

Heritage and Ethno-ecology in the Maya World

ANTH 340

May 22-June 19, 2012

Course Description

Heritage and Ethno-ecology in the Maya World is a 4-week, 6 unit course held in Yucatan, Mexico. The course is centered in the Maya village of Ek'Balam, and includes excursions around the state. Students gain a holistic understanding of life in a modern Maya community through exposure to some of the most pressing issues currently faced by Mayas in the region; how to participate (or not) in tourism development through the presentation of heritage and biodiversity conservation.

Lectures on local history, gender relations, ecology, and economics begin as soon as students arrive. Students learn and apply the primary method of systematic observation and recording of one's surroundings in journals and field notes. The secondary method taught is the collection of ethno-ecological data in the forests surrounding Ek'Balam. This teaches students a valuable field methodology and gives them an opportunity to collaborate with an ongoing research project in the village. Graded assignments include weekly submission of field notes, successful participation in all course excursions and activities, completion of community service signage project, and a final reflective paper submitted at the end of the course.

The final paper will be 10-15 pages, double-spaced, and will present a discussion and description of an aspect of heritage and ethno-ecology that is of particular interest to the student. This paper will include an analysis of relevant fieldnotes and other data as well as a discussion of how these pertain to the literature reviewed in the course. Fieldnotes and a data archive will be submitted along with the final paper.

The final paper will be due at a time agreed upon by the student and myself, and will be after the course is complete, but not later than August 15th.

Part 1: Heritage in the Maya World

Methods:

Seminar 1 (5/23)

1. Taylor "Introduction"
2. Geertz "Thick Description"

Seminar 2 (5/24)

3. Taylor "A Day in the Life"
4. Wolcott "Description"

Seminar 3 (5/25)

5. Bernard "Fieldnotes"
6. Schensul "Mapping"

History and Heritage:

Seminar 4 (5/26)

1. Taylor "Anthropology in the Maya World"
2. Loewe "Way Kot"

Seminar 5 (5/28)

3. Arden "Archaeological Knowledge"
4. Breglia "Patrimony"

Maya Culture:

Seminar 6 (5/29)

1. Taylor "On Being Maya and Getting By"
2. Loewe "Way Kot"
3. Castillo-Cocom "Lost in Mayaland"
4. Kintz "Maya Women"

Tourism

Seminar 7 (5/30):

1. Castaneda "Heritage and Indigeneity"
2. Guide Books

3. Brown “Maya Tourism”

Part 2: Ethno-ecology

Seminar 8 (6/7)

1. Redford “Ecologically Noble Savage”
2. Taylor “Politics and Ethno-ecology”

Seminar (6/8)

3. Bookbinder et al “Ecotourism Conservation”
4. Berkes “Rethinking Community-Based Conservation”

Seminar (6/11)

5. Haenn “Community-based Conservation”
6. Doane “Ecological Native”

Seminar (6/12)

7. Simpson “Heritage to Healing”
8. West and Carrier “Ecotourism and Authenticity”