

GRADUATE PROGRAM

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE
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(Revised April 2004)

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY
GRADUATE PROGRAM**

I. THE GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

- A. To expand the student's knowledge of the scope and content of geography to the high level of conceptual complexity that is commensurate with that of a professional academic.
- B. To guide students to an academically sophisticated understanding of the historical and current trends in the discipline of geography, including the paradigms, methodologies, and philosophies that have influenced and guided research and teaching.
- C. To guide students toward a mastery of the skills needed to conceive, design, and conduct original research in geography.
- D. To guide students toward a skillful employment of maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies in the presentation of their research findings.
- E. To aid students in the acquisition of the critical thinking, time-management, and written and oral presentation skills that will serve them in their pursuit of professional employment or advancement in their current vocations.

II. BEING A GRADUATE STUDENT

Being a graduate student is quite different from being an undergraduate. Graduate school involves a different kind of learning, a different kind of classroom, and different expectations from the faculty.

Rather than focusing on the absorption of as much information and as many ideas and concepts as possible, which was an important aspect of the B.A. program, the M.A. program places you in the realm of paradigms, theories, methodologies, philosophies, debates, and controversies. Knowledge becomes relative, rather than absolute, and you must contend with different points of view and interpretations. Reality is no longer simply a collection of rationally ordered and verifiable facts, but is now discovered to be a very complex place populated by conflicting biases, preferences, and perceptions. You must adjust to a new way of learning.

The venue for this learning changes from the lecture hall to the seminar. No longer will you be a face in the crowd. Faculty will now be interested in you as an individual scholar-in-training. You will be engaging them in one-on-one consultations and seeking them out for individual guidance as you identify your research interests and formulate your research agenda. In the seminar setting no longer can you play a passive role and simply absorb what the professor teaches. You must be an active participant, while the professor acts as the guide. In the typical seminar, you will at first be doing a lot of reading, evaluating, analyzing, discussing, and debating. Then you will select a specific topic or problem within the purview of the seminar theme and engage in individual research, which may involve literary searches, field work, data collection, analysis, map construction, and ultimately a presentation of that research in both oral and written forms. After many such experiences, you will be ready to produce a major piece of original academic research and writing, a master's thesis.

The faculty has high expectations of a graduate student. By this point in your academic life, you are expected to have a fairly sophisticated approach to learning: to be a responsible, highly-motivated learner, to have mastered the techniques of learning, to have learned how to manage your time effectively, and to have acquired a solid and broad understanding of the discipline of geography. To succeed in the program, you must have the ability to conceive, organize, and conduct research, with only a limited amount of faculty guidance, the ability to think critically, and the ability to speak and write in an effective, precise, and articulate manner. If you genuinely enjoy the seeking, discovery, and acceptance of new ideas, are willing to work hard, and find the process fascinating, then your graduate school experience will be very rewarding.

III. ADMISSION

A. **Admission to the University** (see also University Catalog, Graduate Programs)

To be admitted to California State University, Northridge, as a graduate student, you must meet the following requirements:

1. Have a baccalaureate degree from an accredited university or college.
2. Have been in good standing at the last institution attended.
3. Have at least a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) in the last 60 semester units attempted. [The entire semester in which the 60 units began will be used in this calculation. Lower division courses or courses taken in extension (except in concurrent enrollment at CSUN in the upper division), after obtaining the bachelor s degree, will be excluded from the calculation.]

B. **Admission to the Department**

To be admitted to the Department of Geography s Graduate Program, your application will be evaluated by the Department s Graduate Committee, which is composed of the Graduate Coordinator and several other faculty members. This admission will be based on your meeting **all** of the following requirements:

1. One of the following:
 - A cumulative undergraduate grade point average of 3.00 or better.
 - A score at or above the 50th percentile on two of the three portions (verbal, quantitative, and analytic) of the aptitude test of the Graduate Record Exam (GRE).
 - A graduate degree in another field from CSUN or another accredited institution.
2. At least a **2.75** grade point average in the last 60 units attempted.
3. Demonstration of research and writing skills. You must submit to the Graduate Committee a sample research paper, written in English, and preferably one that was completed as part of your baccalaureate degree requirements, such as a senior thesis or other research paper done in an upper division undergraduate course. Because of the importance of research and writing to our graduate program, the Committee needs to be assured of your abilities and promise in these areas.

C. **Status of Admission**

If the three departmental admission requirements are met, you will be admitted as either Classified or Conditionally Classified.

1. **Admission as a Classified Graduate Student**

Classified students may enroll in any graduate course in geography. Classified status will be conferred if you meet the following requirements:

- a. One of the following:
 - (1) An undergraduate major in geography.
 - (2) Demonstrated competence in both human and physical geography and cartography or map interpretation. Competency normally will be judged by the Graduate Committee's evaluation of transcripts and/or any other pertinent evidence.
 - (3) A passing score (8 or higher) on the Upper Division English Writing Proficiency Exam (UDWPE) (a CSU requirement).

2. **Admission as a Conditionally Classified Graduate Student**

If you do not meet the requirements for Classified status, you will be admitted as a Conditionally Classified student.

- a. If you have not met requirement C.1.a. above, you normally will be asked to complete from one to five upper division prerequisite geography courses (listed below), depending on the identified area(s) of deficiency, with a grade of B or better in each course. This work, which carries no graduate credit, must begin in the first semester of residence and normally be completed no later than the end of the second semester. Courses that do carry graduate credit (GEOG 600 and/or

other 400 and 600 level electives) may be taken while the deficiencies are being removed, as long as they are not in the area(s) of deficiency. The prerequisite courses are as follows:

- (1) Two of the following Physical Geography courses: GEOG 311, 364, 365.
 - (2) Two of the following Human Geography courses: GEOG 301, 340, 351.
 - (3) One of the following Cartography courses: GEOG 304, 305.
- b. If you have not met requirement C.1.b. above, you will be asked to take and pass the UDWPE.
 - c. The process of conversion from Conditionally Classified status to Classified status is not automatic. A person in Conditionally Classified status should consult frequently with the Department Graduate Coordinator, and, upon completion of requirements, request that the Coordinator file the Request for Classification form with the Office of Graduate Studies.
 - d. **Important Note: The 12-Unit Rule--Since no more than 12 units of work taken prior to attaining Classified status may be applied to the Master's Program, you must become Classified before completing more than 12 units of work towards the M.A.**

D. Advisement

After receiving notification of acceptance into the graduate program as either Classified or Conditionally Classified, you should consult with the Graduate Coordinator concerning your first semester program of courses. Thereafter, you **must** seek advisement from the Graduate Coordinator prior to your enrollment **each semester** in order to participate in the Touch-Tone Registration (TTR) process.

IV. PROGRAM AND COURSE WORK

The Department of Geography offers two options within its Master of Arts degree program. Option 1, the Standard Program, provides the student with a high degree of flexibility in the selection of courses used to meet the program requirements. Courses may be selected from any of the graduate offerings in geomorphology, climatology, plant geography, economic geography, cultural geography, urban geography, regional geography, cartography, and geographic information science. This option prepares students for advanced Ph.D. study, community college teaching, and professional careers in business, government, or industry. Option 2 offers a highly structured specialization in Geographic Information Science, where most of the requirements are met with graduate courses dealing with various aspects of GIS. This option is designed for students wishing to pursue a career in this highly technological subfield of geography.

A. The Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Geography

OPTION 1: Geography / Standard Program

1. Completion of the following courses (a total of 30 units, with a GPA of 3.00 or better):
 - a. Introductory Seminar
GEOG 600 Geographic Thought, Analysis, and Research 3
 - b. Additional Seminars (five 600-level courses to be chosen by student) 15
 - c. Electives (400 or 600-level courses to be chosen by student, with approval) 6
 - d. Thesis Preparation
GEOG 696 Directed Geographic Research 3
GEOG 698 Thesis 3
2. Competence in a foreign language, statistics, or a geographic technique (see Section VI)
3. Submission of a thesis approved by a departmental faculty committee (see Section VII)

OPTION 2: Geography / Geographic Information Science Specialization Program

1. Completion of the following courses (a total of 30 units, with a GPA of 3.00 or better):
 - a. Introductory Seminar
GEOG 600 Geographic Thought, Analysis, and Research 3
 - b. Additional Seminars (five 600-level courses, as specified below) 15
GEOG 690C Digital Cartography
GEOG 690D Remote Sensing
Two courses from:
GEOG 690E Image Interpretation
GEOG 690F Methods in GIS
GEOG 690G Applications of GIS
Any other 600-level seminar (chosen by student)
 - c. Additional GIS Courses (two 400-level courses, as specified below) 6
GEOG 406 Advanced GIS
GEOG 408 Applications in GIS
 - d. Thesis Preparation
GEOG 696 Directed Geographic Research 3
GEOG 698 Thesis 3
2. Competence in statistics: to be met with completion of GEOG 460, Spatial Analysis and Comparison (with grade of B or better)
3. Submission of a thesis approved by a departmental faculty committee (see Section VII).

B. Additional Regulations Relating to Course Work Program

1. No more than 2 units completed through extension or at another institution may be used in the student's graduate program, and only with departmental approval.

2. No more than 3 units of independent study (GEOG 699) may be included in your program. Independent study is applicable only to the Electives portion of Option 1.
3. To avoid academic probation, you must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 in all units attempted as a graduate student, including those courses taken outside of the Geography Master's Program.
4. Normally, you will take GEOG 600 the first semester it is offered after you start the program. This course is considered to be introductory to the graduate program and should be taken as early as possible.
5. Courses that are part of your approved graduate program may not be taken on a Credit/No Credit basis.
6. With only two exceptions, no course in the student's program may be taken more than once. With the prior permission of the Graduate Coordinator and the Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies on a "Course Repeat Form," you may repeat, for purposes of improving the grade, up to 6 units of courses in which a grade of B- or below was earned. In these cases only the most recent grade will count. Also, you may use in the program two enrollments in the same numbered geography seminar only if the specific subject themes of the two seminars were significantly different.
7. At the discretion of the Departmental Graduate Committee, you may apply towards your Master's degree up to 6 units of 400-level courses taken during your final undergraduate semester. These courses may apply only toward meeting the 6-unit Electives portion of Option 1 or the 6-unit Additional GIS Courses portion of Option 2. These courses must not have been used to satisfy the requirements for your Bachelor's degree. None of the courses in the program may have been used for any other degree that you have earned in the past.
8. With the prior approval of the Departmental Graduate Committee, up to 6 units of the Electives requirement of Option 1 may be taken in related fields outside of geography.
9. As established by university regulations, the maximum time for completing the Master's degree is **seven (7) years** (see section IX.C).

V. ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

- A. After achieving fully Classified status, the next step is Advancement to Candidacy, which signifies approval of a Masters Program of courses (see below).
- B. The general expectation is that before you complete 18 units toward your degree, you will prepare a formal program (on the form Program for the Master of Arts Degree in Geography available in the Department office) with the assistance of the Departmental Graduate Coordinator and your thesis advisor(s). If not done before, completion and filing of this form will be required as part of the course requirements for GEOG 696. This statement of your program requires approval by the Department Chair, Departmental Graduate Coordinator, and the Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies.
- C. If your program is approved, if you are a fully Classified graduate student, and if you have a GPA of 3.0 or higher in all work undertaken since admission, you will be granted Advancement to Candidacy.
- D. You may modify the program, if necessary, after it has been filed, with the approval of your advisor, the Graduate Coordinator, and the Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies. A "Course Substitution for Change in Master's Formal Program" form (available in the Department office) must be filed with the Office of Graduate Studies as soon as the program change is made.

VI. COMPETENCE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE, STATISTICS, OR A GEOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE

To obtain the Master's degree in geography under Option 1, you must demonstrate competence in advanced statistics, a foreign language, or an advanced geographic technique. Your choice should be made after careful consideration, with faculty consultation, of your programmatic needs. Under Option 2, you must meet this requirement with GEOG 460.

A. Statistics

Competence in statistics may be demonstrated by a grade of B or better in an advanced (400- level)

statistics course, such as GEOG 460, MATH 441, or PSYCH 420+420L. GEOG 360, adequate for the quantitative methods requirement for the undergraduate major, will not satisfy the Master's requirement.

B. Foreign Language

You may demonstrate competency in a foreign language in one of two ways:

1. By passing the Graduate Foreign Language Examination (Princeton Examination).
2. By passing a departmental examination, with dictionary, of material selected from a list of works in geography. The examination is given by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures during the fifth week of each semester. Candidates who plan to take this examination should notify the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures early in the semester, and enroll in one unit of 499 in the appropriate language.

C. Geographic Technique

You may demonstrate competency in a geographic technique by completing, with a grade of B or better, one of the following advanced courses: GEOG 402+402L, GEOG 406+406L, GEOG 407+407L, GEOG 409+409L, or GEOG 462+462L.

VII. THESIS

- A. You normally will enroll in GEOG 696 (3 units) during your second or third year. An early requirement of the course will be for you to identify a thesis topic and persuade a full-time member of the geography department faculty to serve as the chair of your thesis committee. Then, working closely with that faculty member, you will prepare a preliminary bibliography and a formal written thesis proposal. Also, you will seek two additional faculty members, one of whom may be from outside the department, to complete your thesis committee. A significant portion of the planning and preparation of the thesis should be completed by the end of GEOG 696.
- B. Before the end of the semester during which you are enrolled in GEOG 696, you are required to obtain signatures on the Thesis/Graduate Project Planning form of the members of your thesis committee and to submit this form to the Office of Graduate Studies through the Department Graduate Coordinator. The same form is used if it becomes necessary to alter the composition of the thesis committee.
- C. Typically during your last year in residence, you will enroll in GEOG 698 (3 units) for one semester, after which it is normally expected that the completed thesis will be ready for submission. Normally, you will be given a grade of SP (Satisfactory Progress) for GEOG 698. Only after the thesis has been submitted and approved will a traditional letter grade be given to replace the SP grade. **The SP grade must be converted to a letter grade within two years after the completion of GEOG 698.** Any extension of this time limit must receive prior authorization by the Graduate Coordinator and the Associate Vice President of Graduate Studies.
- D. On your thesis research, you will work primarily under the supervision of your thesis chairperson, but should also consult frequently with the other members of your committee. It is desirable that you meet with the full committee at least once each semester. Other members of the faculty may be asked to participate in such a meeting, or otherwise assist you.
- E. Should your work on the thesis be deemed incomplete or unsatisfactory by your committee, you will be disqualified from the Department's Master's program.
- F. The thesis should be prepared in conformity with the standards described in the booklet "Guidelines for the Preparation of Thesis, Graduate Projects and Artistic Abstracts," which is available in the Graduate Studies Office or may be downloaded from their web site (<http://www.csun.edu/%7Egripact/3Evaluations/Thesis%20Guidelines%201999.doc>)
- H. Three copies of your approved thesis ultimately must be submitted. After all three thesis committee

members have signified approval on the signature pages of the two copies intended for the Library and the one copy intended for the Department, formal approval of the Library Archivist is obtained as to physical format. You must then submit all three copies of the thesis to the Graduate Studies Office by its announced deadline, near the end of the semester.

VIII. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- A. Although it is normally expected that you will enroll each semester after admission until the degree is completed, non-enrollment for one or two consecutive semesters will not jeopardize your program.
- B. To be qualified for a leave of absence, you must have been enrolled as a graduate student in the semester immediately prior to the beginning of the leave and not have been disqualified at the close of that semester. If, under these conditions, you fail to enroll or if you withdraw during the first three weeks of a semester, the University will automatically place you on Leave of Absence. If you fail to enroll for the following semester, you will once again automatically be granted an additional semester of leave.
- C. If you fail to enroll for a third consecutive semester, you will no longer be considered a matriculated student at the university and will have to reapply for admission in the same manner as you applied as a new student.

IX. COMPLETING THE DEGREE

- A. You should file an application for graduation early in the semester preceding the semester in which you expect to graduate. An application for graduation may be obtained from the Office of Admissions and Records and filed with the current diploma fee. If you have to change your date of graduation, another form must be filled out and filed with a processing fee in the same office.
- B. Upon completion of all departmental requirements with a 3.0 GPA or better, you will be eligible for the degree.
- C. Courses that were completed more than seven years prior to the date on which all requirements for the degree are completed cannot be counted to meet unit requirements unless the student can show current knowledge in the content of the outdated courses by written examination for each course in question. An alternative method of revalidation would be for the student to repeat the outdated course. **A maximum of nine units taken in residency at CSUN may be validated.** Outdated courses taken at another institution may not be validated.
- D. You are required to be enrolled in at least one unit during the semester in which you graduate. Such enrollment can be accomplished through the Special Masters Registration, which carries no unit credit but is offered at reduced cost (see E below).
- E. The **Special Masters Registration** is designed for students who have completed all requirements for the degree except the thesis, and who need additional time to complete the thesis.
 1. To be eligible for the Special Masters Registration, you must:
 - a. be classified;
 - b. have already filed your Program form with the Graduate Studies Office;
 - c. have already applied for graduation and been issued a Graduation Evaluation;
 - d. have completed all requirements for the degree, except the thesis; and
 - e. require minimal faculty assistance in the remaining work needed on the thesis.
 2. The fee for this type of registration is \$185, plus any late filing fees that may apply.
 3. To obtain this kind of registration, you must fill out the "Special Master's Registration" form, which is available in the Department office, and obtain approval signatures from the Graduate Coordinator and

the Graduate Studies Office.

4. Special Master's students are eligible for library privileges, but not services at the Student Health Center.
5. No more than four (4) enrollments in the Special Master's will be allowed.

X. SAMPLE PROGRAMS (for Option 1, the Standard Program)

<u>Minimum Time Model</u>				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Courses</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1	Fall	600, 6XX, XXX	9	Fully classified upon admission Advancement to Candidacy Foreign Language/Statistics/ Technique requirement
	Spring	6XX, 6XX, XXX	18	
2	Fall	696, 6XX	24	Complete Thesis
	Spring	698, 6XX	30	

<u>Maximum Time Model</u>				
<u>Year</u>	<u>Semester</u>	<u>Course(s)</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Notes</u>
1	Fall	600	3	UDWPE (if required) Completion of prerequisite courses (if required)
	Spring	4XX	6	
2	Fall	6XX	9	Attainment of Classified Status Foreign Language/Statistics/
	Spring	4XX	12	
3	Fall	6XX	15	
	Spring	6XX	18	
4	Fall	696	21	Advancement to Candidacy (if not already)
	Spring	6XX	24	
5	Fall	6XX	27	Complete Thesis
	Spring	698	30	

COURSE LIST

Graduate courses in geography are reserved for students who have been admitted to the Geography graduate program under either classified or conditionally classified status, and are not appropriate for Postbaccalaureate Unclassified (PBU) students. Graduate students who have been admitted into formal Master's programs in other departments may enroll in geography graduate courses with the consent of the instructor. All of the geography seminars numbered 605 through 695 focus on the advanced study of a specific topic or subfield determined by the instructor, and the specific content may vary with each offering. Each seminar will normally involve intensive reading and discussion of relevant literature and individual student preparation and presentation (oral and written) of a research paper. The general prerequisite for all of the seminars numbered 605 through 695 is classified status or consent of instructor.

- 600. Geographic Thought, Analysis, and Research (3)**
An introductory seminar designed for first-year graduate students. An analysis of the trends in the theories, methods, and problems pertinent to contemporary geography, including a review of the skills required for geographical research, analysis, and writing. (Normally offered Fall semesters.)
- 605A-B. Historical Geography (3)**
A-History of Geographic Thought, B-Regional Historical Geography.
- 610A-G. Geomorphology (3)**
A-Fluvial, B-Glacial and Periglacial, C-Arid Lands, D-Coastal, E-Regional, F-Environmental Hazards, G-Theoretical.
- 620A-G. Climatology (3)**
A-Boundary Layer, B-Bioclimatology, C-Hydroclimatology, D-Air Pollution, E-Paleoclimatology, F-Climatic Change, G-World Climate.
- 630A-F. Environmental Studies (3)**
A-Plant Geography, B-Zoogeography, C-Soils, D-Ecosystem Studies, E-Human Impact on Environment, F-Natural Resources.
- 640A-E. Economic Geography (3)**
A-Agriculture, B-Resource Utilization, C-Transportation, D-Industrial Location, E-Business Location Analysis.
- 650A-F. Urban Geography (3)**
A-Comparative Urban Structure, B-Urban Systems, C-Housing and Community Development, D-Urban Social Geography, E-Urban Land Use Planning, F-Metropolitan Los Angeles.
- 660A-D. Cultural Geography (3)**
A-Landscape Studies, B-Cultural Ecology, C-Environmental Perception, D-Social/Ethnic Studies.
- 670A-G. Global Studies (3)**
A-Population Geography, B-Medical Geography, C-Economic Development, D-Tourism, E-International Trade, F-Globalization, G-Political Geography.
- 680A-N. Regional Geography (3)**
A-California, B-United States, C-Canada, D-Mexico, E-Central America, F-South America, G-Europe, H-Southwest Asia, I-South Asia, J-Southeast Asia, K-East Asia, L-Eurasia, M-Africa, N-Oceania.

- 690A-G. Geographic Visualization (3)**
A-History of Cartography, B-Map Interpretation, C-Digital Cartography, D-Remote Sensing, E-Image Interpretation, F-Methods in GIS, G-Applications of GIS.
- 695A-C. Methods of Geographical Analysis (3)**
A-Quantitative Analysis, B-Methods in Geomorphology, C-Methods in Climatology.
- 696. Directed Graduate Research (3)**
To be taken near the end of the student's graduate program and prior to Geography 698. Supervised research leading to the development of a thesis topic, the preparation of a preliminary bibliography and a formal thesis proposal, and the selection of a faculty thesis committee. (Normally offered Fall semesters.)
- 698. Thesis (3)**
Prerequisite: Geography 696. Researching and writing the Master's thesis, under the supervision of the student's faculty thesis committee. Only one enrollment permitted.
- 699ABC. Independent Study (1-3)**
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor, graduate coordinator, and department chair. A maximum of 3 units may be applied to the student's program and only to the Elective requirement in the program.

FULL-TIME GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT FACULTY (2003)

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- William A. Bowen**, Ph.D., UC, Berkeley, 1972—historical, physical, California, cartography.
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- Helen Cox**, Ph.D., UCLA, 1998—atmospheric sciences, remote sensing.
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- Darrick R. Danta**, Ph.D., Ohio State, 1985—urban, economic, quantitative, Eastern Europe.
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- David Hornbeck**, Ph.D., Nebraska, 1974—historical, Southwest U.S., California, economic, applied geography.
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- Antonia Hussey**, Ph.D., Hawaii, 1986—economic development, resource management, Southeast Asia.
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- Edward Jackiewicz**, Ph.D., Indiana, 1998—third world development, urban, Latin America and Caribbean.
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- Julie E. Laity**, Ph.D., UCLA, 1982—geomorphology, climatology.
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- Gong-Yuh Lin**, Ph.D., Hawaii, 1974—meteorology, climatology, air pollution.
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- Elliot G. McIntire**, Ph.D., Oregon, 1968—biogeography, conservation, cultural.
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