

## EL CONGO-CIUDAD ANTIGUA, COLOMBIA

*Course ID: ARCH 315J*

*June 2–June 29, 2019*

### FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

**Dr. Santiago Giraldo**, Fundación ProSierra Nevada de Santa Marta ([sgiraldo@prosierra.org](mailto:sgiraldo@prosierra.org))

**Eduardo Mazuera**, Department of Architecture, Universidad de los Andes,  
[eduardomazuera@yahoo.com](mailto:eduardomazuera@yahoo.com)



### INTRODUCTION

The El Congo-Ciudad Antigua archaeological site is located on the western face of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range towards the upper section of the Rio Frio basin. The archaeological remains, which include a number of terrace structures, extend over more than 60 hectares, spreading down the slopes of narrow hillcrests from 900 to 600 meters elevation. Many of the remains are located within ProSierra's El Congo research station and adjacent farms. The El Congo research station is an archaeological and biological conservation area owned by ProSierra since 1991, and the 2019 field season seeks to continue preliminary research that began in 2018.

Between 2006 and 2017, our research program concentrated on Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Archaeological park and sites in the surrounding area, focusing on producing a better understanding of its construction sequence and layout. For 2019 and subsequent years, we are directing research towards the Rio Frío basin to compare inter-basin differences and similarities between sites and towns. El Congo-Ciudad Antigua is located a relatively short distance due west of Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida but in a completely different basin, such that we believe them to be part of two different polities. One of the general aims of the research program involves trying to investigate whether these political differences do or do not manifest themselves in architecture and material culture. During the field season, we will also be doing limited conservation work at a number of structures that have collapsed and need rebuilding. We will be working with a local

conservation team led by Eduardo Mazuera. Given that some of these terraces may have buried occupations, stratigraphic details must be carefully recorded, and artifacts buried in terrace fill recovered and cataloged. Students will rotate between the excavation and conservation teams.

#### ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

**Credit Units:** Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units (equivalent to 12 quarter credit units) through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a private, highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see grading assessment and matrix). This field school provides a minimum of 160 direct instructional hours. Students are encouraged to discuss the transferability of credit units with faculty and registrars at their home institution prior to attending this field school.

**Transcripts:** An official copy of transcripts will be mailed to the permanent address listed by students on their online application. One more transcript may be sent to the student home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the National Student Clearinghouse: <http://bit.ly/2hvurkl>.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of this field school is to provide students with hands on training in archaeology and conservation work and its practice in remote and isolated tropical forest areas such as El Congo-Ciudad Antigua. Students are expected to gain basic knowledge of the logistics involved in running a successful project in tropical forest areas.

Reaching El Congo Ciudad-Antigua research station takes a 2.5-hour drive from the city of Santa Marta on a dirt road and then a 30 minute walk through a trail. In the area, students will be introduced to the logistics and objectives of community-based development related to tourism and sustainable agriculture, as well as long term conservation agreements.

To achieve all of the above goals, we will: 1) provide students with basic knowledge of field methods, including excavation, sampling, artifact processing and cataloging, and conservation work; 2) introduce students to research design, data interpretation, and the constant reframing of assumptions, hypotheses, and methodologies as work advances in the field; finally, 3) explain and describe the process for designing grassroots development projects aimed at improving the livelihoods of peasant inhabitants of the area.

**Sampling:** Students will sample previously surveyed terraces through shovel tests.

**Excavation:** The objective for this field season is to carry out a small number of targeted excavations at El Congo-Ciudad Antigua. Students will participate in discussions regarding excavation trench location, orientation, and expected findings in order to better understand excavation logic and practices. Students will also learn how to set up a datum point and grid, artifact collection procedures, record keeping, artifact sorting, and soil and feature sampling procedures. Students will participate actively in all excavation workflow.

**Record keeping and processing:** Students will participate in drawing architectural features, plotting survey points on plans, filling out excavation forms, and recording stratigraphic details.

**Laboratory:** Scheduled lab tasks will include washing, sorting, drawing, and cataloguing of finds.

The course begins on Sunday, June 2 and will meet every weekday and for a half-day on Saturdays until June 29.

#### **DISCLAIMER – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

Our primary concern is with education. Traveling and conducting field research involve risk. Students interested in participating in IFR programs must weigh whether the potential risk is worth the value of education provided. While risk is inherent in everything we do, we do not take risk lightly. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it complies with all our standards and policies, including student safety.

We do our best to follow schedule and activities as outlined in this syllabus. Yet local permitting agencies, political, environmental, personal, or weather conditions may force changes. This syllabus, therefore, is only a general commitment. Students should allow flexibility and adaptability as research work is frequently subject to change.

Archaeological field work involves physical work in the outdoors. You should be aware that conditions in the field are different than those you experience in your home, dorms, or college town. This program operates in the forests of the Sierra Nevada, with typical tropical forest heat and humidity. Conditions are basic, there is no hot water, and you will be sleeping on bunk beds or field cots. There are no private rooms, but the sleeping space will be divided based on gender. Power is provided by a solar microgrid. Food must be brought in from Santa Marta so there is no choice, stores, or alternative food sources.

Research in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta requires commitment, an inquisitive mindset, and a great love of the outdoors. The program offers a unique experience that will challenge both your body and mind. This program offers students a real opportunity for a transformative experience. You will learn not only about lost civilizations and living tropical forest cultures, you will also learn much about yourself.

If you have medical concerns, please discuss them with your doctor. All other concerns may be discussed with the project director – as appropriate.

#### **PREREQUISITES**

There are no prerequisites for this course. However, due to the fact that we will be hiking and moving around in tropical forest with a very broken topography, students must be physically fit. Archaeological work at El Congo-Ciudad Antigua involves relatively strenuous physical activity, as well as exposure to the elements and insects. You will be constantly sweaty, tired, pestered by droves of mosquitoes, and occasionally drenched by thunderous rains. You will be outside your comfort zone and will have to interact with people who speak no English. Students should be mentally prepared to spend a month with limited communication with their friends and family due to limited cellular phone coverage.

#### **EQUIPMENT-TOOLKIT**

Students must bring the following as part of their personal kit:

- A clip board
- A pointed archaeology trowel, easily bought at Forestry Suppliers and other specialty hardware stores (pack in your checked luggage)
- Leather work gloves

- Hiking boots or shoes
- Rubber boots (wellies), to be bought in Santa Marta
- Sun glasses and cap or hat
- Pocketknife (pack in your checked luggage)
- Personal first aid kit
- Headlamp
- Mosquito repellent

## **GRADING**

**60%:** Participate in activities each day, including lectures, and laboratory work

**15%:** Keep a field notebook that will be evaluated at the end of the field season

**15%:** Participate in daily discussion of results

**10%:** Oral exam testing students on reading materials required for this course

## **TRAVEL & MEETING POINT**

Hold purchasing your airline ticket until six (6) weeks prior to departure date. Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and a range of other factors may require the cancelation of a field school. The IFR typically takes a close look at local conditions 6-7 weeks prior to program beginning and make Go/No Go decisions by then. This time frame still allows the purchase of discounted airline tickets while protecting students from potential loss of airline ticket costs if we decide to cancel a program.

Students arriving by air will be met at the Santa Marta airport (SMR) by staff members. Those arriving by bus from Bogotá will be given instructions on how to get to [Hotel Solymar](#) or [The Dreamer Hostel](#) in Santa Marta. You will have to fly in to Bogotá and take a connecting flight to the city of Santa Marta or fly in to Cartagena or Barranquilla and travel overland to Santa Marta. You should make travel arrangements such that you arrive in Santa Marta by Sunday June 2 at the latest.

## **VISA REQUIREMENTS**

U.S. citizens traveling to Colombia do not need a visa for a tourist stay of 90 days or less. Travelers entering Colombia are sometimes asked to present evidence of return or onward travel, usually in the form of a plane ticket. One empty page in your passport is required for entry stamp. Citizens of other countries are asked to check the Embassy of Colombia website page at their home country for specific visa requirement.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

Conditions are basic, there is no hot water, and you will be sleeping on bunk beds or field cots in a gender-separated single room structure. All meals will be communal events at the kitchen and will provide plenty of food prepared by a local cook. The daily diet is based on rice, corn cakes, manioc, potatoes, plantains, lentils, beans, meat (beef, pork, chicken and fish) and when available, vegetables and fruit juice.

Vegetarians may attend but will find that vegetable and fruit availability vary as the season progresses and we use up our store of fresh produce. Vegan, kosher, and other specialized diets are impossible to accommodate in a remote location such as this one.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

All IFR field schools begin with safety orientation. This orientation includes proper behavior at the field area, proper clothing, local cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, potential fauna and flora hazards, review of IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and review of the student Code of Conduct.

**Sunday, June 2**

5:00 p.m. Students and staff assemble in Lobby of Hotel Solymar, Santa Marta

5-6:00 p.m. Introductions, Q&A session

7:00 p.m. Group dinner

**Monday, June 3**

6:30 a.m. Group meets 4 x 4 vehicles for travel to El Congo

10:00 a.m. Group arrives at El Congo

10:00-12:00 Housekeeping and sleeping arrangements

Afternoon: Lecture “Introduction to archaeology of Northern South America I” and group tour around the site

**Tuesday, June 4**

6:00 a.m.-7:00 a.m. Breakfast

7:00 a.m.-8:00 a.m. Safety and health discussion

8:00 a.m.-12:00 a.m.

Afternoon: Lecture: “Introduction to archaeology of Northern South America II”, Lords of the Snowy Ranges research program aims, objectives, methods and timeline.

**Wednesday, June 5**

Morning: Equipment set up, check-up, and explanations (Total Stations, Prisms, Rods, Tripod set up, computers, cameras, excavation tool boxes, etc.)

Afternoon: Workgroup organization and schedule, visit to El Palmar coffee farm and sustainable agriculture research station

**Thursday, June 6**

6:00-6:45 a.m. Breakfast

7:00-1:00 p.m. Research and conservation activities, training session 1 (TS in field set-up, shot taking, attribute recording, drafting, conservation drafting and recording, etc.)

1:30-3:00 p.m. Lunch and rest break

3:00-6:00 p.m. Debriefing and discussion

6:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner

**Friday, June 7**

6:00-6:45 a.m. Breakfast

7:00-1:00 p.m. Research and conservation activities, Training Session 2 (Excavation grid set up and logics for Tairona archaeological sites, methods discussion, practical exercises. Excavation and conservation challenges in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta)

1:30-3:00 p.m. Lunch and rest break

3:00-4:00 p.m. Debriefing and discussion

6:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner

### **Saturday, June 8**

7:00 a.m. Breakfast

8:00-11:00 TS in field set-up individual practice

Free time

### **Sunday, June 9**

#### **Rest/Laundry Day**

#### **Week 2-4 Daily Schedule (Monday-Saturday June 10 thru July 1)**

6:00-6:45 a.m. Breakfast

7:00-1:00 p.m. Research or conservation activities (10:30 a.m. break)

1:30-3:00 p.m. Lunch and rest break, walk back to camp

3:00-6:00 p.m. Debriefing and discussion, labwork

6:00-7:00 p.m. Dinner

7:00-8:30 p.m. Occasional lecture by project staff

Sundays: Free time (laundry, reading, writing, swimming in the creek, additional hiking)

**Thursday June 27** Season wrap up and discussion, equipment cleaning and packing

**Friday June 28** Travel to Santa Marta

**Evening:** Team dinner in Santa Marta

**Saturday June 29** Return home or continued travel throughout Colombia or South America

#### **READINGS**

The readings listed below will be posted on-line for students to access and read in advance of the project.

Bray, Warwick. 2003. Gold, Stone and Ideology: Symbols of Power in the Tairona Tradition. In *Gold and Power in Ancient Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia*, Jeffrey Quilter and John W. Hoopes. 301-344. Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks.

Cavelier, J., Aide, T.M., Santos, C., Eusse, A.M., and Dupuy, J.M. 1998. The Savannization of Moist Forests in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. *Journal of Biogeography* 25, 5 (Sep. 1998): 901-912.

Dever, Alejandro. 2007. *Social and Economic Development of a Specialized Community in Chengue, Parque Tairona, Colombia*. PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh. Ch. 1, 2, and Conclusions.

- Edelman, Marc and Haugerud, Angelique. 2005. *The Anthropology of Development and Globalization: From Classical Political Economy to Contemporary Neoliberalism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing. Chapter 1 and Selected Chapters.
- Feilden, Bernard. 1994. Introduction to Architectural Conservation. In *Conservation of Historic Buildings*. Elsevier. U.K. Eppich, Rand (Ed). 2007. Recording, Documentation and Information Management for the Conservation of Heritage Places. The Getty Conservation Institute. Los Angeles, California.
- Giraldo, Santiago. 2010. *Lords of the Snowy Ranges: Politics, Place, and Landscape Transformation in Two Tairona Towns in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia*. Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago. Ch. 1 and 2
- 2009. *Teyuna-Ciudad Perdida Archaeological Park Guidebook*. Bogotá: Instituto Colombiano de Antropología e Historia.
- ICOMOS. 1990. Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage.
- Jokilehto, Jukka. 1999. *A History of Architectural Conservation*. Elsevier. U.K. Ch. 10.
- Krogzemis, James R. 1967. *A Historical geography of the Santa Marta Area, Colombia*. PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley.
- Langebaek, Carl. 2003. The Political Economy of Pre-Colombian Goldwork: Four Examples from Northern South America. In *Gold and Power in Ancient Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia*, Jefferey Quilter and John W. Hoopes, Eds. 245-278. Washington D.C: Dumbarton Oaks.
- Matero, F.,K, Fung., del Bono, E., Goodman, M., Kopelson, E., McVey, L., Sloop, J., Turton, C. 1998. *Archaeological Site Conservation and Management: An appraisal of recent trends*. Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites. Volume 2: 129-142. James & James, London.
- Moore, Jerry D. 2014. *A Prehistory of South America*. Boulder: University of Colorado Press. Chapters 2-4, 10.
- Renfrew, Colin and Bahn, Paul. 2004. *Archaeology Theories, Methods, and Practices*. London and New York: Thames and Hudson. Ch. 14
- Safford, Frank and Marco Palacios.2002. *Colombia: Fragmented Land, Divided Society*. Latin American Histories, Thomas E. Skidmore, ed. Ch. 1-4, 14
- Sullivan, Sharon. 1995. A Planning Model for the Management of Archaeological Sites. In De la Torre, Marta (Ed). *The Conservation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean Region*. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California.
- Uribe Tobon, Carlos Alberto. 1990. *We, the Elder Brothers: Continuity and change among the Kággabba of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia*. PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh. Ch. 1, 2, and Conclusions

#### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

- Bakewell, Peter. 1997. *A History of Latin America*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell. Ch. 1-3
- Lucas, Gavin. 2005. *The Archaeology of Time*. Themes in Archaeology, Julian Thomas, E.J. London and New York: Routledge.Ch.1-3