

Borderless Higher Education for Refugees
Information packet on Bachelors' Degrees for prospective students

Bachelor of Arts in Geography
York University

Program: Bachelor of Arts Degree in Geography

Institution and Faculty/Department: Department of Geography, Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies

University: York University, Toronto, ON Canada

1. About the university

Since its inception in 1959, York University has become world renowned for its unique interdisciplinary approach to teaching and research. A York University education provides a broad perspective and a modern approach to real world issues studied from every angle. York is where students and faculty from different disciplines join together to explore their subjects to the fullest possible extent. The result is a dynamic, all-round perspective that delivers a more relevant learning experience. Our graduates are better able to develop advanced solutions to complex problems, and benefit from a unique perspective that is both flexible and optimistic.

York University is known for its interdisciplinary approach to research and scholarship. We are home to 28 Research Centres covering a wide spectrum of interests from Environmental Sustainability and Vision Research to Earth and Space Science and Refugee Studies.

York University offers a world-class, modern academic experience in Toronto, Canada's biggest city. York is at the centre of innovation, with a thriving community of faculty, students, staff and alumni who challenge the ordinary and deliver the unexpected. Working together, we redefine the possible.

2. About the program

The Department of Geography at York is one of the largest and most comprehensive Geography programs in Canada. We offer courses in all the major subfields of Geography, including human geography, physical geography, and techniques of geography, such as GIS and remote sensing. The Department has more than 20 full-time professors, many of whom are highly accomplished and internationally known in their specialties. Also, the York Geography Alumni Network (YGAN) helps our former students connect with each other and with the Department on an ongoing basis. The Department offers BA and Honors BA degrees through the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, as well as BSc and Honors BSc through the Faculty of Science and Engineering. However, for the present program in Dadaab, we offer only a BA degree for which a student needs to complete a total of 90 Credits.

3. Start date and expected completion date for the program

Program starts: September 2016

Program completed: April 2018

4. Admissions criteria

In order to be considered for admission to the degree in Geography offered by York University under the BHER project, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Have graduated from secondary school and hold a KCSE or equivalent;
- Hold at least thirty credits or the equivalent at the university level (ten half-courses or one year of full-time study) from York University, Moi/UBC, Kenyatta University, or another accredited university approved by York University;
- Have earned the equivalent of a York University C+ average (GPA of 6) in previous university-level studies.

5. Application process

Applicants should complete the York University Application Form for Undergraduate Study. Please attach copies of secondary school records; if these are not available, please provide an explanation as in some cases, York University may be able to offer a special exemption. If your postsecondary study has been through a program offered under the BHER project (e.g. CES-E from York University, DTE-P from Kenyatta University, DTE-S from Moi University), please note this and provide your student number from that program on the form; York University will arrange the direct submission of your academic records. If your postsecondary study has been completed in another non-BHER-affiliated program, please submit academic records from this program, including a detailed transcript showing all courses taken.

6. Discipline of study

At the basic level, Geography studies the earth's surface as the place where human beings live. As a discipline, Geography helps us to understand the world, as our home, and to make sense of its many attributes. For the most part, Geography examines *why* and *how* things (or phenomena) are located *where* they are and their relationships, differences, and similarities to each other—this is what we call the geographic or spatial perspective. Geography has two main sub-divisions (i.e., physical geography and human geography), as well as overlapping techniques, such as GIS, cartography, remote sensing etc.(which are shared by both sub-fields).

At the mundane level, have you ever thought of how we get day and night? How is it that when the time is 1:00pm in Toronto, it is 8:00pm in Dadaab? How we get rainfall? Or how we know the earth is not flat? More substantively, why are some countries developed and other still struggling economically? What causes people to migrate from one place to another? How do we locate a healthcare facility, for instance, in a big city to make it accessible to as many people as possible? How do we manage our fisheries or any extractive industry to make it environmentally sustainable? These are just some of the questions geographers grapple with.

Unlike other disciplines, Geography cuts across both the physical sciences (with physical geography) and social sciences (with human geography). The physical component of the discipline is further divided into subfields such as climatology, biogeography, geomorphology etc. Similarly, human geography includes sub-fields such as urban geography, social geography, economic geography, health or medical geography, historical geography etc. Normally, students who move on to do graduate programs in Geography get to specialize in these sub-fields.

7. Qualification earned:

Students in this program will earn an “ordinary” 90-credit Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Geography.

What can students do with their degree in Geography? While we cannot guarantee any jobs, it is still important to note that because of the many useful and transferable skills that Geography offers in areas such as research, data analysis, computer mapping, and quantitative techniques, students of Geography routinely find employment in many sectors of the economy, including the public sector, education, local government, armed forces, energy and utility companies, and district and city councils etc. More specifically, geographers are often employed as: urban or town planners, environmental consultants, real estate analysts, military intelligence analysts, national census officers, and GIS technicians. Many others are employed as cartographers, tourism officers, transportation planners, teachers/professors, international development officers, researchers, and policy analysts.

8. Program structure and schedule of study

Students in the York University BA in Geography will complete 60 credits during their enrolment in the program. They will also carry forward 30 credits from their studies in Certificate or Diploma programs or other University-level study, to graduate with a 90 credit degree.

Note that at York University, most single-semester courses are worth 3 “credits”. For example, most courses offered within CES-E were 3-credit courses, so if you have completed CES-E, you have already earned 30 credits. Courses that run for two semesters are often 6-credit courses. 9-credit full-year courses have a heavier work load. A normal full-time 1-semester course load at York University is 15 credits.

York University divides the academic year into three terms: the “Fall Semester” (September to December), the “Winter Semester” (January to April) and the “Summer Session” (May to August). Students in Dadaab will be enrolled in courses over five terms.

There will be no practicum or attachment component in this academic program. Students will complete courses online, working independently. Most students will be required to attend the BHER Learning Centre one day per week throughout all terms to participate in tutorial activities; alternate arrangements may be made for students who no longer reside in Dadaab.

Program Structure					
Year	Term	Dates	Number of courses	Number of credits	Time on-site at BHER learning centre
2016	Fall Semester	September – December	4*	15*	1 day per week
2017	Winter Semester	January-April	4*	15*	1 day per week
2017	Summer Session	May-August	1	3	1 day per week
2017	Fall Semester	September – December	4	12	1 day per week
2018	Winter Semester	January-April	5	15	1 day per week

*Note that students who have already completed the WRIT1700 course in 2015-2016 will have only 3 courses and 11.5 units in Fall 2016 and Winter 2017. The above schedule may be subject to minor changes.

9. List of courses

Year 1, 2016-2017

GEOG 1000 World Geography. 6 credits.

This course shows students how to think geographically about the world. It introduces them to the basic concepts and approaches that geographers use to examine how different people relate to the environment in which they live. With this course, students will come to appreciate how people live around the world, the diverse issues that concern them, and the ways they are connected to people in other parts of the world. In particular, the course will explore how capitalism, new forms of sovereignty and *othering* are transforming different world regions. Key themes examined in the course include globalization, colonialism, geographies of inequalities, and urbanization.

WRIT 1700 Writing, Process and Practice. 9 credits.

This course considers a wide range of written expression including fiction, nonfiction, poetry and other genres, with an emphasis on the theory and practice of writing. This is not a technical writing course; the focus is on developing critical reading, writing and thinking skills through a close and thoughtful consideration of readings and other resources. Students will explore and practice a variety of writing methods, such as how to write persuasively for different audiences and how to write collaboratively. Students will also read and practice different forms and genres of writing, such as argument, personal essay, blog post, journals and short (no-pressure) writing experiments.

ANTH 1120 Making Sense of a Changing World. 6 credits.

In this course you will use anthropological approaches to increase your understanding of global issues in diverse locales. This course challenges you to engage with other ways of knowing and being, and to rethink your taken-for-granted knowledge and beliefs through the comparative analysis of the human condition. This course will take a problem-based approach to a range of topics such as: the effects of race and racism, sources of religious conflict, alternate genders and sexualities, First Nations and health, international development and issues of social inequality. Students are encouraged to bring their own knowledge and experience as the first step in "thinking like an anthropologist" (i.e. rethinking the taken-for-granted). The emphasis in this course is developing skills (analytical thinking, writing).

SOSC 1341 Introduction to the Social Economy. 9 credits.

This course introduces students to the social economy (including co-operatives, credit unions, worker-owned firms, non-profit social service organizations, etc.). It investigates the history of the social economy and its potential contributions to local, regional and international socio-economic development.

EDUC 4XXX Education and International Development. 3 credits.

"Education changes the world" is the slogan of the World University Service of Canada (WUSC). This course asks how education has contributed to, and sometimes been implicated in, social, political, economic, and environmental change in the context of what is commonly known as "international development". The course will consider notions of "quality education" at the primary and secondary school levels and explore the place of technical and vocational education and training (TVAT) and higher education in development.

Year 2, 2017-2018

GEOG 2030 Global Environmental Change. 3 credits.

This course helps students to understand contemporary human-induced transformations of the earth's systems. Students will get to know how and why the global environment is changing; how these changes manifest themselves in different places; and the ways in which individuals and societies adapt to, respond to, and mitigate environmental changes. In particular, students will learn about large-scale transformations of the earth, focusing on themes such as climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss, deforestation, changes in nutrient cycling, and soil erosion. Also, the politics and power relations embedded in contemporary policy debates concerning large-scale environment changes will be examined in this course.

GEOG 2340 Introduction to Geoinformatics. 3 credits.

The course introduces students to geoinformatics by tracing some of its historical development, before examining the major sub-domains of this field. Students will learn about cartography, global positioning systems (GPS), vector and raster geographic information systems (GIS), survey, remote sensing and other related tools, depending on the availability of necessary equipment, logistics, software, and data. The course is suitable not only for geographers, but also for anybody who is curious about the technologies related to geographic research and analysis. The course entails the use of computers, and students are expected to have basic computer skills to be able to take this course.

GEOG 3370: International Development. 3 credits.

The course deals with the meaning, politics, processes, and projects of development and how they have unfolded over the years. More importantly, it sheds light on why some regions and countries of the world are “developed,” while others remain “under-developed.” With this course, students will understand how contemporary development programs and process affect, or relate to, matters of security, conflict, migration, and refugee movements. We will also learn what has, and hasn’t, worked in different places when it comes to development, and explore how each of us can “do development” in a meaningful way.

GEOG 3520 Research Methods in Geography. 3 credits.

This course introduces students to the variety of research designs and methods used by geographers to conduct research. It covers both quantitative and qualitative methods, and gives students ample opportunity to deal with the practical and ethical issues in geographic research. Students will learn how to write research proposals, conduct literature reviews, and collect and analyze the ensuing data.

GEOG 4380 Urban Social Policy. 3 credits.

This course examines the relationships between the geographies of inequalities, state policies, and civil society in the context of cities. It will help students to understand the theoretical and methodological approaches used to enact social policies and to deal with power dynamics in cities. Questions of concern include: how does a geographical perspective contribute to our understanding of urban social policy? Is the urban form and design of cities exclusionary in nature? How do societies collectively struggle and negotiate for social welfare? The course focuses on cities with examples drawn from many regions of the world for comparative purposes.

GEOG 2310 Refugee Migration. 6 credits.

This course introduces students to the main concepts and issues of contemporary migration studies. It employs historical and international perspectives, and uses case studies drawn from various parts of the world to enhance students understanding of the contextual nature of migration processes. Issues such as refugee movements, human rights, citizenship, forced migration and displacement, nationalism, and the gendered nature of migration and settlement processes will be examined. The course uses critical development approach to address the implications of the north-south relationships in the creation of refugee and immigrant populations around the world.

GEOG 3070 Gender, Migration, Population. 6 credits.

With this course, students will learn about the characteristics of human population across the globe, paying special attention to the factors responsible for the spatial variations in the key components of population—i.e., mortality, fertility, and migration. The course explores the relationships between population and the global crises of poverty, economic inequality, and the oppression of women, and highlights the contradictions in the socio-economic realities that impact the human condition across the globe. With its emphasis on *gender*, the course places the differential perspectives of women and men at the center of most of its discussions.

10. Mode of instruction

Most of the courses in this degree program will be taught in an online format entailing a mixture of tape-recorded lectures, on-line lectures, presentations, chats, group work and tutorials, depending on the availability and reliability of internet connections. Most courses will be integrated; students in Dadaab will be enrolled in online courses

alongside Toronto-based students at York University, and will interact with them in online forums. The York University Moodle system will be used to deliver most course content. Each course will have a designated Teaching Assistant (TA) who will help students to understand the course materials. TAs will also be located offsite and will communicate to students online. To succeed in this program, it will be mandatory that all students check and respond to their email several times per week, and log in to access Moodle at least twice per week.

11. Expectations of students

Because this is primarily an online, distance program, students are expected to work in an independent and self-directed way within the program. Students must carefully review course outlines, and be sure they understand all assignments, assessments, deadlines and other course requirements, as instructors, TAs and BHER staff will not necessarily provide reminders of deadlines.

Instructors and TAs are available to students; students are encouraged to contact them directly via email or the Moodle platform with any questions or concerns. Students are also required to read their email frequently in order to retrieve and respond to messages from their instructors. In each course, students will be expected to access an online forum one or more times each week. Most courses will have mandatory reading materials which students must complete each week. Students will be expected to participate in online discussion forums on a weekly basis, and to complete and submit online a variety of assignments, including some completed independently and some done through group work. Some courses may include one or more exams.

12. Life as a York University student

All students at York University have access to the York University library; remote based in Dadaab will have the same online access to electronic books and journals as students based in Toronto. Students admitted to this program will also have access to SPARK, York University's Student Papers and Academic Research Kit available at yorku.ca/spark. We strongly encourage all students to work through the SPARK online modules in order to develop the skills necessary for success in York University courses.