**ANTH 450 / ARCG 482**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK IN THE MAYA AREA**

Summer 2023

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**Course Description**

This Problems Without Passport course provides students with the opportunity to conduct archaeological fieldwork at the site of La Milpa North in northwestern Belize. Students will learn field methods pertaining to archaeological survey, excavations, laboratory analysis, 3D scanning of archaeological materials, data presentation, and archaeological interpretation. The remit of the course goes beyond archaeological fieldwork however, as it also provides students the opportunity to interact with local Belizean people on a daily basis and partake in cross-cultural learning experiences.

**Recommended Preparation**

No previous preparation is required for this course, but ANTH 202g, 140g, 302, 314g or another anthropology-based archaeology course would be helpful.

**Introduction, Objectives, and Outcomes**

Field archaeology is a rigorous undertaking filled with physical and mental challenges. The limited time that academic archaeologists are able to spend in the field each summer necessitates the learning of intensive and efficient data gathering methods. This course is designed to teach students archaeological methods and theory through an experiential framework. Learning about the important technological developments in a classroom setting is one thing, but walking through the jungle, excavating ancient elite residences, and the latest technologies to model archaeological sites is another.

Students will live at the Programme for Belize Archaeological Project (PfBAP) field camp in the town of Blue Creek in the Orange Walk district of Belize. The research compound is owned and operated by the University of Texas, Austin. Dr. Farah and Dr. Heller both have extensive research experience at this site. The amenities provided by the compound include sleeping quarters, filtered water, electricity, and home-cooked meals. These are rugged but comfortable accommodations. Students will take part in ongoing archaeological research every Sunday through Friday and will have Saturdays free to relax and/or take part in organized trips to nearby archaeological sites.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

* Employ archaeological field skills related to survey, excavation, and lab analysis.
* Analyze the material culture of the Classic Maya civilization.
* Evaluate information pertaining to the Classic Maya civilization and archaeological field methods.
* Evaluate presentations of contemporary Maya society in popular media.
* Create an evidence-driven research project based on past or present Maya cultures.
* Capture and creatively use digital cultural heritage information in research and data dissemination.

Additional information may be found at: <https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/cats/pfbap/overview.php>

**Course Requirements**

International travel in Latin America requires a certain degree of maturity and self-awareness. Moreover, archaeological fieldwork can be a physically demanding task. Students must have the physical capacity to excavate or conduct survey work in the field every day from roughly 7 am to 3:30 pm with a lunch break. This may include being hunched over, moving heavy objects, long periods of sun exposure, hiking with field gear and equipment, documenting excavations or excavation of archaeological ruins. If you do not have this kind of energy or ability you should speak with your instructor or different course as it will negatively affect your ability to complete required course goals. You should be sure to carry enough water to stay hydrated in the field.

While in-country, students are expected to be attentive and respectful during tours and visits, as well as every day out in the field. All work is expected to be turned in on time.

**Description of Assignments**

The bulk of your grade will consist of maintaining thoughtful and thorough field journal entries consisting of your daily log of activities, observations, notes and the field methods employed each day. Your field journals will be reviewed at the end of each work week., By the end of the third week of the field season, you will be required to turn in a research prospectus for your final project. By the end of the summer, you must complete your pre-approved research project, which may take the form of a conference presentation, a poster presentation, a short research paper, or other alternative.

**Statement on Late Assignments**

This course is designed for a select group of students prepared for international travel. Late assignments will not be accepted. You will receive no credit if assignments are not turned in on time.

**Statement on Attendance**

Attendance in all pre-trip lectures is mandatory in order to prepare you for travel and research in Belize.

**Statement of Contact Hours and Out of Class Workload**

Prior to the trip, you may contact us through email or come to my normal office hours. While in Belize you will spend a large part of your time with us in the field and when we visit archaeological sites on weekends. While in Belize, your primary writing workload will involve developing and maintaining field notebooks. You will have the rest of the summer to complete your blog post and final projects such as conference presentations, and/or research papers.

**Grading Breakdown**

Assignment % of grade Due date

Daily Field Journal 60% Saturday Evenings

Blog Posts 10% August 10th

Final Project 30% August 10th

**Transportation**

Students are responsible for arranging their own air travel to the Belize City Airport (BZE) on the day of the program start, no later than 3:30 PM. Upon arrival, chartered busses will provide transportation between the airport and the Programme for Belize camp. All additional travel, e.g. to and from camp to the research site or to town on days off, will be provided by the PfBAP.

**Lodging**

Lodging will be provided to you upon arrival in camp. Lodging is rustic in nature and will consist of bunks in shared dormitory rooms in a rainforest preserve. Students are required to supply their own mosquito netting and bedding.

**Cost**

Beyond the core project cost, the most significant expense will be airfare, approximately $800.00 from LAX to BZE. Beyond that, PfBAP maintains a camp bar, which includes cold waters and sodas, and all bar tabs must be paid in cash. Finally, students may wish to bring additional funds to purchase snacks, drinks, cellular phone time, or other conveniences at the general store in town. I would recommend bringing no less than $200.00 cash for these expenditures.

**Health and Safety in Belize**

Though relatively safe, Belize is a developing country in many ways, and you will see some poverty-stricken areas during your experience abroad. There are a number of private hospitals in Belize that will be accessible if necessary. There is also a local health clinic that can be easily visited for more minor issues. We will be staying at the Programme for Belize Archaeological Project (PfBAP) camp, which is a secure compound located on a protected ecological zone and directly next to an eco-lodge.

Given that we are in the jungle, and in a protected ecological zone, there are a number of precautions that you should take to ensure your safety and the wellbeing of our environment. We will discuss these precautions in depth the week before your departure.

**Readings**

There are no required books for this course. Readings will be disseminated to you as PDFs.

**Course Schedule**

Pre-Trip (at USC)

There will be 3 meetings prior to our trip to Belize. Topics will include:

1. Preorientation
2. Orientation
3. Introduction to the Ancient Maya
	1. Culture and Cosmology
		1. Readings: Selections from Coe and Houston 2015
	2. Cosmology, Landscape, and La Milpa in the Terminal Classic
		1. Readings: Tourtellot et al. 2003, Heller 2015
	3. Practicing Maya Archaeology and Field Orientation

Readings: Houk 2015

In Belize

During your time in Belize, you will be spending every weekday from roughly 7:00 am to 3:30 pm in the field. We will take a midday break to eat lunch, you are also very welcome to take water and snack breaks whenever you need them. We will arrive back at camp by 4:00 pm and you will have time to shower, relax, read, and contribute to camp chores. Dinner is served at approximately 6:00 pm and the evenings are largely your own, though we do host regular lectures by one of the many professors in camp or visiting scholars. Attending lectures is mandatory.

**Itinerary**

***Sunday 6/16 – Arrive in Belize, Arrive in Camp***

Students arrive and will be met by Farah and Heller at the airport in Belize City, Belize.

Upon your arrival, we will take a bus from Belize City to camp that same day.

6:00 PM: Room assignments, dinner, and camp health and safety orientation

***Monday 6/17 – Camp Orientation, and Training***

7:00 AM: Breakfast at camp

8:00 AM: Orientation of camp, organize and prep field materials

12:00 PM: Lunch at camp

1:00 PM: Basic field methods instruction

4:00 PM: Free afternoon to get acquainted with camp and your fellow campers. There will be students from a number of Universities from across the US.

6:00 PM: Dinner at camp.

***Sundays through Fridays (6/18-7/7)***

6:30 AM: Must have eaten breakfast, prepared your lunch, and be ready to leave for the field by this time

7:00 AM: Arrive at field site and begin fieldwork

Midday: Lunch

3:30 PM: Leave the field site

4:00 PM: Process the day’s data and then have free time

8:00 PM: Dinner at camp

***Saturdays (6/24-7/1)***

Free Day! There will occasionally be trips to visit archaeological sites on these days. There will also be an opportunity to travel to nearby town of Linda Vista, where you will be able to purchase supplies and call home.

***Tuesday 6/8***

6:00 AM: Breakfast

Camp clean up! Pack and prepare for your next adventure.

12:00 PM: Lunch at camp

Camp clean up! Pack and prepare for your next adventure.

6:00 PM: Farewell dinner

***Wednesday 6/9***

End of program, students travel home or to next destination. Note: there will be transportation to the Belize City Airport from camp available to you. There are also other options for travel that are not sponsored by USC.

**Statement for Students with Disabilities**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me or your TA as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in GFS 120 and is open 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

The website is: https://dsp.usc.edu

**Statement on Academic Integrity**

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. Scampus, The Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

https://policy.usc.edu/files/2016/10/SCampus-2016-2017.pdf

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/scampus/

Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: https://policy.usc.edu/files/2014/02/intellectual\_property.pdf

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in Crisis**

In case of emergency, when travel to campus is difficult, if not impossible, USC executive leadership will announce a digital way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of the Blackboard LMS (Learning Management System), teleconferencing, and other technologies. Instructors should be prepared to assign students a “Plan B” project that can be completed ‘at a distance.’ For additional information about maintaining your classes in an emergency, please access:

http://cst.usc.edu/services/emergencyprep.html