

Borderlands Studies and Climate Resilience in Desert Communities

Program Orientation

Meet your group and Overseas Educators at the Tucson International Airport. Drive through the scenic Arizona landscape, moving from desert to mountain terrain as you arrive at your orientation site. Our hosts have lived on the property for 35 years, transforming it into a natural building/earthen architecture teaching and demonstration site. The group will stay for the next 4 days, building bonds, setting intentions, enjoying day hikes, and establishing a strong foundation for the upcoming journey.

Native Seed Harvesting, Endemic Plant Nursery, and Watershed Restoration, Patagonia, Arizona

The group will head east to the small community of Patagonia, Arizona. Less than 20 miles from the Mexico border, the town is known for placing an emphasis on community engagement and activism. Spending 2 weeks with a local NGO, we'll dive into hands-on work as we learn about some of the considerations for mitigating climate change, specifically in the context of soil, plants, and water. Especially in the desert, it is vital to slow the movement of water as a means to retain this precious resource and to slow erosion. Integral to that is the propagation of endemic plant species that will retain water, hold soil, and can withstand the harsh climate of the desert. The group will spend 2 weeks learning about the interplay of these conservation methods, working on watersheds, identifying and collecting native plant seeds, and working in a local nursery that propagates these seeds. On weekends, the group will take time to explore local hikes, including sections of the Arizona Trail. We may also schedule a talk with local farmers and law enforcement, and take a trip into Nogales (a town that straddles the U.S.-Mexico border), or take care of group and personal needs. We'll also have time to relax after a long week's work, and to prepare for another!

Deep Dirt Organic Farm and Permaculture Site, Patagonia, Arizona

Just a few miles down the road from our conservation site lies Deep Dirt, a sustainable agriculture and permaculture farm founded in 2005. Nestled in one of the most bio-diverse regions on the planet, the community has transformed the land and has educated thousands of students interested in permaculture, organic food production, natural building, and community. Specifically, our group will work with a local master craftsman in an effort to complete an adobe structure made of entirely local materials. There will

also be other projects (gardening, water catchment, etc.) depending on the community's current needs.

Accommodation for our conservation and organic farm projects will be a dorm/bunk style arrangement, with immediate access to a bathroom and shower. In collaboration with your group leaders, students will create a meal plan and grocery budget and prepare meals in an onsite kitchen.

Outdoor Adventure

Arizona is truly a remarkable state, and it's now time to head to the backcountry and explore the rich geological diversity and beauty of this region. Check out the scenic Superstition Mountains, hike a longer section of the Arizona Trail, or ask the many locals whom you've encountered what their favorite backpacking destination is. Regardless of place that your group collectively chooses, the natural environment will be stunning! You'll enjoy days of backpacking in the scenic landscapes and enjoy cooler nights with epic starry desert skies. In order to immerse ourselves and experience the wilderness fully, we'll spend 5-6 days backpacking roughly 6-8 miles per day. Enjoy!

Border and Immigration Studies in Tucson, Arizona

Settling into Tucson after our backpacking expedition, we'll spend a week exploring immigration in the context of human rights, government policy, race, culture, and identity, and systems of oppression. The group will engage with a local non-profit that promotes sharing of perspectives, challenges assumptions, and advocates for human rights and social justice. Experiential in nature, our time here is intended to generate a deeper understanding of the difficulties and challenges people face along the border.

****Carpe Diem reserves the right to make changes to the program at any time, and indeed has the responsibility to do so in some instances; changes may be required to provide the best possible experience, protect the safety of participants, or respond to changes in weather or political conditions.***