



UTTyler
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER

SYLLABUS

ANTHROPOLOGY 4361

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD METHODS

Summer 2026

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CAS 136



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Course Description

Archaeology is the branch of anthropology that deals with peoples of the past. This course deals with the techniques of data collection and processing that are applied in archaeological field and laboratory situations. Students will participate in an archaeological field project with associated laboratory operations.

The location of the course in 2026 is at the Maya Research Program's excavations at the site of Blue Creek in Belize. Excavations of Blue Creek have been sponsored annually since 1992 by MRP who also provides housing, meals, transportation, laboratory facilities and this course opportunity through a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Texas at Tyler. Situated in a beautiful, rural area of the country of Belize, MRP's Blue Creek Research Station offers a safe, stable, but rustic environment in which to conduct research and educational programs. For details regarding living conditions, please see the current MRP *Participant Guide*.

Current research is conducted by a multi-institutional, multi-national group of scholars and is aimed at understanding the dynamics and demise of the ancient Maya civilization from 600 BC until AD 1100. These scholars are joined by a diverse group of student and non-student participants. In 2009, participants came from ten countries and more than 30 colleges and universities. Students are fully engaged participants who will be engaged in surveys, excavations and other data collection activities as well a laboratory processing of collected data.

- During the day, the methods and techniques used by archaeologists to reconstruct ancient cultures and history are examined through participation in the excavation of the sites of Blue Creek, Tzunun, Xnoha and Tulix Mul.
- In the evening, lectures by professional staff members and expert guest lecturers address various topics in the fields of archaeology, history, geography, and language, as well as technical aspects of the excavation.
- On weekends, students are introduced to the Maya archaeology through field trips to the public restored sites of Lamanai, a national park in Belize.



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All students will learn fundamentals of field archaeology. While focused on excavations methods and techniques, other elements may include research design, survey, digital mapping, subsurface sampling, materials/artifact identification and analysis, basic archaeological laboratory procedures, and soil flotation.

In addition, specialized training in bioarchaeology and digital technology applications will be offered when appropriate staff are available.

Objectives

1. Introduce students to methods and techniques of field archaeology.
2. Introduce students to techniques, such as radiocarbon dating, surveys and excavations, commonly used in archaeology.
3. Introduce students to methodologies the general chronology and understanding of the prehistoric Maya.
4. To introduce students to other cultures via a study abroad experience

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will master basic field techniques of data collection.
This will be assessed through observation in closely supervised situations.
2. Students will understand the role of research designs in archaeology and science generally.
This will be assessed through their written work and oral discussion of that work with the instructor.
3. Students will understand the fundamental principles of Maya archaeology. This will be assessed through their written work and oral discussion of that work.

How Will This Class Help You Get a Job?

This class is often the first step for many professionals. Our alumni teach at universities and work as professional archaeologists throughout the United States, Europe and Canada. This course is also preparatory for life.

"I am now working as a Relationship Banker for Bank of Oklahoma... (and)...am also doing some marketing consulting on the side, which I love. I am planning on going back to school for my MBA within the next year, and my long-term goal is to provide marketing consulting for small businesses and nonprofits.

I can say that although I didn't end up using my degree exactly how I planned, studying Social Sciences was the best decision I made in college and has prepared me for just about any career path I could choose to pursue- by equipping me to think critically, ask pressing questions, understand other cultures and perspectives, challenge my own perspective, and WRITE just



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about anything! I am forever grateful for the classes I took and the professors ... who made such an investment in me academically and personally. "

Kelsey Wells

Social Science majors are valued in the for-profit world because they are informed, adaptable and well-prepared. In this course you will:

1. Archaeology students trained in data recovery are prepared for entry level jobs in Cultural Resources Management and engineering firms.
2. Learn to discern between data and speculation (aka: Critical Thinking skills)
3. Enhance your research skills
4. Enhance your writing and communication skills
5. Enhance your presentation skills
6. Gain a better understanding of the human condition

Grading

Evaluation will be based upon two measures. Students will be expected to master fundamental skill levels of data collection. This assessment will be made by the instructor with input from any other applicable supervisory personnel. Assessment will also be made of students' ability to understand and explain methodologies and techniques employed and their understanding of fundamental principles of Maya archaeology.

Each student will keep a journal and summarize each of the evening lectures. Beyond summarizing, each student will be expected to discuss the relevance of each lecture to the larger framework of a complex, large-scale, archaeological project, specifically with regard to the role of research designs in archaeology and their grasp of fundamental principles of Maya archaeology.

In addition to the 2-week field experience, each student will create a poster presentation based upon both research data and experiential knowledge. This is expected to be a 3-contact hour third week after return to the US.

The assessment by supervisors, journal and discussions, and poster will each constitute 1/3 of the final grade.

Textbook and Readings (all will be provided)

Hester, Thomas R, Harry Shafer, and Kenneth Feder 2008 *Field Methods in Archaeology* (Paperback). Mayfield Publishers, Mt. View.

The Ancient Maya. (2006) By Heather McKillop, Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO Publishers, Santa Barbara (paper and e-book).

Chronicles of Maya Kings (2001) Simon Martin and Nikolai Grube. Thames & Hudson.



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The Nature of an Ancient Maya City: Resources, Interaction and Power at Blue Creek, Belize.
(2007) Thomas Guderjan. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Additionally, students will be assigned readings from the MRP library at the Blue Creek Research Station.

Participating Faculty and Graduate Students in 2026

- *Dr. Thomas Guderjan*- Project Director, University of Texas at Tyler
- *Dr. Tim Beach* –Professor of Geography, University of Texas at Austin
- *Dr. Cher Foster*- Lecturer of Geography and Anthropology, LA State University
- *Colleen Hanratty* – Center for Social Sciences Research, Univ of Texas at Tyler
- *Dr. Christophe Helmke*, University of Copenhagen (Denmark).
- *Dr. Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach* - Professor of Geography, Univ of Texas at Austin.
- *Dr. Alexander Parmington*-La Trobe University (Australia)
- *Rachel Smith*, PhD. Candidate, Washington State University
- *Prof. Robert Warden* – Chair, Department of Architecture, Texas A&M Univ
- *Dr. Marc Wolf* –US Forest Service
- *Emily Zylka*, graduate student, University of Southern Mississippi
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Academic Problems

Feel free to talk with me about any problems you may have with the course. It's usually best to make an appointment to me in my office rather than trying to get an answer to a question or to take care of a problem between classes. Faculty members are expected to provide information at the start of each semester on how the final grade will be determined. I am extremely conscientious about determining student grades, but if you feel that an error has been made, talk with me. If you feel that your concerns have not been addressed, talk with the department chair or the dean of the school in that order.

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php> (*Note: All unregistered weapons are illegal in Belize.*)



UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a



history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities Revised 01/18

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;



- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
- falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
- taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
- misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.

ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.

iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)