



# Master in Geography : General

## Focus Erasmus Mundus Urban studies

MA-GEOG | M-GEOGM | 2023-2024

### Programme mnemonic

MA-GEOG

> Focus *Erasmus Mundus Urban studies* : M-GEOGM

### Exists also in

> Focus *Teaching* : M-GEOGD

> Focus *territorial Development* : M-GEOGT

> Focus *Urban studies (ULB-VUB)* : M-GEOGE

### Studies level

Master 120 credits

### Learning language

english

### Schedule

office hours

### Studies category / subcategory

Sciences and technics / Sciences

### Campus

Plaine and Solbosch

differences. After four months or so, just as students begin to find a routine and feel comfortable with their surroundings, it's time to move again. While this obviously requires a high degree of independence and self-reliance, students must also be cooperative and collaborative, as much of the academic work in 4CITIES is done in groups. Spending so much time traveling and studying and socializing together can turn cohorts into extended families, with all the support and occasional conflict of traditional families. The experience can be intense, and adaptability is a prerequisite for success.

## Programme objectives

4CITIES is an immersive, two-year, interdisciplinary master program in urban studies, incorporating geography, sociology, history, cultural studies, and political science. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union since 2013, 4CITIES brings together 40–50 students each year from around the world and across the academic spectrum. The language of instruction is English and proof of fluency is required. Graduates receive a master of science (MSc.) degree in urban studies.

As the world continues to urbanise and globalise, cities are becoming the predominant form of human settlement and the scale at which many of the most pressing societal issues are engaged. Although urban studies, in which the city is both object and context, is an inherently interdisciplinary field, it is too often limited by national containers. In response, 4CITIES brings a distinctly European viewpoint to issues concerning urbanity and urbanization that are simultaneously locally unique and globally networked.

Glocalization, or the ways in which global forces interact with local conditions, is a key part of the programme's multiscalar perspective, and it is seen as essential for new approaches in important fields of urban policy such as culture, economy, and planning. 4CITIES was developed to provide an immersive, experiential urban studies education that overcomes geographic and disciplinary boundaries while embracing the diversity of actors, forces, and contexts that are shaping the 21st century city.

Please see <https://www.4cities.eu> for a full description of the programme's mission statement, tracks, format and content.

## Succeed in your studies

4CITIES is not a normal graduate program, and it does not offer a normal academic experience, but that is very much by design. The multifaceted complexity of cities is difficult to grasp, and so 4CITIES takes a holistic and immersive approach. Theory and practice are seen as mirrors, each critically reflecting the other. The city is engaged as an evolving narrative, more dialogic than linear, and students learn to see "The City" as manifold and emergent, to hear it, to participate in it, and to understand it, all while experimenting with their role in shaping it. Life and scholarship in 4CITIES are not always easy, but for those who embrace its unique approach the program can be immensely rewarding, inspiring, and transformative.

## Student support

While the 4CITIES teaching and administrative staff provides guidance, students are expected to be highly independent. They must find their own housing as they move from city to city, navigating a gauntlet of practical, cultural, and linguistic



## Programme's added value

4CITIES bridges disciplinary limitations by combining sociology, geography, history, cultural studies, and humanistic urban studies while providing students with an array of means and methods for analysing and understanding the specific character of cities. Academic courses are supplemented with fieldwork and excursions, reframing The City as a dynamic, immersive learning laboratory. Please see the full description of The 4CITIES approach to urban studies here : <https://www.4cities.eu/philosophy-and-mission>

## Teaching methods

4CITIES began in 2008 as a collaboration of six universities in four countries, with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) in Brussels serving as the primary administrative center. At each university, the program is hosted by a different research institute or faculty, and courses are taught by an interdisciplinary team of approximately 20 professors and lecturers. Student profiles are even more diverse, with more than 40 countries and 25 academic fields represented. The shared perspective linking them all is that the city is a complex adaptive system that must be understood and experienced before it can be responsibly changed. With the addition of the Research and Practice Tracks in 2019, the mission remains the same but the list of partners expands significantly.

## Succeed in your studies

### Choose

The information and guidance counsellors at the InfOR-études [<https://www.ulb.be/en/studies-info-desk-1>] service will help you choose your studies throughout the year.

### Succeed

Take part in preparatory courses [<https://www.ulb.be/en/studies-info-desk-1>] or get help to succeed [<https://www.ulb.be/en/studies-info-desk-1>], before or during your studies.

### Get help

Apply for financial aid, look for accommodation or a student job, get support [<https://www.ulb.be/fr/aides-services-et-accompagnement/aid-services-and-support-1>] for your specific needs.

## International/Openness

The Master in Geography has signed Erasmus+ exchange agreements with a number of European universities in France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Romania, and Switzerland. Students may also attend classes at VUB or KUL, as part of the Erasmus Belgica programme. Lastly, exchange programmes are also available with universities outside Europe, including in Quebec.

## Job opportunities

There is no general profile of 4CITIES graduates, as the wide variety of geographic and disciplinary backgrounds, skill sets, and personalities leads to many different paths. The most common employers are public sector (39%), private sector (24%), and nonprofits or NGOs (17%). Several graduates have also founded their own research, planning, or consultancy firms. Among alumni's, 48% of graduates have continued their studies after 4CITIES, with half of those pursuing doctoral degrees and half another master's degree to further develop specific skills.

It is important to note that 4CITIES is an academic program in urban studies, not a professional program in urban planning. Students engage in an interdisciplinary curriculum that prepares them to be scientific generalists. While an array of skills are introduced and developed, it is common for 4CITIES graduates to build on their master's degree in urban studies with more sector-specific education, experience, and skill certification.

### Contacts

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### Jury President

Mathieu VAN CRIEKENGEN

### Jury Secretary

Eléonore WOLFF



# Master in Geography : General

## Focus Erasmus Mundus Urban studies

The Master in Geography includes three distinct focuses: **territorial development, teaching, and urban studies**. While they each cover specific contents, these focuses are built around a shared philosophy: enabling students to **acquire the knowledge and methods required to analyse spatial questions while developing their intellectual curiosity and their critical perspective**. To this end, particular emphasis is placed on **active learning, field work, and work placements**. The Master in Geography takes advantage of the University's **location in Brussels**, encouraging students to reflect on current issues of the city.

The Master with a focus on **'territorial development'** is devoted to analysing the structure of territories, their transformations, and development projects at various scales. Particular emphasis is placed on the economic, social, and political dimensions of territorial issues. From a methodological perspective, the programme covers the production, management, analysis, and diffusion of optimal geographical data, with a view to helping students work autonomously. Courses in this focus include lectures on specific topics (political geography, analysis of urban spaces, cultural geography, etc.) and methods (remote sensing, geomarketing, database management, etc.). In addition to lecture classes, students attend seminars where they can work on practical projects in small teams, under supervision. Students complete their curriculum with electives chosen from a wide range of courses in areas such as urban studies, mobility, transportation, tourism, environmental studies, or development.

The Master with a **teaching focus** prepares students to teach geography. Its main purpose is to train skilled teachers who can get students interested in the richness and significance of geographical issues in relation to understanding the world and living as a citizen. Graduates of the teaching focus receive the official title of 'agrégé' (AESS): only graduates of this programme—and holders of an AESS—may teach geography in secondary schools in Belgium. This programme includes courses on geography and didactics, as well as work placements involving teaching in a school environment. This approach blends theory and practice, with field experience, micro-teaching exercises, lesson preparations, organising a school trip, etc., always keeping in mind the creative and rewarding aspects of teaching.

The Master with a focus on **urban studies (Erasmus Mundus programme)** is fully integrated into an international urban studies programme, given entirely in English: the 4Cities Master, organised jointly by universities in Brussels (ULB and VUB), Vienna, Copenhagen, and Madrid (Universidad Complutense and Universidad Autonoma). Students attend common classes in English during both years of the Master, in Brussels and Vienna for the first year, and in Copenhagen and Madrid the second year. Since 2013, this Master has been part of the Erasmus Mundus programme. Enrolment is subject to certain criteria: applications must be sent to the team coordinating the 4Cities programme (see [www.4cities.eu](http://www.4cities.eu)).

The Master in Geography with a focus on urban studies is fully given in English, in Brussels. Classes are held at both ULB and VUB, with students receiving a joint degree upon graduation. This gives them access to a wide range of classes on urban studies (with many electives that let them specialise in topics of interest), as well as to field visits and the opportunity to complete an international work placement or a semester abroad. Please note that this programme is subject to specific access requirements. For more information, visit the programme's website: <http://urbanstudies.brussels/master/urban-studies>

## Bloc 1 | M-GEOGM | MA-GEOG

### Brussels

- GEOG-F427 **Urban sociology** | Eva SWYNGEDOUW (Coordinator)  
⌚ 5 credits [lecture: 24h, project: 40h] 📅 first term 💬 English
- GEOG-F428 **Urban political economy** | Mathieu VAN CRIEKENGEN (Coordinator)  
⌚ 5 credits [lecture: 24h, project: 40h] 📅 first term 💬 English
- GEOG-F429 **Urban analysis II** | Mathieu VAN CRIEKENGEN (Coordinator)  
⌚ 5 credits [lecture: 12h, practical work: 12h, project: 80h] 📅 first term 💬 English
- GEOG-Y007 **Urban analysis I** | Bas VAN HEUR  
⌚ 3 credits [lecture: 12h, practical work: 12h, field trips: 24h, project: 12h] 📅 first term
- GEOG-Y008 **European Cities in an Urbanizing World** | Bas VAN HEUR  
⌚ 6 credits [lecture: 24h] 📅 first term
- GEOG-Y009 **Urban social geography** | David BASSENS  
⌚ 6 credits [lecture: 24h] 📅 first term

### Vienna

- GEOG-Y010 **Urban Planning and development** | Axel PRIEBDS  
⌚ 7 credits [lecture: 24h] 📅 second term

GEOG-Y012

[Urban Transformations](#) | Michaela TRIPPL

🕒 7 credits [lecture: 24h] 📅 second term 🗣️ English

GEOG-Y014

[Urban analysis III](#) | Axel PRIEBDS

🕒 6 credits [lecture: 12h, practical work: 12h, field trips: 12h] 📅 second term

## Thesis

MEMO-F507

[Preparatory work for the master thesis](#) | Mathieu VAN CRIEKINGEN (Coordinator)

🕒 10 credits [mfe/tfe: 300h] 📅 first and second terms 🗣️ English

# Master in Geography : General

## Focus Erasmus Mundus Urban studies

### Bloc 2 | M-GEOGM | MA-GEOG

## Copenhagen

- GEOG-Y015 [Urbanism and architecture](#) | Martin ZERLANG  
🕒 7.5 credits [lecture: 90h] 📅 first term
- GEOG-Y016 [Urban culture and cultural theory](#) | Henrik REEH  
🕒 7.5 credits [lecture: 90h] 📅 first term
- GEOG-Y017 [Urban analysis IV](#) | Henrik REEH and Martin ZERLANG  
🕒 5 credits [lecture: 90h] 📅 first term

## Madrid

- GEOG-Y018 [The sustainable and liveable city](#) | Diego BARRADO  
🕒 10 credits [lecture: 120h] 📅 second term
- GEOG-Y019 [Governance and local welfare](#) | Marta DOMINGUEZ PEREZ  
🕒 10 credits [lecture: 120h] 📅 second term

## Thesis

- MEMO-F508 [Masters thesis](#) | Mathieu VAN CRIEKENGEN (Coordinator)  
🕒 20 credits [mfe/tfe: 600h] 📅 first and second terms 💬 French