriculum—classes taken during freshman and sophomore years. General education accounts for approximately one-third of the semester hours required for this degree. It includes courses in composition and speech plus electives from the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, human well-being and multicultural studies.

Faculty

Geology courses are taught by faculty holding doctoral degrees from distinguished universities such as Indiana University, University of California at Davis, Southern Methodist University in Texas and Yale University. All are dedicated educators, skilled in fostering active student participation and undergraduate research.

Scholarships

The Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences offers five scholarships for Geology majors:

- The Richard Schafer Freshman Scholarship is offered to entering freshmen who hold a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.2/4.0 or a minimum composite ACT of 24.
- The Richard Schafer Community College Transfer Scholarship is offered to entering transfer students with a minimum of 30 semester hours (sh) and an overall GPA of 3.0/4.0 with 4 sh of completed coursework in geology/earth sciences.
- The Richard Schafer Summer Field Camp Scholarship is a biennial scholarship offered to junior or senior geology majors with an overall GPA of 3.0.
- The Scholarship for New Geology Major is offered to a newly declared, full-time geology major (non-entering freshman) within previous 12 months who has successfully completed Geology 110 or Geology 112 with a minimum overall GPA of 3.0.
- The Continuing Student Alumni Award is offered to a declared, full-time geology major with a minimum semester GPA of 3.25 for the previous semester.
Honors in Geology
To be eligible for the Centennial Honors College, entering freshmen must meet two of the following three criteria:
Have an 1160 SAT (24 ACT), have a 3.4/4.0 GPA or higher, or be in the top 15 percent of their graduating class.
Transfer and current WIU students who wish to join the Honors College (including the Quad Cities Honors Program) must have a 3.4 GPA on a 4.0 scale based on 12 sh or more. Honors credit is given for honors coursework completed at other accredited institutions. To find out more, visit wiu.edu/Honors.

General honors seminars in the humanities, sciences and social sciences provide students with the opportunity to explore key academic issues with distinguished faculty members. In the geology major, honors students take courses for honors credit and, as seniors, prepare an honors thesis under the direction of a department faculty member.

Student Activities
The WIU Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences offers two student organizations: (1) Sigma Gamma Epsilon, a national earth science honorary organization, and (2) the Geology Club. These organizations sponsor activities such as field trips, visiting lectures, picnics and fundraising.

Special Opportunities
The department offers small classes with accessible faculty in Tillman Hall. It also offers personalized professional advising, all labs taught by faculty members and undergraduate research opportunities. All interested and motivated geology students at Western have the opportunity to conduct original research under the direction of a faculty mentor. Most students present their research at regional or national meetings, with travel expenses partly or wholly covered by the department. Recently, students have worked on a wide variety of topics in hydrology, igneous petrology and sedimentary geology.

After College
Our graduates have built a record of success, working throughout the United States and in foreign countries for companies that range from small, independent entities to corporations such as U.S. Gypsum, Conoco, ARCO, Texaco, Chevron, U.S. Steel, EOG Resources and Marathon Exxon. Some alumni are teachers in community colleges and universities. Many of our students work for state or federal agencies. Approximately 25 percent of WIU’s geology graduates go on to complete higher degrees at universities like Arizona, Indiana, The Ohio State, Purdue, Stanford, Louisiana, Utah, Texas A&M and Wyoming. In the past, careers in geology concentrated on exploration for minerals or energy resources. While such careers are still important, geologists are now finding careers in areas related to the environment, engineering projects and water resources. Some geologists are even involved in space and planetary exploration.

Since a career in geology may lead to extensive travel, office work, laboratory experiments, field work or classroom teaching, students will find it helpful to develop skills in communication, foreign languages, business, economics, art and politics.

For More Information
Contact the WIU Department of Earth, Atmospheric, and Geographic Information Sciences, Tillman Hall 312, Western Illinois University, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390. For more information, email eagis@wiu.edu, call (309) 298-1648, fax (309) 298-3003, or visit wiu.edu/eagis.

Campus Visits
The Admissions Reception Center (Sherman Hall 115) is open most weekdays from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. when the University is in session. Group information sessions are available on Mondays and Fridays at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., and individual appointments can be made on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Campus tours are conducted at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday. Appointments with advisors, faculty or a financial aid advisor may be arranged separately during the week. The Admissions Reception Center is open from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. most Saturdays when the University is in session. A group information session is available at 10 a.m., and a campus tour is conducted at 11 a.m. Students may schedule a visit or tour online at wiu.edu/admissions by selecting “Visit Campus.” Students may also schedule a visit, tour or individual appointment by calling toll free (877) PICKWIU (742-5948) or (309) 298-3157, or by e-mailing admissions@wiu.edu.