



**SPRING 2024, 2H Course: GEOG 499**  
**Environmental Justice in Greater Chaco**

Instructors: Silas Grant and Maria Lane

**Short Description:** Learn about histories and struggles for environmental justice amid a changing climate in the Greater Chaco Landscape of northwestern New Mexico. Field-based learning experiences in field research methods, service learning, and community geography.

**Overview:**

Learn about the complex histories and lived realities of extraction, climate change, and fights for environmental justice in the Greater Chaco Landscape, with a focus in Dinétah and northwestern New Mexico. Through readings and discussions ahead of the field experience, students will engage with core concepts and themes, including environmental justice, extractivism, settler colonialism, self-determination and sovereignty, and climate change in the Southwest. In the field, students will learn from community-based instructors to understand these dynamics in the region. The course will pay special attention to the environmental, social, and spatial dimensions of oil and gas extraction, which has surged in New Mexico in the last decade. Activities include fracking tours, hikes, film screenings, renewable energy demonstrations, discussion circles, and more. Students will work with community-based instructors on service learning projects that contribute to local struggles for environmental justice, gaining hands-on experience in field methods and community geography. Open to undergraduate and graduate students.

**Key Dates**

- The course will meet from 1-2:30pm on March 20, April 3, April 24, and May 1
- Field Dates: May 14-21, 2024
- Students have May 22-28, 2024 to complete final assignments

**Learning Outcomes**

This course is available for both undergraduate and graduate credit. All students will:

- Gain experience in community engaged research and field methods.
- Make a meaningful contribution to local environmental justice efforts.
- Gain experience communicating research into written, visual, audio, or other forms.
- Develop or deepen an understanding of environmental justice, environmental policy, energy transition, and climate.
- Be able to identify and analyze human-environmental interactions as mediated by colonialism, law, and space.

**Student Expectations:**

- Students must be prepared to camp for all or part of the field experience (8 days). We will be camping at Chaco Culture National Historical Park and likely spending one night at a hotel in Farmington.
- At camp, students must be prepared to participate in camp maintenance activities such as rotating meal prep, set up and tear down, and other activities as needed.
- Students must be prepared to be outdoors for large parts of the day in late-spring weather (average temp. low 37, high 76, windy, possible occasional rain).
- Students should be able to walk/hike for 3-5 miles and lift 20 pounds (see accessibility note in application form).
- Students acknowledge that in addition to tuition, there will be a course fee of \$75-\$125. The final fee amount will be determined based on enrollment, and students will pay the fee in March 2024. Fee assistance is available upon request.
- Students will be provided with a packing list (clothes and personal items). The course fee includes rental of all group camping equipment, but students need to bring their own sleeping bag/pad. If needed, these can be rented from the UNM Outdoor Center at a 50% discount.

**Evaluation and Assignments:**

- Reading Responses (Pre-Field) — 15%
- Participation and Contributions to the Camp — 25%
- Field Journal — 15%
- Community Engaged Team Project — 25%
- Reflection Essay — 20%

\*Guidelines and evaluation criteria to be developed for syllabus. Percentages subject to change until syllabus is finalized.

**Instructor Permission**

- Instructor permission is required to register for this course. To obtain permission, [please fill out this form](#). If you have additional questions, contact Silas at [silasporellegrant@gmail.com](mailto:silasporellegrant@gmail.com)
- Students in GES and Sustainability Studies will be given priority for registration until November 10th. After November 10th, registration will be open to all other majors and degrees.

*This class is supported by:*

