

Heritage and Ethno-ecology in the Maya World

ANTH 597AB: Join us this summer for a 2-week, 3 unit course in Yucatan, Mexico!

The course 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 in tourism development through the presentation of heritage and biodiversity conservation. Students observe and participate in the many ways that residents are engaging with tourists during visits to four archaeological sites, a biosphere reserve on the coast, a rural Maya village, and the beautiful colonial city of Merida.

The adventure begins and ends in Ek'Balam, where the instructor has been conducting field research for more than a decade. There, students will get to know families and participate in an ongoing community-based ecotourism project in the village.

Visit 4 ancient Maya sites, 2 colonial cities, a biosphere reserve, and the beautiful Maya Riviera!



May 23-June 4, 2016

Excursions



History

Yucatan boasts a dynamic and unique history that is still very much alive in oral story-telling traditions, food ways, and architecture of both rural, indigenous villages and the state capital of Merida. Merida is a beautiful, bustling cosmopolitan city. The excursion to Merida serves to teach students about the regional history of Yucatan. As part of the trip, we will attend a lec-



ture at the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan about Merida's history and the economic connections to the region both historically (through the trade of henequen) and presently (through the tourism industry). The Merida excursion includes a Balet Folklorico performance at UADY and a trip to the downtown market where students see the final destination of hammocks purchased in Ek'Balam wholesale by vendors.

Heritage

One of the many advantages of studying heritage in Yucatan is the existence of numerous archaeological zones and impressive monumental architecture. The class includes tours of four archaeological sites; Mayapan, Ek'Balam, Chichen Itza, and Yaxuna. The history of these sites since their initial excavations has varied, and a comparison of archaeological investigations provides insight into the ways that a community can engage with archaeology and heritage.



Hands-on learning through cultural immersion

Ethno-ecology



The community-based model of development and conservation initiatives is used with increasing frequency around the world, and Ek'Balam is no exception. Through an immersive experience, students learn about the projects that are ongoing and the way ecological resources are targeted as both a means toward development and an attraction for tourists. The first section of this unit is a day in the fields with two men who are still actively farming their land, followed by another day accompanying a man who has designated most of his land to conservation initiatives. The second is an excursion to Rio Lagartos Biosphere Reserve. There we will embark on a boat tour of the reserve with a member of the fishing and tourism cooperative. This experience gives students an understanding of the strategies for economic and ecological benefit that have been successful in some parts of the region.



Program Schedule

- 5-23 Arrive in Cancun, travel to Valladolid
- 5-24 Travel to Ek'Balam
- 5-26 Travel to Chichen Itza, overnight in Piste
- 5-27 Visit Yaxunah, overnight in Yaxunah
- 5-28 Travel to Mayapan, overnight in Telchaquillo
- 5-29 Travel to Merida
- 5-31 Travel to Rio Lagartos Biosphere Reserve
- 6-1 Return to Ek'Balam
- 6-3 Travel to Cancun
- 6-4 Depart

Spend summer 2016 touring the Maya World

Structure



Grading

Evaluation of student success is based on 1) the quality of the manner in which the student works through the processes and dynamics of field-work, including proactive participation in all components, 2) the submission of a final reflective paper (5-7 pages), and 3) the archiving, storage, and organization of research materials according to criteria and formats provided, including field notes and photos.

Contact Hours

- 15 instructional contact hours in seminars
- 10 instructional contact hours in archaeological tours and guest lectures
- 10 instructional contact hours in conservation project tours
- 10 hours independent reading and reflection

Interested?

Contact Sarah R. Taylor, Assistant Professor
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No previous study of Spanish required, taught in English.

This once-in-a-lifetime trip costs \$1000 in advance by March 1st (includes airfare, transportation within Yucatan, hotels, meals, entry fees to archaeological sites and museums, insurance, and overhead costs). The remainder of \$1000 is due April 15th.

You should also budget approximately \$300 to cover additional food, refreshments, internet, and souvenirs. You will need to set aside \$50.00 for the purchase of a hammock on the first day. You will also need a valid passport (approximately \$100.00).

Tuition for 3 credit hours (optional) is additional.