

MAYA ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL IN BELIZE
ANTH 497 – Summer 2024

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Course Description:

This is a 6 credit-hour course designed to introduce students to the methods used to collect and analyze archaeological data in a hands-on field setting. The course will take place over the span of 4 weeks at a remote archaeological field camp in Belize, Central America. Students will receive instruction in archaeological excavations, plan mapping/profiling excavation units, and basic field laboratory procedures. In addition, students will have the opportunity to learn a great deal about the Prehispanic Maya through lectures and field trips.

Required Text:

The Maya, 10th edition, by Michael D. Coe (Thames & Hudson)

Reading Schedule:

Prior to departure: Coe chapters 1 through 6, and 9.

Dates:

May 19-June 12, 2024

Course Requirements and Grading Procedures:

The grade in this course will be determined by each student's demonstrated ability to perform basic and more advanced procedures in three facets of archeological fieldwork: excavation, mapping/profiling, and laboratory procedures. A portion of the grade will also be based on maintaining a field journal, participation in camp duties, and overall conduct.

Excavation evaluation will focus on the student's ability to lay out an excavation unit, dig and screen archaeological matrix, recognize changes in the matrix, properly manage paperwork and artifact recovery, and photograph features as they are uncovered in the field. Each student will be assessed on their ability to coordinate and maintain all of these activities, as well as demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the modified Harris Matrix recording system employed by the project.

Mapping/profiling evaluation will assess each student's ability to draw plan maps, profiles, and elevation drawings of excavation units and exposed architecture. The assessment will be based on accuracy as well as neatness, proper use of scale, proper labeling of drawings, etc.

Laboratory procedures will address each student's ability to process and record artifacts and samples in the lab. This includes the processing and recording of ceramic and lithic artifacts, as well as any bone, botanical, or carbon¹⁴ samples. Students may also be called upon to participate in flotation and dry screen analyses, or on other projects that may be underway in the lab (e.g., ceramic refit/reassembly or lithic analysis).

Your field journal is *not* the same thing as a personal journal. Field journals are important supplements to the other forms of recording and allow for more detailed accounts of the excavations, survey, and other field activities – as well as the thoughts and interpretations of the recorder.

Camp duties vary and will rotate weekly. These include disposing of trash, doing dishes, and maintaining and cleaning the camp, lab, and kitchen. Students will also be expected to pitch in on an as-needed basis.

Essential non-technical skills, including teamwork, punctuality, attitude, following the rules of the project, and ability to work well with others will also comprise a portion of the student assessment.

The course may also include approximately 2 hours of lecture per week. These lectures will take place in the evenings after dinner. They will be presented by program directors, project staff, or guests (we will be sharing camp with two other field schools and their instructors will lecture on various topics to all groups).

Grading breakdown for Undergraduate Students is as follows:

Excavation:	20%
Mapping/Profiling:	20%
Lab:	20%
Field Journal:	20%
Camp Duties/Conduct	20%

Academic Integrity:

Scholastic dishonesty is not tolerated by the academic community of Western Colorado University. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarisms, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an exam for another person, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

You should review the portion of the *College Catalog* and/or the *Student Handbook* on academic integrity. The policy states: "Violations of academic integrity may result in the following: an 'F' grade or a zero for the assignment, an 'F' for the course, withdrawal from the course, or suspension or expulsion from the College. Serious violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs."

Expected Learning Outcome:

At the completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

1. Lay out, excavate, and record materials associated with an excavation unit.
2. Describe natural and cultural impacts on artifact, ecofact, and feature preservation.
3. Recognize artifacts and features for a given context.
4. Demonstrate a grasp of mapping equipment and procedures.
5. Process, inventory, and conduct a preliminary analysis on artifacts in the lab:
6. Function as an integral part of a larger field research station.

Emergency Contact (in Belize)

There are no telephone lines in the PfBAP camp. If **extremely urgent** contact is necessary, you may call the Programme for Belize at **+011.501.227.5616**, where 501 is the country code for Belize and 227.5616 is the local number in Belize, and leave a message.

Packing List

The program will provide primary excavation equipment such as trowels, screens, picks, shovels, buckets, etc.

Required:

- Valid passport (required to enter Belize)
- US Cash for personal expenses
 - For your time in camp:
 - Bring enough cash, probably \$200-300 to sustain you because it is somewhat difficult to withdraw any money until the trip at the end.
 - For the optional trip (June 12-16):
 - This trip can be done for about \$300-400 if you are sharing rooms with other project members.
- Bedding
 - 1-2 sets of sheets for single (twin) size mattress.
 - Remember, laundry is once a week, and will take a day and a half to get it back, so be prepared for that.
 - Pillow (one will not be provided)
- Mosquito net (if you are staying in a dorm room)
 - The kind that can be upheld from two or four points.
- Personal toilet kit
 - Bath towel, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, and other favorite or necessary personal toiletries.
 - Mosquitos dislike these things- Peppermint, lavender, cedarwood, rosemary, eucalyptus, lemon, etc. Try to find soap and shampoo that have these in them.
- **Two Flashlights** and batteries (this is **critical!**)
 - Consider bringing replacement bulbs and plenty of batteries.
 - You will use your flashlight every night.

- Water bottles (i.e. Nalgene bottles)
 - You will need at least three liters of water a day, so plan for that.
- A reliable day pack for carrying supplies, water, lunch into the field
- A sturdy, reusable laundry bag
- Clothes & footwear
 - Sturdy pants (at least THREE pair) – shorts are **NOT** allowed to be worn at the dig site
 - Long-sleeved shirts (these will protect you against bugs and other critters)
 - Anything that is cool in high humidity and dries quickly is good
 - Synthetic materials, although cotton is good in this climate as well.
 - Laundry is only done once a week; **bring enough clothes to last ten days**
 - Good Socks
 - Something like a lightweight hiking boot, tough and well broken in – sandals or flip-flops are **NOT** allowed to be worn at the dig site
 - Clothes for off-time, around camp.
 - Shorts, sandals/flip-flops are allowed when not at the dig site.
 - Also, good to have a pair of tennis/running shoes
 - The local population is Mennonite (conservative) and we need to respect that
 - Hat – something that will protect you from rain and sun that can be stored in your backpack
 - Work Gloves (more a suggestion – but recommended)
 - Cotton or canvas work gloves dry quickly
 - Leather gloves are good but dry slowly and sometimes mold or mildew

Recommendations/suggestions:

- Battery-operated fan and batteries
 - It's hot and humid and there is no A/C
- Insect repellent
 - For skin: Deep Woods Off!TM or Off! SkintasticTM are commonly used - up to about 30%-35% DEET.
 - For clothing and gear: PermanoneTM, or repellent containing permethrin, 100% DEET
 - Natural Repellents- REPEL lemon and eucalyptus repellent works very well, better than most DEET repellents.
 - Remember, insects like sweet sweat, so what you eat can affect how much they are attracted to you.
- Pocket knife
 - Remember to pack this in your checked luggage
- Garbage bags
 - At least six - to pack things in and keep them dry, including covering your day pack

- Dry bags
- Poncho/rain gear
- Earplugs
- Reading material
- Snack foods – must be stored in your dorm room/tent (no refrigeration)
 - Most snacks items can be purchased locally
- Nylon string and clothespins
 - If it rains, to hang dry clothes, towel, poncho
- Camera
- Personal journal or notebook (separate from your field journal)
- Re-sealable container for your lunch
- Medications and supplements
 - Prescriptions/medications and supplements must be in their original pharmacy containers only - these should include the pharmacy label bearing your name (not anyone else's name).
 - Carrying a copy of your prescription is recommended.
 - Make sure you have enough for the duration of your stay.
 - Keep in mind that some medications spoil quickly in hot humid climates, so a dessicant from your pharmacy should be included in the bottle with any tablets.
 - Consider the following:
 - Pepto-Bismol/Imodium, aspirin/ibuprofen, eye drops, electrolyte solution (Gatorade powder); foot powder, disposable wet-wipes for field and camp, minor first aid kit, allergy medications, antibiotic cream or wash, anti-fungal spray, Benadryl (or other antihistamines, both pills and cream).
- Spare pair of eye glasses or contact lenses
 - Eyeglass repair kit
- Sunscreen
- Other useful items-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Zip-Ties ○ Tweezers ○ General First-Aid ○ Paracord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Duct-Tape ○ A sewing kit ○ Climbing tape ○ Carabiners
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Dig Kit (optional)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trowels – pointed and margin • Line level x 2 • <u>METRIC</u> tape measure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compass • Pencils • Ruler w/ <u>metric</u> |
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What NOT to Bring back to top

- Hair dryers
- "Boom Box" style CD players

- Electrical appliances
- Pets/animals
- Firearms, slingshots, bows, crossbows
- Illegal drugs
- Candles - they are a fire hazard
- Visitors - are only allowed with prior permission. The project is located in a remote area that is difficult to find. We are located on a controlled access, guarded property

Typical Field Day:

5:30	Wake-up call
6:00	Breakfast, make your lunch
6:45	Daily briefing and assignments
7:00	Leave for the field (with lunch and equipment)
Noon	Lunch (30 minutes on site)
3:30	Pack-up and depart La Milpa for camp
6:00	Dinner
7:00	Lectures (when scheduled), otherwise evening free
8:30	Quiet time
9:00	Lights out

Other Considerations:

If you are traveling on a passport issued from the US or Canada no visas are required. If your passport was issued by a different country please contact your embassy to determine if additional paperwork is required.