



BINGHAMTON
UNIVERSITY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK



ACTUNCAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, BELIZE

Course ID: ARCH 330K

May 26–June 22, 2024

Academic Credits: 8 semester

FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR(S)

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OVERVIEW

Located along the beautiful Mopan River valley, Actuncan was a major pre-Columbian Maya city. City life took place in five major public plazas delineated by monumental stone platforms, which were once the site of public administration, community rituals, and the homes of the ruling elite. Most dramatically, the southern end of the city is defined by **one of the largest pre-Columbian structures in Belize: a massive 32 m tall pyramid complex** that served as the center of ritual life at the site. Actuncan did not start as a bustling city, however. The natural ridge under the city was originally settled around 1100 B.C. as a small village and **one of the earliest permanent communities in the region**. Over the following 2000 years, the site grew from a village to a city. Around 300 B.C., the original village was entirely buried under planned rectangular plazas and newly founded civic infrastructure. For several centuries, Actuncan was the local political capital and perhaps the home of a Maya king. **How did Actuncan rulers create and maintain their political power for so long?** That's just one question we're investigating at the Actuncan Archaeological Project.

During the Classic Maya period, Actuncan's political standing changed. By 400 A.D., much of Actuncan's public architecture was burned, covered in broken pieces of ceramic and abandoned. The remaining occupants of the city were poor farmers, craftspeople, and merchants, not the ruling elites of the site's earlier glory. Actuncan was no longer a local capital, but a small village under the control of the growing capitals of nearby Buenavista del Cayo and Xunantunich. Though texts are uncommon from this section of the Mopan River valley, Classic Maya hieroglyphic inscriptions from Caracol to the South and sites in modern day Guatemala indicate that the subjugation of Actuncan under its growing neighbors resulted from the competition between the rulers of Caracol and Naranjo for control over the river trade route that passes below Actuncan.

After several centuries, Actuncan reemerged as a local community center during the 8th and 9th centuries as Maya rulers faltered across the Maya world as part of the Maya Collapse phenomenon. **How did Actuncan yet again rise to power?** This is something we think we're beginning to understand at the Actuncan Archaeological Project. Our research indicates that Actuncan forestalled the impacts of the collapse for a time by abandoning the hierarchy of Classic period Maya divine rulers. Instead, the community gathered and reformed its political institutions around collaborative decision making. Community members built a new council house to anchor this new political form and thrived for a time before the site was totally abandoned.

Since 2001, the Actuncan Archaeological Project has completed 13 research seasons at Actuncan. The project has two major research goals. First, through excavations within households and contexts of public ritual **we aim to understand the changing nature of political power** across Actuncan's 2000-year history. We now understand that early in time the site was likely controlled by ruling elites living in the site's three large urban houses who may have claimed to be kings and queens. At the end of the site's history, political power was likely located in council-based decisions. In the middle, local residents were impoverished as part of a strategy of subjugation by external powers. However, there is much we do not understand about the arrival of divine rulership at Actuncan and the move to participate in broader pan-Maya networks of power beginning with the 300 B.C. urban renewal event.

Second, through archaeological excavation and survey within Actuncan's urban core, **we are interested in investigating the everyday functioning of long occupied urban places.** We use excavation coupled with micro-archaeological forensic methods such as soil chemistry, microartifact analysis, and coring to understand the use of open public spaces, such as plazas. We also try to understand the abandonment and reuse of buildings to understand how people lived among the ruined spaces that inevitably were created in Actuncan's 2000 year history. Finally, we excavate access points and passageways to understand how people moved through the city at different times, and how the control of movement

and strategic placement of monuments and infrastructure were used as tools of rulers' authority. In all, we're interested in understanding how past people affected the spaces around them and, in turn, how spaces affected past people.

In 2024, research by the field school will focus on two new areas of data collection. Excavations will target Actuncan's *aguada* group, a monumental platform located on the edge of Actuncan's major reservoir. Within Maya sites, water was a major collectively controlled resource. During the dry season, urban reservoirs called *aguadas* provided convenient sources of water for drinking, cooking, and farming. While Actuncan's proximity to the Mopan River meant that water was not a scarce resource, the site's reservoir would have allowed for the storage of large quantities of water uphill in the site core. **The reservoir is important for understanding the nature of political power for two reasons.** First, Maya reservoirs are typically man-made structures that are often clay or plaster-lined with constructed outlets and controlled access points. As such, they are a form of public urban infrastructure that would have required community labor to build and rules controlling access and use. **Did local rulers control access to this resource or was it a commonly held good controlled collectively?** Second, water sources had cosmological significance to the Maya, and reservoirs were often the site of ritual activities. **What role did ritual play in the administration of water in the *aguada*?** Excavations will aim to understand the role the *aguada* group played in the negotiation of power relations between rulers and ruled as a key collectively-held resource and site of community ritual.

In addition to these excavations, we will begin a new pedestrian survey program to identify archaeological settlements in the modern pastures to the east of the Mopan River. Past research has largely focused on the immediate environs of Actuncan's core. This new survey effort will aim to identify the extent of hinterland settlement across the river from the site. One finding of our initial work has been that the number of households located in Actuncan's urban core is quite small. The estimated population from this number of households does not seem sufficient to have constructed architecture of the size present at Actuncan. To understand the nature of early power and authority at Actuncan, we plan to begin a wider survey effort to understand where the site's population was located and eventually follow with excavations to understand the nature of the relationship between these hinterland settlements and the rulers living in Actuncan's core.

ACADEMIC CREDIT UNITS & TRANSCRIPTS

Credit Units: Attending students will be awarded 8 semester credit units through our academic partner, Connecticut College. Connecticut College is a highly ranked liberal arts institution with a deep commitment to undergraduate education. Students will receive a letter grade for attending this field school (see assessment, below). This field school provides a minimum of 360 hours of experiential education. 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's home institution at no cost. Additional transcripts may be ordered at any time through the [National Student Clearinghouse](#).

PREREQUISITES

There are no formal prerequisites for attending this field school. Prospective students should be aware that archaeological fieldwork is a serious research endeavor and hard physical labor. Summer

temperatures in Belize are often over 95° F during the day with nearly 100% humidity and plenty of bugs. Students need to be prepared to stay focused despite a mile long hike uphill to the site and near constant physical activity squatting and digging during the workday. If you have concerns about this level of physical activity, please contact your program director or IFR before committing to the program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Our curriculum highlights the basics of archaeological investigation as applied to understanding the Prehispanic Maya people. Our learning focus is to help students make connections between the stuff we dig up and past people - in other words, how we know what we know about the past. Students will engage with different data types, interpret multiple lines of evidence, work closely with local community members, and gain field and lab experience.

This field school is geared toward students with little to no archaeological knowledge or experience and who may or may not become archaeologists themselves. Therefore, we also focus on transferable skills (.e.g, critical thinking) that can be learned through archaeological practice but can also be applied in a variety of other contexts.

Students will participate in the following research and learning activities:

- ★ **Lectures and Readings:** Scheduled time throughout the field school to discuss different archaeological topics.
- ★ **Excavation:** Conduct excavations at the site of Actuncan while documenting data appropriately.
- ★ **Survey:** Participate in site survey and mapping of Actuncan.
- ★ **Labwork:** Wash, sort, and catalog finds from excavation and survey.
- ★ **Field Trips:** Visit nearby archaeological sites that demonstrate different time periods and site structures.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students successfully completing this field school will be able to:

1. apply the basic skills of archaeological excavation, survey, lab analysis, and interpretation. (critical thinking)
2. explain the cultural history of the prehispanic Maya. (communication)
3. describe different archaeological methods and how they've been used in Mesoamerica. (communication)
4. compare characteristics of specific prehispanic Maya settlements. (critical thinking)

ASSESSMENT

20%	Pre-field school orientation and assignments
25%	Engaged participation in lectures, discussions, and field trips (including assigned reading)
25%	Active participation in field work (excavation, survey, lab)
15%	Daily journal reflecting on field activities and personal impressions

15%	Public-facing blog posts about Maya archaeology and life in the field
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COURSE SCHEDULE

All IFR field schools begin with a safety orientation. This orientation addresses local and program protocols concerning student behavior, appropriate attire, local practices and sensibilities that may be unfamiliar, potential fauna and flora hazards, IFR harassment and discrimination policies, and the student Code of Conduct.

Typical Workday

- 5:45 am Breakfast
- 6:15 am Hike to Actuncan (includes crossing a river and up hill climb)
- 6:30 am Begin excavations
- 10:00 am Morning break
- 10:15 am Resume excavations
- 12:00 pm Lunch
- 12:30 pm Resume excavations
- 2:30 pm Pack up and return to camp
- 3:00 pm Labwork
- 6:00 pm Dinner
- 7:00 pm Lecture and discussion

Schedule

Pre-field school assignments will be completed via [Perusall](#), a free online social annotation platform. Students will engage with the assigned materials while also interacting with their field school peers. The purpose of these assignments is to help students prepare for and engage with in-country programming while beginning to get to know each other. Students will receive an invite to the class Perusall prior to the field school arrival date and are expected to complete all assignments before they get on the airplane to Belize. See Required Readings for additional information.

*Please note that the exact schedule and topics may change based on factors such as weather and availability of local experts.

[calendar follows on next page]

May/June

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 26 WEEK 1----- - Students arrive at BZE - Transported to Clarissa Falls - Welcome dinner	27 Morning: Visit to Xunantunich Afternoon: Actuncan field procedures - Lecture: Introduction to the Ancient Maya ¹	28 Morning: Actuncan site tour Afternoon: Begin fieldwork - Lecture: Digging and Recording the Maya ²	29 - Excavation / Lab	30 - Excavation / Lab - Lecture: Actuncan: Urbanism and Political Change ³	31 - Excavation / Lab	Jun 1 Field Trip: Cahal Pech and San Ignacio
2 WEEK 2----- - Lab - Catch up time / rest	3 - Excavation / Lab	4 - Excavation / Lab - Lecture: Survey 101 ⁴	5 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab	6 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab - Lecture: Household Archaeology: Understanding the Maya Community ⁵	7 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab	8 Field Trip: Caracol
9 WEEK 3----- - Lab - Catch up time / rest	10 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab	11 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab - Lecture: Interpreting Activity Areas ⁶	12 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab	13 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab - Lecture: Water, Community, and Ideology among the Maya ⁷	14 - Excavation /Survey/ Lab	15 Field Trip: ATM
16 WEEK 4----- - Lab - Catch up time / rest	17 - Field/Survey/ Lab	18 - Field/Survey/ Lab - Lecture: Methods Spotlight: Ceramics ⁸	19 - Field/Survey/ Lab	20 - Backfill/wrap up - Lecture: Methods Spotlight: Bioarchaeology ⁹	21 - Backfill/wrap up -End of season celebration	22 - Students leave - <i>Optional: stay for Belize Archaeological Symposium (BAS) W-F of next week</i>

REQUIRED READINGS

PDF files of all mandatory readings will be provided to enrolled students. Students are encouraged to download and/or print readings prior to traveling. Course participants are expected to be prepared to engage the discussions led by facilitators, all of whom will be looking for compelling evidence that students have read and thought about the assigned readings prior to the scheduled day on which they are first discussed.

Time to read materials in the field is very limited. We suggest that you do as much reading as possible ahead of the field season. Please bring readings with you (either on a computer or printed) to review prior to lectures.

Note: Pre-field reading and materials associated with #1-3 are assigned to be completed via Perusall in advance of your arrival to Belize.

Pre-field reading:

- Fagan, Brian, and Nadia Durrani. 2016. Fossils, Cities, and Civilizations: The Birth of a Science. In *Archaeology: a brief introduction*, 12th edition, pp. 1-28. London: Routledge.

The numbers below correspond with the superscript numbers on the schedule.

1. Topic: Introduction to the Ancient Maya
 - a. Joyce, Rosemary A. 2021. Mesoamerica: From Culture Area to Networks of Power. In *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Theory and Practice*, 2nd edition, edited by Julia A. Hendon, Lisa Overholtzer, and Rosemary A. Joyce, pp. 1-31. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
 - b. Ashmore, Wendy, and Cynthia Robin. 2021. Inseparable Entities: Classic Maya Landscapes and Settlements in *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Theory and Practice*, 2nd edition, edited by Julia A. Hendon, Lisa Overholtzer, and Rosemary A. Joyce, pp.179-201. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing
2. Topic: Digging and Recording the Maya
 - a. Fagan, Brian, and Nadia Durrani. 2016. Excavation. In *Archaeology: a brief introduction*, 12th edition, pp. 155-183. London: Routledge.
 - b. Fagan, Brian, and Nadia Durrani. 2016. Space and Time. In *Archaeology: a brief introduction*, 12th edition, pp. 100-126. London: Routledge.
 - c. PaloAltoBattlefieldNPS. 2020. [Archeology Stratigraphy, Context, and Association](#) [Video]. YouTube. 5 min, 7 sec.
3. Topic: Urbanism and Political Change
 - a. Fulton, Kara A., and David W. Mixter. 2022. The Maya Domestic Landscape and Household Resilience at Actuncan, Belize: A Reconstruction and Modern Implications. In *Palaeolandscapes in Archaeology: Lessons for the Past and Future*, edited by Mike T. Carson, pp. 156–191. London: Routledge.
4. Topic: Survey 101
 - a. Fagan, Brian, and Nadia Durrani. 2016. They Sought It Here, They Sought It There: The Process of Research and Finding Archaeological Sites. In *Archaeology: a brief introduction*, 12th edition, pp. 127-154. London: Routledge.
5. Topic: Household Archaeology: Understanding the Maya Community
 - a. Fulton, Kara A. 2019. Community Identity and Shared Practice at Actuncan, Belize. *Latin American Antiquity* 30(2):266-288.
6. Topic: Interpreting Activity Areas
 - a. Wells, E. Christian, Richard E. Terry. 2007. Introduction. Advances in Geoarchaeological Approaches to Anthrosol Chemistry, Part II: Activity Area Analysis, special issue of *Geoarchaeology: An International Journal* 22(4):387-390.
 - b. Holliday, Vance T. 2004. Human Impacts on Soils. In *Soils in Archaeological Research*, pp. 290-337. New York: Oxford University Press.

7. Topic: Water, Community, and Ideology among the Maya
 - a. Lucero, Lisa J. 2018. A Cosmology of Conservation in the Ancient Maya World. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 74(3):327–359.
 - b. Davis-Salazar, Karla L. 2003. Late Classic Maya Water Management and Community Organization at Copan, Honduras. *Latin American Antiquity* 14(3):275–299.
8. Topic: Methods Spotlight: Ceramics
 - a. LeCount, Lisa J. 2001. Like Water for Chocolate: Feasting and Political Ritual among the Late Classic Maya at Xunantunich, Belize. *American Anthropologist* 103(4):935-953.
9. Topic: Methods Spotlight: Bioarchaeology
 - a. Freiwald, Carolyn, Anna Novotny, and Kirsten Green Mink. 2019. Mobility among the Maya of the Belize Valley. *Research Reports in Belize Archaeology* 16:91–100.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

This list contains major publications about Actuncan as well as thematic readings that relate to the 2024 research questions.

Introductions to the Maya and Mesoamerica

Coe, Michael D., and Stephen D. Houston. 2015 *The Maya*. 9th edition. Ancient peoples and places. Thames and Hudson, New York.

Sharer, Robert J. and Loa P. Traxler. 2006. *The Ancient Maya*. 6th ed. Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif.

Toby Evans, Susan. 2013. *Ancient Mexico and Central America: Archaeology and Culture History*. 3rd ed. Thames & Hudson.

Actuncan

LeCount, Lisa J., John H. Blitz, and Jonathan W. Tidwell. 2022. Ancient Maya Embedded Economies and Changing Ground Stone Densities in Households at Actuncan, Belize. *Latin American Antiquity* 33(3), 641-647.

LeCount, Lisa J., Chester P. Walker, John H. Blitz, and Ted C. Nelson. 2019. Land Tenure Systems at the Ancient Maya Site of Actuncan, Belize. *Latin American Antiquity* 30(2):245–265.

LeCount, Lisa J., E. Christian Wells, Thomas R. Jamison, and David W. Mixer. 2016. Geochemical characterization of inorganic residues on plaster floors from the palace complex at Actuncan, Belize. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports* 5:453–464.

Mixer, David W. 2017. Collective Remembering in Archaeology: A Relational Approach to Ancient Maya Memory. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24(1):261–302.

Mixer, David W. 2020. Community Resilience and Urban Planning during the Ninth-Century Maya Collapse: A Case Study from Actuncan, Belize. *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 30(2):219–237.

Mixer, David W. 2022. Building Ritual Space at Post-Royal Actuncan, Belize. *The Mayanist* 4(1):51–76.

Simova, Borislava S., E. Christian Wells, David W. Mixer, and Lisa J. LeCount. 2018. Exploring changes in activities in Maya E-Groups: archaeological and geochemical analysis of E-Group plaster floors at Actuncan, Belize. *Research Reports in Belizean Archaeology* 15:27–37.

Maya and Water

Finamore, Daniel and Stephen D. Houston (eds.). 2010. *Fiery Pool and Mythic Maya Sea*. Peabody Essex Museum and Yale University Press, Essex, Massachusetts and New Haven.

Lucero, Lisa J. 1999. Water Control and Maya Politics in the Southern Maya Lowlands. *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 9(1):35–49.

Lucero, Lisa J. and Barbara W. Fash (eds.). 2006. *Precolumbian Water Management: Ideology, Ritual, and Power*. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Scarborough, Vernon L. 1998. Ecology and Ritual: Water Management and the Maya. *Latin American Antiquity* 9(2): 135–159.

Scarborough, Vernon L. 2003. *Flow of Power: Ancient Water Systems and Landscapes*. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Scarborough, Vernon L., Nicholas P. Dunning, Kenneth B. Tankersley, Christopher Carr, Eric Weaver, Liwy Grazioso, Brian Lane, John G. Jones, Palma Buttles, Fred Valdez, and David L. Lentz. 2012. Water and sustainable land use at the ancient tropical city of Tikal, Guatemala. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(31):12408–12413.

PART II: TRAVEL, SAFETY & LOGISTICS

NOTICE OF INHERENT RISK

Traveling and conducting field research can involve risk. The IFR engages in intensive review of each field school location and programming prior to approval. Once a program is accepted, the IFR reviews each program annually to make sure it still complies with all our standards and policies, including those pertaining to student safety. Participants should also take every reasonable step to reduce risk while on IFR programs, including following the safety advice and guidelines of your program director, being alert to your surroundings and conditions, letting someone know where you will be at all times, and assessing your personal security.

The IFR does not provide trip or travel cancellation insurance. We strongly encourage participants to consider purchasing this insurance, as unexpected events may prevent your participation or cause the program to be canceled. Insurance is a relatively small cost to protect your educational investment in an IFR program. When comparing trip cancellation insurance policies, make sure the policy covers the cost of both airfare and tuition.

We do our best to follow a schedule of activities, methods training, and programming as outlined in this syllabus. However, this schedule can be easily disrupted by unforeseen circumstances, including weather, revisions by local permitting agencies, or conditions onsite. While this schedule represents the intentions of the program, adaptability is an intrinsic part of all field research, and necessary alterations to the schedule may happen at any time.

If you have any medical concerns, please consult with your doctor. For all other concerns, please consult with the program director and staff.

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

Western Belize is a sub-tropical rain forest ecosystem that is now largely divided into pastures, traditional subsistence milpa farms, and villages. Temperatures range from nearly 100° F during the day into the 60s at night. To get to the excavation site, we walk through tall, sharp cow grass, and some excavations may be under the forest canopy. Though we do erect tarps as sunshades, you should bring plenty of sunscreen and along with light long pants and long sleeves. Though early in the field season it may be dry, the seasonal rains will likely arrive by the end of the season. While these bring some respite from the heat, they also bring high humidity levels and mosquitos. Ticks are also common. We will continue to work in light rain, so please bring light rain gear. You will also want to pack your favorite bug repellent. High concentration DEET repellent is strongly recommended. Though you may not need it, a light jacket is recommended in case we have cool evenings. You will want several water bottles to carry water to site for the day. The directors usually carry 3 L with them each day.

Field conditions are not too difficult as archaeological projects go. To get to the site, you will need to cross the Mopan River on a hand-pulled raft and then walk uphill for 1 mile through a cow pasture. You may need to cross barbed wire fences by bending over between the wire strands. Students should be ready to hike to the site carrying research equipment, work all day, and hike back with artifacts they recover at the end of the day. You will need a sturdy backpack for carrying equipment and water. Sturdy boots are necessary for this work. We strongly recommend investing in waterproof options as the trail sometimes becomes thickly muddy.

LOCAL PROTOCOLS, REGULATIONS, & EXPECTATIONS

The local community is very familiar and informed about archaeology. Western Belize has been a site of extensive archaeological research by foreigners for well over a century. Now Belize has its own developed heritage infrastructure led by the Belizean Institute of Archaeology and archaeology is a major local economic driver. Tourism is the largest sector of the Belizean economy, and that often includes people working as tour guides, selling souvenirs, serving food to tourists, and running hospitality businesses. Additionally, many community members work seasonally for local archaeology projects.

You will work directly with Belizeans in the field and live in a Belizean-owned resort. We will also visit local towns on the weekend. Belizeans tend to be kind and welcoming people. You will find them to be friendly, thoughtful, and easy to talk to. Most speak English well. However, people in the region where you will be tend to speak Spanish at home and some, especially elderly individuals, may only speak Spanish. If you know some Spanish, they tend to be willing to let you practice, though they may make fun of you a bit. It is important that you are kind and respectful at all times.

That said, it is important to remember that you are traveling in a foreign country which has different norms and expectations. Local community members may say things that shock you. It is also important to remember to be aware of your surroundings at all times. Belize is fairly safe, but many foreigners feel a false sense of security in tourist towns like San Ignacio. The same risks that you weigh walking around cities at night in your hometown are at play in Belize with the added risk that your lack of understanding of local norms makes miscommunication all too easy.

VISA REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the United States require a valid passport to enter Belize. A 30-day travel Visa is typically included in your flight. If you plan to stay longer than 30 days (the field school is 28 days), then you must visit a local immigration office prior to departure to pay for a visa extension. Additional information can be found in the [U.S. Dept. of State Belize International Travel Information website](#).

Citizens not from the USA are asked to check the embassy website page at their home country for specific visa requirements.

STUDENT HEALTH

An IFR field school is designed to provide safe, positive, and constructive experiences for participating communities, students, and researchers. We are committed to protocols and practices that support the health and well-being of all involved in our field school projects, including the members of the community in which these projects take place.

We recommend that students adopt best-practices for arriving in a good state of health to protect themselves and their peers' readiness to set about the work of the field school. A thriving field camp environment is a constant exchange of energy, patience, effort, respect, and service. Arriving healthy is every student's first act of service — their first opportunity to behave in a way that respects the safety and wellness of one another.

We suggest you discuss appropriate vaccines and other medical precautions with a travel doctor prior to departure. Be sure you bring all medications you may need during your time with you to Belize.

IFR programs follow the health requirements and guidelines of local health authorities. You may also wish to consult recommendations from the US Centers for Disease Control at: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

Natural disasters, political changes, weather conditions and various other factors may force the cancellation or alteration of a field school. IFR recommends students only purchase airline tickets that are fully refundable and consider travel insurance in case a program or travel plans must change for any reason. General information for this program is below, but keep in mind we will discuss any updated travel information and regulations during the required program orientation, which could affect travel plans.

Students will be met by project representatives at the Philip S.W. Goldson International Airport in Belize (airport code: BZE) on Sunday, May 26, 2024. Students must inform the project directors of their arrival time and flight number before the project. Because the airport is a 2 hour drive from Clarissa Falls Resort where we stay, we will wait until all students have arrived to drive back to camp together by car or van. If you are coming overland or would like to arrange your own transportation to site, please contact the directors as soon as possible. If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text, or email the field school director immediately. A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

Belize no longer has any COVID-related entry requirements.

Once at Clarissa Falls Resort, travel to and from the excavation field site is on foot. Occasional outings from Clarissa Falls to nearby towns or archaeological sites will use project vehicles, tour operator vehicles, or local badged taxis. Tours of Caracol, in the Belize Mountain Pine Ridge, and Actun Tunichil Muknal caves will be coordinated by a local tour company and use their vehicles.

If you missed your connection or your flight is delayed, please call, text or email the field school director immediately. A local emergency mobile phone number will be provided to all enrolled students.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Our project has the great fortune of using Clarissa Falls Resort in Callar Creek, Belize as our base of operations. This well regarded eco-resort (check out the reviews on your favorite travel site!), provides a lovely setting among tropical flowering plants and fruit trees. You will have plenty of opportunity to spend time swinging in the resort's many hammocks or lounging by the riverside in your time off work.

Perhaps the greatest perk of this arrangement is the food. Our meals are served in the resort's restaurant, and Chena Galvez is a legendary cook in the region. Each day, she and her staff will prepare local favorites such as stewed chicken, beans and rice, fried plantains, and fresh fruit juice for you to enjoy. Breakfast and dinner are served family style at a single long table, where we will get a chance to get to know each other over Chena's fabulous food. If you have dietary restrictions, please let the project directors know. Chena is used to dealing with a wide range of dietary requirements. All food is prepared in a professional kitchen that maintains the highest hygiene standards.

The restaurant is one of two main collective spaces for the program. The other is our laboratory. In 2010, the project constructed an enormous open air thatch-roofed palapa. The back of the palapa is enclosed and contains storage and analysis space that can be locked. But most of the space is a wide open concrete slab where you can sit in the shade and feel the cool breeze drift over the land during the

hottest part of the day. When it is not in use for lab work or lectures, this space will be available for informal social gatherings.

You will be housed in dorm-style accommodations within one of Clarissa Falls' charming thatch-roof cottages. Each individual will be provided a bed with a mattress, pillows, sheets, and blankets. Each room contains rotating fans to help move some air during hot nights. Students will be in rooms of between 3-6 individuals depending on final enrollment numbers and which spaces are available. Each room has a private bathroom with hot water showers, which is actually quite a luxury for a Latin American archaeology project. Though these accommodations may sound spartan, the space is quite comfortable. Resort staff will clean your rooms weekly, but you will be provided with supplies to provide maintenance cleaning in between. If you have concerns in advance about accommodations, please reach out to the project directors. We cannot promise individualized solutions, but we can work with Clarissa Falls to see what might be possible.

We will provide supplies for students who want to try doing their laundry by hand. For those who are less ambitious, Clarissa Falls Resort provides a laundry service for a small fee.

In a tropical environment, constant cleaning is required or else dirt, grime, and mildew accumulate rapidly. Many people are still concerned about COVID-19 as well. Common spaces are cleaned regularly, and disinfecting supplies will be provided to wipe down surfaces before and after use.

EQUIPMENT LIST

Required field equipment

Most of these items can be found at your local hardware store, except the pointing trowel, which may require a special order from a specialty supplier such as Forestry Suppliers. 4½ inch

pointing **trowel** (Marshalltown brand is highly recommended)

metric measuring tape (at least 5 m)

Ruler with metric markings (clear rulers work best!)

Black or blue ink **pens** (3-4)

Mechanical **pencils** (4-5)

A good **eraser**

Fine and Extra-fine **sharpies** (2 of each)

Line Level

One 250-500 ft. roll of **nylon mason's line** (be sure it is nylon not cotton!)

Dustpan and a corn straw **whisk broom**

Small personal **first aid kit**

Leather-palm **work gloves**

Daypack-sized **Backpack (CRITICAL)** - large and durable. Must carry the above items plus a clipboard with papers, your lunch, and 3 liters of water.

Leak-proof **water bottles (CRITICAL)** - at least 3 liters of total water carrying capacity. You need to carry your water to the site each day.

Optional Gear - *these items are not required!*

Plumb bob

Clipboard - basic particle board ones work, or, better, one that holds papers

Orienteering compass

Wooden pottery tools (for excavating fragile finds)

Small paint brushes

Small hand pick

Extra line levels

2 m folding metric ruler (wood or plastic)

Camera

A rectangular tupperware for your lunch (burrito length! - there are ants, and they love your lunch)

Pocket knife (must be in your checked luggage!)

Clothing (assuming laundry once per week)

Field Clothing

Hiking Boots (CRITICAL) - preferably waterproof

Lightweight long **field pants** (NOT jeans - technical fabric is best, but old chinos work 3-5)

Belt

Lightweight long-sleeve **field shirts** (button down shirts are recommended - 5-6)

Some people like to wear tank tops or **t-shirts** under their long-sleeved shirts

Hat for sun protection. Many people like wide-brims.

Field **socks** (comfy with your boots - 7-8 technical fabric recommended)

Underwear/bras/sports bras - (for at least 8 days, though I recommend spares)

Bandana if you like them. Good for wiping sweat and keeping writing surfaces dry!

Raincoat or poncho- lightweight

Fishing shirts/pants make excellent field clothes, but so do lightweight pants/button downs picked up on the cheap at Goodwill!

After work clothing

3-4 changes of clothes, such as shorts, skirts/dresses, light tops, sandals, tennis shoes, etc.

Swimsuit

Watershoes for ATM cave - requires closed toed shoes that can get wet, old sneakers work

One or two nicer outfits for wearing to town - think tropical nice

A light **sweater/jacket** - you may not wear it, but evenings can get chilly!

Personal Care items

Insect repellent (CRITICAL) Bring at least 30% DEET. I recommend two large cans

Sunscreen (CRITICAL) SPF 30 or higher

Medication - any over the counter meds that you may need, many are difficult to acquire in Belize.

Prescription Medications - bring at least a 4-week supply. Bring your written prescription.

Toothbrush/paste

Comb/hairbrush (do not bring hair dryers, straighteners, curling irons - it is too hot, and your rooms may not have enough electrical capacity for them)

Glasses/contact lenses and solutions - bring backups! And bring glasses if you wear contacts

Shampoo, conditioner.

Your room is supplied with basic bar soap, if you prefer anything else, bring it.

Any **other toiletry items** that you can't live without. You can get toiletry items in Belize, but it may not be easy to find specifically what you want.

*NOTE: ** A few precautionary medications you should consider bringing in small quantities: Benadryl, Pepto Bismol tablets, Imodium, Pain killers (Advil, Tylenol, etc.), Cortizone cream, Antibacterial cream, Allergy pills, Wound/cut cleaner (alcohol pads are good), and Band-aids.*

Other Items

Sunglasses

Flashlight/**headlamp** (to get around camp at night!)

Computer, tablet, or other device that you can use to read and write project assignments (wifi is available in public spaces in camp!)

Power cords for any electronics you bring! (Belize has 110V electricity with the same style sockets as the US)

Laundry Bag

Optional

Mosquito Net (Recommended)

Music player, small portable speaker

Books or e-reader

Powdered Gatorade or similar (hard to find in Belize)

Granola bars or other small, portable, individually wrapped snacks you can't live without

Clarissa falls supplies towels and bedding, but you have special textile needs, bring what you need.