URBAN AND REGIONAL STUDIES, BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.S.)

Xueming (Jimmy) Chen, Ph.D.
Professor and program chair

The Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Studies requires 120 credits, including 40 credits within the major. The program is designed so that students may enter as late as their junior year and provides a solid foundation for professional work or advanced study aimed at addressing some of the most important challenges and issues facing the U.S. and other world regions, such as urban sprawl, economic marginalization, ethnic and racial conflict and environmental degradation. The program covers a wide range of topics related to these issues, including transportation, housing, land use, environmental management, regional and international development, human-environment interaction, globalization and socioeconomic change. Students can focus on the subject matter of their interest by choosing to concentrate in either urban planning and policy or regional analysis and development; alternatively they may opt for a generalized course of study. Nine core courses and a lab (28 credits total) are required for all majors. These courses provide fundamental background knowledge in an array of disciplines that form the foundations of urban and regional studies, such as urban planning and design, human and physical geography, economics, environmental management, urban and public policy, and geographic information systems. Students complete their remaining 12 credits within one of the two concentrations or through a generalized course of study.

The program helps develop a theoretical and methodological background as well as analytical skills that can be used to address a wide range of issues and problems. Students acquire marketable skills in qualitative and quantitative analysis, computer usage, problem solving and communication — as well as a broad perspective on environment and society — that are essential for many occupations.

The generalized course of study option is designed for those students who have a broad interest in urban and regional studies. They can tailor this course of study to match not only intellectual interests but anticipated career goals. Students complete the core courses and then select the remaining 12 credits from any of the non-core courses listed below.

Student learning outcomes

Upon completing this program, students will have acquired the following.

A multidisciplinary understanding of urban and regional dynamics and planning
Students will develop a multidisciplinary understanding of the characteristics of cities and other regions, the factors that shape them over time and the role of planning in influencing socioeconomic and environmental conditions therein. Among the key topics covered are:

• The urbanization process in the United States
• Urbanization and regional change in other cultures and historically
• Urban design and the built environment
• Economic geography
• Urban and regional demographics and sociology
• The relationship between the natural environment and urbanization and other land use change
• Local and regional politics

• The role of planning tools and strategies in addressing urban and regional problems, such as poverty, congestion and environmental degradation

Mastery of general and major-specific skills
Students will acquire the skills needed to function as well-rounded, educated citizens, including those required for careers or advanced study in urban and regional analysis, planning and community development. These include:

• Oral, written and graphic communication
• Social science and planning methods, including quantitative and qualitative analysis
• Research using government documents and other library sources
• Cause and effect reasoning
• Organized presentation of ideas
• Critical and independent thinking
• Computer proficiency
• The ability to work in groups
• Analysis of maps and other spatial data

Ethics and a sense of social and personal responsibility
Students will develop a strong ethical foundation and a sense of social and personal responsibility rooted in an understanding of and sensitivity to:

• The complex notions of the public good
• The potential social costs and other externalities of regional and economic change
• Human needs and requirements for becoming a more humane and egalitarian society
• The ethical dimensions of social conflict and ways in which it can be addressed
• Diverse cultural and class perspectives
• The ethical standards of professional behavior

Special requirements
Proof of competency with Excel software is a prerequisite for URSP 306; URSP 116 is a prerequisite for URSP 310; URSP 204 (or permission of instructor) is a prerequisite for URSP 332/ENVS 332; URSP 310 is a prerequisite for URSP 428; URSP 310, URSP 313 and senior standing are prerequisites for URSP 440; and URSP 102 and URSP 306 are prerequisites for URSP 502.

Degree requirements for Urban and Regional Studies, Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select 30 credits of general education courses in consultation with an adviser.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Major core requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 102</td>
<td>Introduction to Human Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 116</td>
<td>Introduction to the City</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 204</td>
<td>Physical Geography</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&amp; URSZ 204</td>
<td>and Physical Geography Laboratory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 306</td>
<td>Economic Geography</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Urban and Regional Studies, Bachelor of Science (B.S.)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URSP 310</td>
<td>Introduction to Urban and Regional Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 313</td>
<td>Research and Field Methods in Urban and Regional Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP/ENVS 332</td>
<td>Environmental Management</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 360</td>
<td>Community and Regional Analysis and GIS</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 428</td>
<td>Land Use and Infrastructure Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URSP 440</td>
<td>Senior Capstone Seminar in Urban and Regional Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Major electives**
  - Select additional credits from any URSP courses.  
  
- **Ancillary requirements**
  
- **GVPA 100** Making Policy Real: Social Problems and Policy Solutions  
  - 3 credits

- **STAT 208** Statistical Thinking (satisfies general education quantitative foundations)  
  - 3 credits

- **Open electives**
  - Select any course.  
  - 9 credits

- **Total Hours**: 120

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

Students who complete the requirements for this degree will receive a Bachelor of Science in Urban and Regional Studies.

What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

### Freshman year

**Fall semester**

- **MATH 131** Introduction to Contemporary Mathematics (prerequisite for STAT 208; counts toward open electives)  
  - 3 credits

- **UNIV 101** Introduction to the University  
  - 1 credit

- **UNIV 111** Focused Inquiry I (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)  
  - Play course video for Focused Inquiry I

- **URSP 102** Introduction to Human Geography  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP 116** Introduction to the City  
  - 3 credits

- **General education course (select BOK for social/behavioral sciences)**  
  - 3 credits

- **Open elective**  
  - 3 credits

- **Term Hours**: 16

**Spring semester**

- **GVPA 100** Making Policy Real: Social Problems and Policy Solutions  
  - 3 credits

- **UNIV 112** Focused Inquiry II (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)  
  - Play course video for Focused Inquiry II

- **URSP 116** Introduction to the City  
  - 3 credits

- **General education course (select BOK for humanities/fine arts)**  
  - 3 credits

- **Term Hours**: 16

### Sophomore year

**Fall semester**

- **STAT 208** Statistical Thinking (satisfies general education quantitative foundations)  
  - 3 credits

- **UNIV 200** Advanced Focused Inquiry: Literacies, Research and Communication (satisfies general education UNIV foundations)  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP 204** Physical Geography  
  - 4 credits

- **URSZ 204** Physical Geography Laboratory  
  - 3 credits

- **General education course (URSP 350 is suggested; satisfies AOI for global perspectives)**  
  - 3 credits

- **General education course**  
  - 3 credits

- **Term Hours**: 16

**Spring semester**

- **URSP 306** Economic Geography  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP 310** Introduction to Urban and Regional Planning  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP major elective**  
  - 3 credits

- **Open elective**  
  - 3 credits

- **Term Hours**: 15

### Junior year

**Fall semester**

- **URSP 313** Research and Field Methods in Urban and Regional Studies  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP major elective**  
  - 3 credits

- **Open electives**  
  - 9 credits

- **Term Hours**: 15

**Spring semester**

- **URSP/ENVS 332** Environmental Management  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP major elective**  
  - 3 credits

- **Open electives**  
  - 9 credits

- **Term Hours**: 15

### Senior year

**Fall semester**

- **URSP 360** Community and Regional Analysis and GIS  
  - 3 credits

- **URSP 428** Land Use and Infrastructure Planning  
  - 3 credits

- **Open electives**  
  - 10 credits

- **Term Hours**: 16

**Spring semester**

- **URSP 440** Senior Capstone Seminar in Urban and Regional Studies  
  - 3 credits

- **Open electives**  
  - 9 credits

- **Term Hours**: 12

**Total Hours**: 120

The minimum number of credit hours required for this degree is 120.