

**2016 Field School in Maya Archaeology  
Texas Tech University**

***Chan Chich: 2016 Is Our Half-K'atun Jubilee!***

**May 24 to June 27, 2015**

**Preliminary Information**

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**For The Most Recent Information and to Apply Please Visit:**

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/sasw/Anthropology/Belize.php>

**Background on the Program**

In 2016, the Field School in Maya Archaeology will be held at Chan Chich, Belize in association with the Chan Chich Archaeological Project (CCAP). The CCAP represents a truly special opportunity for college students to participate in a significant research project, while receiving instruction in archaeological field and laboratory methods. Rather than a typical study abroad trip, the Field School in Maya Archaeology and the CCAP represent Research Abroad! The field school will be 34 nights long. Students will have the opportunity to learn how to excavate, how to draw profiles and plan maps, how to record archaeological data, and how to process and analyze artifacts in the lab. The program is limited to 12 students.

**About Chan Chich**

Chan Chich is a medium-sized Maya city in northwestern Belize, very near the border with Guatemala. The area was first settled as a small village during the Middle Preclassic period (1000 to 250 BC) and occupied until the Terminal Classic period, ca. AD 850). Most of the visible architecture dates to the Late Classic period (AD 600–850). In the late 1980s, Gallon Jug Ranch was established on 130,000 acres of jungle, including the site of Chan Chich. Chan Chich Lodge was built in the Main Plaza at the site shortly after that. While some may see that as a negative impact to the ruins, the construction of the lodge and the return of legitimate economic activity to the area put an end to the illegal looting that had been going on at Chan Chich and the nearby archaeological sites for several years.

For the latest information on the CCAP and to learn more about the site, please visit:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/sasw/Research/CCAP.php>



*Main road entering Chan Chich Lodge and the main plaza of the archaeological site.*

### **Chan Chich Archaeological Project Research Plans**

Preliminary plans for the 2015 season call for students to work at two areas of Chan Chich and to investigate a nearby Colonial period site.

***Research at Chan Chich:*** The research at Chan Chich will take place in the Upper Plaza and at the Norman's Temple complex. In the Upper Plaza, we will focus excavations on a buried Late Preclassic platform and continue to refine the chronological sequence by conducting new excavations in the plaza itself. At Norman's Temple, we will be looking for evidence of the site's abandonment and testing the hypothesis that a wall around the courtyard is a defensive feature.

***Colonial Site:*** Concurrently, we also investigate the late 19th and early 20th century Maya village of Kaxil Unic, which is a 2-mile walk from Chan Chich. The village was home to a group of Maya displaced by the Caste War in Mexico in the late 19th century.

### **Archaeology is Hard Work!**

Archaeology is fun and exciting, but it is also physically challenging work in difficult conditions. Survey involves hiking through the forest, wearing snake guards, and carrying a heavy backpack. Excavations involve lifting heavy objects, as well as using picks and shovels. Everything we do is in a tropical climate with high heat (often over 90 degrees) and high humidity (often over 70 percent). We sometimes have to work in the sun and

other times in the rain. There are bugs, snakes, bats, scorpions, and poisonous plants.

### **To Apply**

If you want to participate on the Field School in Maya Archaeology, you must first complete the application form, which is available on the web page listed above. Students who are accepted to the program will then need to complete an online application form at the Study Abroad website.

Applying early greatly helps your chances of getting a slot, and there only 12 slots to go around.

***First Round of Applications Reviewed:*** December 11, 2015 (with notification by December 22, 2014)

***Final Round of Applications Reviewed:*** February 5, 2016 (with notification by February 8, 2016). If you miss the deadline, send us an email to inquire about available slots or getting onto the waitlist.

All applications for the program go through a review process. Acceptance to a study abroad program is based on this review, fulfillment of GPA and academic requirements, and approval by the program sponsor.

### Why Choose This Field School?

There are plenty of field schools each summer in Belize, and they all offer unique experiences. It is up to each student to find the program that best fits his or her interests and expectations. When considering different programs, please keep in mind these features of the FSMA at Chan Chich:

- **Experience:** The 2016 season will be the tenth consecutive summer for the FSMA and the tenth season of the CCAP. The program director, Dr. Brett A. Houk, has directed 14 summer field schools and has over 22 years of archaeological experience in northwestern Belize. The project staff includes graduate students with up to six seasons each of experience in Belize.
- **Group Size:** The FSMA is limited to 12 first-time students, one or two second-year students, and a small professional staff. The total group size will be 20 people. This means students get individual attention from the staff and project director.
- **Research:** Students on the FSMA actively contribute to significant and cutting-edge research on the Maya. The CCAP uses a digital database system and employs Structure from Motion mapping techniques, which the students will get to observe and try. In 2016, research will contribute to international presentations and publications.
- **Safety:** Chan Chich Lodge is remote, but that is how we like it! Many field schools stay in or near modern towns, but such situations expose students to an entirely different array of dangers (from crime, traffic, unclean water, improperly handled food, etc.). Many projects have to drive on public streets to get to their excavation site each day, but our ruins are literally right outside the door. We can safely walk to work. The lodge offers a crime-free setting, purified drinking water, and professionally prepared meals.
- **Comfort:** Chan Chich Lodge offers 24-hour electricity, hot and cold water, purified drinking water, cell phone coverage, and wifi (slow and only most of the time). Our students have access to a swimming pool, hot tub, and cozy bar. The food is exceptional, and the lodge can accommodate vegetarians and people with celiac disease.
- **Chan Chich Lodge:** The real selling point for the project is the lodge. The staff includes the friendliest people you will meet anywhere, and the facilities are top-notch. The lodge is so special that it is listed in the book *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*.

### Estimated Cost

The cost of the program is estimated as follows:

Fee	34-Night Session (6 Hours Credit)
Estimated Study Abroad Program Fee†	\$3,100
Tuition and Fees*, estimated	\$1,850
Airfare, estimated	\$800
Study Abroad Application Fee	\$200
Insurance	\$40
Spending money, estimated	\$300
<b>Total estimated cost including tuition</b>	<b>\$6,290</b>

The Study Abroad program cost includes the following:

- All student transportation in Belize once the project begins until it ends
- Two day trips to visit a restored archaeological site, admission fee included
- Lodging at Chan Chich Lodge (students will share a cabana with other students)
- Three meals/day while at the lodge
- Laundry, done once per week by the lodge staff

†The Program Fee is the same price as 2015, but the program is six nights longer. We are able to do this despite rising food costs at Chan Chich Lodge thanks to an external grant.

\*Tuition rates for the summer session have not been published, but are estimated based on last summer. The estimate is for 6 hours of in-state tuition and fees. More information about taking the course for credit is included below.

**Passport Information:** If you don't already have one, you should apply for a passport immediately. THERE ARE CURRENTLY SIGNIFICANT DELAYS IN PROCESSING PASSPORT APPLICATIONS, SO PLEASE APPLY FOR ONE NOW JUST IN CASE YOU DECIDE TO GO ON THE TRIP. The process is not difficult. Visit the US Department of State website for more information. You will need two passport photos of yourself, and you can get those taken at the International Culture Center (ICC) here at Texas Tech for only \$6. You will need to take your application and photos to the new passport office on campus at the ICC.

**Insurance Information:** More information about insurance is available from Study Abroad.





*The screened pool at Chan Chich Lodge.*

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**Insurance Information:** More information about insurance is available from Study Abroad.

### **Receiving Credit for the Program**

Students attending Texas Tech or another university in Texas are required to enroll in ANTH 4642, Field Archaeology, for the 34-day session.

Students at other universities in Texas can easily be admitted to Texas Tech for the summer and enroll in the course. Students at universities outside of Texas may speak with their academic advisor about enrolling in a comparable course at their home institution to receive credit, but are encouraged to enroll at Texas Tech. In reviewing applications, preference is given to applicants who plan to enroll for credit at Texas Tech.

### **Description of Course Objectives (ANTH 4642)**

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. Students will receive instruction in archaeological excavations, plan mapping/profiling excavation units, survey, and basic field laboratory procedures. In addition, students will have the opportunity to learn a great deal about the ancient Maya through lectures, readings, and discussions.

### ***Contents of the Course***

The grade in this course will be determined by each student's demonstrated ability to perform basic and more advanced procedures in four facets of archeological fieldwork, including mapping/profiling, excavation, survey, and laboratory processing. A portion of the grade will be based on the quality of field notes the students maintain in a daily journal, as well as their participation and overall conduct.

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.

Excavation evaluation will focus on the student's ability to lay out an excavation unit, dig and screen soil 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 track of these things, as well as demonstrate a conceptual understanding of the recording system employed by the project. This will be covered in lectures and demonstrations.

Survey involves walking cut transect lines through the jungle looking for unrecorded archaeological sites. Students will be taught how to recognize cultural features and ruins and how to document newly discovered archaeological sites. Each student will be assessed on their ability to recognize features on the landscape, map them accurately, and record appropriate descriptive and location information.

Artifact processing and analysis (lab) 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 Carbon 14 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, soil cores, photography, drawing, etc.).

The student daily journal will consist of field notes, which will detail the techniques used and observations about the artifacts and features encountered. Students may also ask questions in their notes about why things are being done the way they are; they are also encouraged to make their own interpretations. As archaeological excavation is a destructive process, the accurate recording of fieldwork is an essential part of this field school.

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

The course will also include approximately 2 hours of lecture per week. These lectures will take place in the evenings after dinner and will be presented by the program director, project staff, or guests (other archaeological projects will be operating about an hour north of Chan Chich). The course will also include assigned readings from a reader as well as a textbook (see syllabus). Student comprehension of readings, field trips, and lectures will be assessed in a written exam.

Grading breakdown for ANTH 4642 is as follows:

Mapping/Profiling:	10%	A = 90-100%
Excavation/Recording:	25%	B = 80-99%
Lab:	10%	C = 70-79%
Journal/Notes:	10%	D = 60-69%
Conduct/Participation:	25%	F = <59%
Exam	20%	



*The Looter's Trench bar at Chan Chich Lodge.*

### **Description of the Lodge and Schedule**

Students will be housed in the "casitas" and cabanas at Chan Chich Lodge, a remote jungle resort. More information about the lodge is available on their web site:



www.chanchich.com. The lodge has a restaurant, bar, swimming pool, wireless internet, 24-hour electricity, and cell phone coverage for AT&T phones. There is no TV at the lodge.

The program includes three meals per day while at the lodge, and there is a full-service bar. Students will be able to use the swimming pool and walking trails. Other activities, including horseback riding, guided jungle tours, mountain bike riding, canoeing, etc. can be arranged through the lodge, but are not included in the cost of the program.

***A Typical Field Day (Tentative Schedule)***

6:30	Breakfast
7:00	Depart for field (with lunch if on the Colonial crew)
12:00 to 12:30	Lunch
3:30	End of field or lab work for the day
6:30	Dinner
7:30	Lectures (when scheduled), otherwise evening free
9:30	Quiet time
10:00	Lights out* (bar and pool closed to students; no talking in lodge)

\*The bar closes at 10:00 and, because we are sharing the lodge with regular guests (who are paying a LOT more to be there), our group will have lights out at 10:00 each night. Most guests at the lodge are there for the bird watching and the solitude offered by the lodge's location. Complaints by paying guests about student behavior affect the ability of the project to continue and will be taken very seriously. Complaints will directly affect the conduct/participation portion of the offending student(s) grade.

### **Tentative Program Schedule**

- May 24** You are responsible for your own travel to and from Belize. You must be at the airport in Belize City on this date Group assembles at Goldson International Airport (Belize City). Once everyone has arrived, we will travel by van to Chan Chich Lodge (3 hour ride).
- May 25 Orientation day with tour of Chan Chich.
- May 26 First day in the field (see Typical Field Day schedule above).
- May 27–June 3 Regular field and lab schedule.
- June 4 Overnight trip to Caracol.
- June 5 Caracol site visit.
- June 6–10 Regular field and lab schedule.
- June 11 Half-day in the field, with afternoon free.
- June 12 Day off for everyone. Optional trips arranged through CCL.
- June 13–17 Regular field and lab schedule.
- June 18 Half-day in the field, with afternoon free.
- June 19 Day off for everyone. Optional trips arranged through CCL.
- June 20–23 Regular field and lab schedule.
- June 24–25 Backfilling.
- June 26 Pack for return home
- June 27** Transportation to Belize City airport for departure to US or other destinations.