

CSUDH Ethnographic Field School

SYLLABUS

The primary goal of the California State University-Dominguez Hills Summer Ethnographic Field School is to help students interested in fieldwork and ethnographic methods achieve a level of methodological proficiency that will enable them to undertake future work independently and confidently. The medium of training is an on-site research project revolving around issues associated with daily life in the lake region. This may include the environmental, socio-economic, and cultural impacts of tourism; a study of textiles and vendors; research on local agriculture...the list of topics is as broad as our students' interests. A second goal of the program is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the multi-faceted culture dynamics in the area. This is accomplished by having the program participants design, implement, and write-up an independent, training project during the 6 weeks of their participation. A third goal is the production of useful information and analysis that comes from their experiences working in the region. Program sponsors, governmental entities, university scientists and faculty, and relevant community leaders and collaborators are given copies of the final reports of every student participant.

Courses and Credits

Each student receives six course credits upon successful completion of the following two courses that form the basis of instruction during the field school. Both undergraduate and graduate credits are offered. Note: English will be the primary language of instruction, but Spanish will also be used and students with sufficient Spanish language skills will be encouraged to use their Spanish as often as possible. English translation is available to facilitate interviewing and communication. There are also inexpensive language schools in Panajachel and several of the surrounding Lake Atitlan communities for those who are interested.

ANT 495 Ethnographic Field School: This is a three-credit field methods course emphasizing practical training in ethnographic fieldwork and ethics. Applied research methods such as rapid appraisal will also be demonstrated. Students learn research design, systematic observation, interviewing, fieldnote-taking, coding, ethics, and how to use laptop computers in ethnographic research, data analysis and report writing.

ANT 334 Mesoamerica, Past and Present: Explores historical and contemporary trends among the diverse cultures of Mexico and Central America from Pre-Columbian era to today. Focus on indigenous peoples and relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples.

Learning Objectives

The program begins with an orientation and classes; meanwhile students begin to develop their field project, eventually writing a final report on their fieldwork activities and findings throughout the 6 weeks of the program. Students learn methods and theories through classroom lectures and fieldwork assignments. Excursions to other communities in the Western Guatemalan highlands are planned. Students are placed in Guatemalan homes in communities around Lake Atitlan, where they all live.

Contact with their families is one of the best ways to learn about Guatemalan and Maya Atitlan culture and society. Each student undertakes his/her own applied fieldwork project. Student fieldwork begins immediately and continues throughout the remaining weeks. The director and assistant director, located in Panajachel, will make frequent visits to each student to assist them in their research and check on their progress. For examples of the type of research projects students have done in the past, consult the website's final papers from each of the previous field schools. The program emphasizes the following skill development during the program:

1. designing a field research project;
2. selecting appropriate research techniques based on a realistic appraisal of the field context;
3. developing daily and weekly research goals;
4. writing field notes, coding field notes and keeping a journal;
5. doing systematic observation techniques;
6. understanding ethical issues implied in field work;
7. doing formal and informal interviewing;
8. developing appropriate rapport building devices with informants and collaborators;
9. surviving and overcoming culture shock;
10. analyzing ethnographic and fieldwork data, and writing research reports.

Evaluation

Grading:

A,B,C,D,F (A = 100-90; B= 89-80; C=79-80; D=69-60; F=below 60) (for ANT419/431) S,U for ANT 610)

1. Participation (5 %) in classroom meetings; and informal interim reports and discussions
2. Work on individual research assignments (30%).
3. Fieldnotes and Field Journal (60-75 pp of fieldnotes/journal) (30%)
4. End of program Power Point presentation (5%)
5. Final research report - 20 pages (30%) (20 double-spaced pages are due by an agreed upon date after your return from the program you will not receive any credit for the report.)

Attendance:

Attendance is required at all class meetings. Unexcused absences lead to a reduction of the overall grade average (OGA). Each missed class will reduce your OGA by 5 points.

Assignments:

There are a series of research assignments required of each of you during the program. Research assignments should be included with your weekly fieldnotes and are due the Sunday after assigned unless otherwise noted. Assignments not included in their fieldnotes by the assigned Sunday will have 5 points deducted for each day they are late. Each student must begin working on each assignment by the day following when they are assigned so that initial findings can be discussed the following class period.

Fieldnotes and Journal:

COPIES ARE DUE EVERY SUNDAY (you must either e-mail or submit notes on a flash drive to one of the directors no later than 5pm every Sunday). Notes turned in late will have 10 points deducted for each day they are late.

Requirements and Outcomes

Students will spend some time in classes, but most of the time will be spent doing your research projects and writing fieldnotes, journal notes, and reports. In the evenings, you are expected to write about two hours worth of fieldnotes/journal notes. You will produce a minimum of 60-75 pages of text material as a result of your research and assignments. Finally, after departure you must write at minimum a 20 page document. A detailed outline is submitted before departure. The final report must be well thought out and conceived and presented, but could be revised and re-submitted after returning home. No student will receive a passing grade without completing a twenty page minimum final report.

By the end of the course, you should be able to design a research plan, apply appropriate fieldwork techniques, understand how theories in the anthropology are applied to a particular field site, write a final report summarizing the significance of the data collected, and understand ethical issues involved in fieldwork. In addition, you will know the principal theories of anthropological research; understand the history of anthropological engagement with Mesoamerican communities; and identify change and continuity in Maya culture from pre-Columbian times to present.

Hardware and Software Requirements:

It is essential that you download a software program called, SIL Fieldworks 6.0, software from SIL International. There is a free download of the software at this address: http://www.sil.org/computing/fieldworks/FW_downloads.htm. Download and install this software and become familiar with it before you leave. Please do this at least a month prior to departure to make sure you have and that it is installed properly and ready to be used. It is much harder to do it in Guatemala and it is required you use this. Note that this is a Windows only program (Windows 2000, XP and Vista only), for MAC users, we will discuss alternatives.

1. **Your laptop is one of your most important pieces of field equipment.** Please come prepared to use it correctly and keep it in shape.
2. **Surge protectors are a requirement** due to the instability of electric service, especially during the rainy season. There are occasional power outages and spikes; the surge protector will help protect your equipment, so don't skimp on your surge protector.
3. You must back up your data frequently, so be prepared with **flash drives** (we recommend at least three). Throughout the program, you will need to transfer your fieldnotes to the instructors' computers, so make sure to have a flash drive either to give to us or to send the file via email. Many towns have Wi-Fi or Internet Café capabilities, but we suggest you keep your laptops safe in your homestay and just use flash drives to send program files to us, pictures to friends, etc.
4. You will be living in places with electricity, of course, but plugs are often inconveniently located, therefore you should bring an **extension cord**.

Texts

Pre-departure Readings: Two of them deal with Guatemalan Maya communities we will be visiting.

1. Daniel Wilkinson, *Silence on the Mountain: Studies of Terror, Betrayal, and Forgetting in Guatemala*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 2002. ISBN: 0618221395. (Moving, very well written book, almost like a novel, that discusses the history and consequences of Guatemala's 30 year civil war which has left an indelible imprint on the current generation of Guatemalans.)

Readings in Guatemala: (These you need to bring with you.)

2. Kathleen M. DeWalt and Billie R. DeWalt, *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 2002. (inexpensive, basic details of how to do fieldwork.)

3. Stephen Schensul, Jean J. Schensul, and M. LeCompte, *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1999 (from the *Ethnographer’s Toolkit Series*, No. 2)
4. Grandin, et al 2011. *The Guatemala Reader: History, Culture, and Politics*. Duke University Press
5. Assigned handouts will be provided for you.

Not required but recommended:

6. Edward F. Fischer & Carol Hendrickson, *Tecpán Guatemala: A Modern Maya Town in Global and Local Context*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2003. (A good update on current issues as it intersects with a local, Indian community, not far from Lake Atitlán, and is a town we will visit.)
7. Walter Little, *Maya in the Marketplace*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2004. (tourism, globalization and identity, market vendors in Antigua.)
8. The eight volumes of papers from previous years (available on site or from the website.)
9. There are many, many books and articles on Guatemalan Maya communities. I will have a pretty good selection of them in Panajachel for you to loan out when you get there. Also, there is a good bookstore in Panajachel where you can buy some of the best known ethnographies. They take VISA/MCard, too.

Course Schedule

Week #	Date	Topic/Activity	Assignment	Reading
1	5/27	Arrival to the hotel in Guatemala City and brief orientation		
	5/28	Travel to Panajachel and Lake Atitlán; CLASS 1: orientation to the field site, the local culture, the fieldwork, and the issues		
	5/29	Travel to locations and towns of home stay, first night with host families		DeWalt Ch 8; LeCompte & Schensul Ch 4; Hinshaw (online #11)
	5/30	CLASS 2: Home stay issues, services, clinics, internet, health, culture shock and coping; program rules and polices A. Nature Reserve and lecture on the culture, biology, and geology of Lake Atitlán B. Pre-departure reading overview C. Discussion of syllabus and assignments	<i>Assignment 1: Verbal Snapshot (be prepared to discuss for Class 2, due with 5/31 notes)</i>	DeWalt Ch 3&4, App 3; Ethno Tool vol 5, p 11-43 (online #20); Bernard Ch 14 (online #19); Sanford (online #59) <i>optional: Russell Handbook,</i>

				Schweizer (online #26)
Note on classes 2, 3, 4, and 5: The group will be divided into two smaller groups and meet on alternate days, but the material will be the same for both groups.				
	5/31 & 6/1	CLASS 3 A. Guiding Principles of Participation Observation B. Mayans Past and Present --Kaqchiquel, Tz'utujil, and Quiche'	<i>Assignment 2: Transportation Observation (be prepared to discuss for Class 3, due with 5/31 notes)</i>	LeCompte & Schensul Ch 5; Russell Handbook Johnson/Sackett (online #23); Paul (online #12); Adams (online #13); Mertz (online #60)
2	6/4 & 6/5	CLASS 4 A. Learning to be a Participant Observer --Entering the field B. Local Mayans and the Civil War	<i>Assignment 3: Active Listening (be prepared to discuss for Class 4, due with 6/7 notes)</i>	LeCompte & Schensul Ch 2; Chambers Ch 1; Russell Handbook Ch 10 (online #30); Bernard Ch 15 (online #22); Ethno Tool v1 ch5 (online #46); Beckers and Richards (online #56)
	6/6 & 6/7	CLASS 5 A. Research Paradigms and Conceptualizing Research--Fieldnotes B. Globalization and tourism	<i>Assignment 4: Observing and analyzing the landscape (be prepared to discuss for Class 5, due with 6/7 notes)</i>	LeCompte & Schensul Ch 6,7, 10; Chambers Ch 2; Maxwell (online #45); Sobo (online #39)
	6/8 & 6/9	CLASS 6 First draft of research project outline due and class discussion of it A. Interviewing, Fieldnotes, Coding, and Sampling	<i>Assignment 5: Market study of "your" town where you are working (be prepared to discuss for Class</i>	Chambers Ch 3; DeWalt Ch 10; Pink Ch 3-4 (online #48 & #51); optional: Ethno Tool v4 Ch2 (online #28);

		<p>--The problem of validity and reliability</p> <p>B. Tourism concepts, development concepts, and identity</p>	<p>7, due with 6/14 notes)</p>	<p><i>Ethno Tool v3</i> <i>Ch2 (online #42);</i> <i>Tredell 9 pps (online #43);</i> <i>DeWalt App 4</i></p>
3	6/11-14	<p>FIELD TRIP TO ANTIGUA</p> <p>One on one meetings with instructors to discuss research project</p>		
	6/16	<p>CLASS 7</p> <p>A. Ethics in Research</p> <p>B. Data gathering techniques including RAP, pilesorts, oral/life histories, archival data, ethnographic surveys, time allocation</p> <p>C. Tourism, Development, Place and Performance</p>	<p><i>Assignment 6: Cognitive Mapping among members of the local community (due with 6/21 notes)</i></p>	<p>DeWalt Ch 5; Chambers Ch 4; Russell Handbook Ch 11 (online #33); Russell Handbook Ch 4 (online #36); Austin (handout)</p>
4	6/17-23	<p>CLASS 8: Fieldwork and occasional small group meetings to help and complete research projects</p> <p>Discussion of progress in the projects and data collection; More on data collection, data analysis and report writing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gathering oral literature 2. How to be a collaborative listener 3. Being descriptive in fieldnotes for aid in writing final report 4. Discussion of assignments <p>Analyzing fieldnotes</p>	<p><i>Assignment 9: Free-List and pile Sorts (due with 6/23 notes)</i></p>	<p>DeWalt Ch 9; Roos (online #54); Fliesher (online #50)</p>
5	6/24-6/30	<p>CLASS 9: Small group discussions on final write-up of project</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing the final report: tips, techniques, suggestions, requirements 2. Protecting the informant's identity 3. Responsibilities to the local community, clients, colleagues and the discipline 	<p><i>Assignment 10: Visual Montage (due with 6/30 notes)</i></p>	<p>Wolcott Ch 2 (online #15); Lamott (handout); Fine Tuning Results (handout)</p>

		<p>4. Evaluating the validity of the data for significant conclusions</p> <p>5. Executive summaries and making research useful</p>		
6	7/3 & 7/4	CLASS 10: Final Presentations		
	7/6	Farewell Luncheon (11:30-3:00)	Final set of notes, assignments, and final paper due	
	7/7	DEPARTURE FROM PANAJACHEL		