

Environmental Justice & Community Resilience is the discipline focused on understanding and addressing the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens across communities while building the capacity of people and places to adapt to environmental, social, and economic challenges. Professionals in this field work at the intersection of environmental science, public health, geography, policy, planning, community engagement, and social justice to ensure that all communities have access to healthy environments and opportunities to thrive. The field recognizes that environmental hazards, pollution, climate change impacts, and resource inequities often disproportionately affect low-income communities, communities of color, Indigenous communities, and other historically marginalized populations. Some of the critical questions that might be addressed with a career in these fields include:

- *Why are some communities disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards and risks?*
- *How can climate adaptation and resilience planning better serve vulnerable populations?*
- *How can environmental policies be designed to promote equity and justice?*
- *What strategies help communities prepare for and recover from environmental disasters?*
- *How can communities participate more effectively in environmental decision-making?*
- *How can environmental investments improve public health, economic opportunity, and community well-being?*



Careers

Careers in **Environmental Justice & Community Resilience** involve working with governments, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, community organizations, consulting firms, and international agencies to address environmental inequities and strengthen community resilience.

Career	Potential Employers
Environmental Justice and Advocacy	
Environmental Justice Specialist	EPA, State Agencies, NGOs
Environmental Justice Advocate	Community Organizations, National NGOs
Community Engagement Coordinator	Nonprofits, Government Agencies
Environmental Policy Advocate	Advocacy Organizations, Think Tanks
Environmental Equity Analyst	Government Agencies, Consulting Firms
Community Resilience and Planning	
Community Resilience Planner	Municipal Governments, NGOs
Climate Adaptation Specialist	Consulting Firms, Government Agencies
Sustainability Coordinator	Municipal Governments, Universities
Resilience Program Manager	Foundations, NGOs, Government Agencies
Public Health and Environmental Health	
Environmental Health Specialist	Public Health Departments, CDC, NGOs
Public Health Program Coordinator	Local Governments, Community Organizations
Health Equity Analyst	Hospitals, Public Health Agencies, Foundations
Community Health Outreach Specialist	Nonprofits, Government Agencies
Education and Communication	
Environmental Educator	Schools, Nature Centers, NGOs
Science Communicator	Universities, NGOs, Media Organizations
Public Outreach Coordinator	Government Agencies, Community Organizations

Coursework & Degree Options

The **Environmental Justice & Community Resilience** pathway is especially well suited for Environmental Studies majors, though Environmental Science and Geography majors interested in public service, policy, public health, climate adaptation, planning, sustainability, or community engagement may also pursue this pathway. Students interested in careers in this field may wish to consider the following courses to fill elective requirements within the Environmental majors:



4-cr. Science & Technology laboratory courses:

- GEV 4323 – Watershed Biogeochemistry

3-cr. Science & Technology elective courses:

- GEV 2500 – Global Change in Local Places
- GEV 3308 – Environmental Health
- GEV 3521 – GIS for Urban Sustainability
- GEV 4358 – Environmental Project Management
- GEV 4512 – Medical Geography
- GEV 4518 – COVID-19 Pandemic



3-credit elective Environmental Policy & Management courses:

- GEV 3001 – Introduction to Sustainability Studies
- GEV 4001 – Advanced Sustainability Studies
- GEV 4331 – Environmental Policy and Management
- GEV 4334 – Environmental Law
- GEV 3570 – Land Use Planning and Management
- PA 2000 – Public Policy
- PA 3000 – Overview of the Nonprofit Sector



3-credit elective Environmental Social Science and Humanities courses:

- GEV 3004 – Geographies of Environmental Justice
- PHI 2121 – Environmental Ethics
- ETH 3650 – Ethics of the Anthropocene
- HIS 2276 – American Environmental History

Degree Options

- Students should consider double majoring in **Geography, Peace & Justice, Public Service and Administration, or Political Science.**

Notes:

- Students should seek internships with nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, government agencies, planning organizations, community development corporations, or environmental justice organizations.
- Many study abroad programs have courses that are relevant to this pathway and may count towards major requirements. Your academic advisor and the Chair of the Department can provide guidance, along with the Office of Education Abroad, about programs and courses that would be a good fit with this pathway.
- There are additional thematic courses offered every semester that can count toward elective requirements that may be relevant to this pathway.

Alumni Spotlight

Julia Chase

B.A. Environmental Studies, Class of 2013

Chief Resilience Officer, City of San Diego

Since graduating, Julia has become a leader in climate resilience and environmental planning, serving as Chief Resilience Officer for the City of San Diego where she oversees climate adaptation, conservation, and biodiversity initiatives that strengthen community resilience and advance equitable responses to environmental change.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/juliachase1/>



To learn more about this and other career pathways, use the QR code, contact your academic advisor, or contact the Chair of the Department of Geography and the Environment for guidance.

The GEV Career Pathways Page:

