



Winter Term in Mexico 2006-07

This will be a thirteen week program starting in the second week of December and continuing through the first week in March. We will begin with three weeks of Spanish language study, immersion and orientation activities in Merida and surrounding areas. This will be followed by three weeks of classes and field trips in the areas in and around Merida in the Yucatan during which students will continue to do homestays with families. The remainder of the program will be based in Oaxaca. It will include three weeks of classes and field trips developed in collaboration with La Universidad de la Tierra, two weeks of work on independent student projects, and a final week of project presentations.

The central goal of the program is to prepare students so that they can continue in study and work in Latin America on their own -- pursuing subsequent internships, independent projects, university studies, and senior projects.

There will be a variety of field trip activities, some in small groups and some with the class as a whole, some for an afternoon and some for several days. Learning to work in Spanish will be stressed. Courses will intersect and be integrated in a variety of ways in field trips as well as theoretical studies.

Prerequisites include one of COA's fall courses in Spanish designed to prepare students for learning in the Yucatan and the fall orientation program which will consist of weekly meetings with reading and written homework assignments. These fall orientation meetings will count for a significant portion of the final grade in all three Winter Term courses.

As part of the program, COA instructors will offer the following courses, all of which are required, along with a Spanish course which will be offered in the winter term by a professor from Mexico:

Gray Cox "Doing Human Ecology in Cross-cultural Settings: The Yucatan" -- In this course students develop key skills needed to pursue learning, research and action for human ecological projects in cross-cultural settings. These include skills in ethnographic observation, historical interpretation, social analysis, language, communication, problem solving, negotiation, and project planning and implementation. In practicing these skills students will learn substantial bodies of information about the context of issues in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula and the region of Oaxaca and apply this information and their skills in a major independent project that demonstrates their abilities to pursue subsequent learning, research and action in Latin America on their own. Course activities will provide opportunities to make extensive and increasing use of Spanish skills. Evaluation will be based on student performance of a variety of short writing assignments and field exercises.



Suzanne Morse: "Agriculture, Comida and Community in Yucatan and Oaxaca". In this



course we will explore through both theory and practice the nature of Maya agriculture in Yucatan and Zapotec agriculture of Oaxaca, a mountainous region celebrated for its diversity of landscape, people and plants. In preparation for the course, we will begin by reading ZAPOTEC SCIENCE as a way to explore the premise that all human cultures need and create a coherent story that emerges from their relationships within particular landscapes. In each cosmology there are foundational assumptions or concepts, which

weave together magic, religion and science. In Zapotec agriculture, these include household and ecological maintenance, reciprocity, food quality, non-human and super-human actors, physical work, and hot/cold qualities of plants. We will compare these practices of agriculture with science-based concepts of conventional and sustainable agriculture. One of the central experiences in this course will be to live with families whose lives flourish in a form of local subsistence and diverge markedly from western forms of capitalist agriculture. Evaluations will be based upon class participation, homework, a midterm exam and the effective incorporation of the course material into an independent and interdisciplinary final project. ES



Student Costs:

Airfare = approximately \$720, depending on where you fly from; room and board and local costs for fourteen weeks = \$2,570, program fee = \$1,350; incidental expenses and pocket money vary depending on the student.

Note that you can travel from home directly to our common point in Huston or Miami to begin the term and so, depending on where you live, the extra cost incurred for airfare may vary - and may be less than or little more than you would spend anyway to come to COA. Also note that the room and board is the amount normally set for 10 weeks at COA but will cover costs for the additional time in December in which you are in Mexico. Note also that there are no other lab or book fees for the program apart from the program fee.

The intent of the College is to make this program accessible to any student. If you can afford to come to COA you should be able to afford this program. If for some reason you find peculiar difficulty in doing so, please talk to us so that we can understand why and help you work something else. We are very committed to making it possible for any one who wants to go to be able to do so.

A presentation explaining the program will be offered at 2:30 pm on Wednesday, May 3.

Interested students should speak to the instructors for further questions. Email versions of the application will be emailed to all students. They are due in completed form by May 12th. Interviews will be made in the following week and acceptances and a waiting list, if any, will be decided as quickly as possible. If accepted into the program, students will have to make a non-refundable deposit of \$200 by May 31st.

