

***The Anthropology of the
Yucatan – ANT 4956
Course Syllabus
Summer “B” 2011***



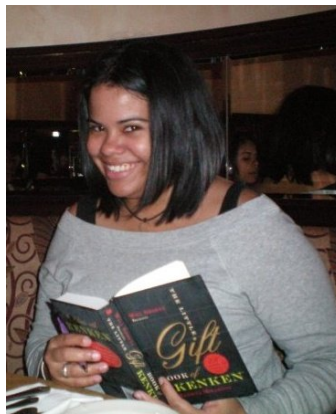
**5 Credits 8:30-10:15 am in the Facultad
de Arquitectura
Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán**

Location of classes: Both Anthropology and Spanish classes are held at the Facultad de Arquitectura Annex, Located at the Plaza Mejorada, Calle 59 X 50A in the center of Merida.

Instructors:



**Drs. Burns in Guatemala
Carlos Viera**



Carmen Laguer-Diaz



Allan F. Burns, Ph.D.
University of Florida
Department of Anthropology

Alba Amaya-Burns, MD, MSc.
University of Florida
College of Public Health and Health
Professions

Carmen Laguer-Diaz, Graduate Student in
Caribbean Archaeology, University of Florida
Department of Anthropology

Carlos Viera Castro, Facultad de Educación,
UADY

And Guest lecturers from the Universidad
Autónoma de Yucatán.

**Text: Burns, A. Yucatan 2011, ANT 4956,
Available at Orange and Blue Texts, (352
377 4221), ask for Chris; Email address:
Chris@obtbooks.com)**

Please note the emergency telephone numbers for instructors and others at the end of this syllabus.

This course is designed to acquaint you with the place of the Yucatán peninsula and the people within it in the context of México. The instructors for the course are Dr. Allan Burns, Dr. Alba Amaya Burns, and UF Graduate Student Carmen Laguer-Diaz. Dr. Amaya-Burns will assist with the first several weeks of the course focusing in public health issues affecting the Mayan communities in Yucatan.

Each week the lectures and readings help you look at Yucatán through a different lens: archaeology, linguistics, history, ethnography, and urban studies. Students are expected to read and discuss the articles in the course packet, do well on a midterm examination, complete a weekly journal and work in teams to create an ethnography of your experiences here. Grades will be assigned as follows:

Midterm Exam	Essay	Tuesday, July 12	30
Five Weekly Journals (10pts ea.)		June 27, July 5, July 11, July 18, July 25	50
Project		Wednesday, July 27	30
Total			110 points

Grades will be assigned as follows: 90-100% = A; 88-89% = A-, 80-87% = B; 78-79% = B-; 70-77% = C; 68-69% = C-; 60-67% = D; below 60% = E.

Attendance is mandatory for all classes. Exceptions are made for illness. Please be sure to call one of the instructors if you are ill and cannot be in class.

Weekly Journals: The weekly journal will be produced as part of your evolving final project. The journals are both written and photographic. The written part can be turned in on a spiral notebook that you purchase during your first few days in Mérida or electronically if you are writing your report on a computer. Each week you will turn in 3-4 photos along that relate to your written journal. You can use the Sakai site for the course or turn in your weekly journal or provide it each Monday on a memory stick to Carmen Laguer-Diaz. The purpose of the journal is to give you an opportunity to discuss your understandings of the differences between Yucatán and the U.S.

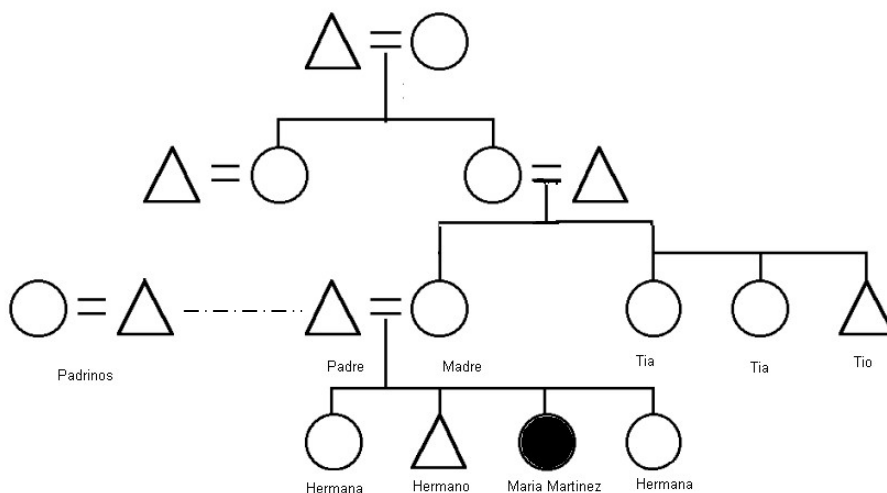
Week One:

Culture Shock, First impressions of Mérida, Yucatan and Mexico. Describe the most interesting thing that struck you as different yet positive in your first week in Yucatan. Compare it with something else that struck you as different and negative. Anthropologists say that culture shock is part of a learning experience, and even things that are distasteful or stressful help you learn. What did this first week tell you about what you will need to learn in order to make the most out of this summer? Do not try to

write about everything that you experienced, but rather one or two items such as differences in families, what and the way people eat, etc.

Week Two:

Families in the Yucatán. Anthropologists have always studied the way that families are organized to meet needs of society. These needs include economic activities of production and consumption, social needs for defining identity, reproductive needs including socialization of children, marriage, and so forth, as well as ideological needs. One way that anthropologists study the importance of the family is to do a “kinship chart” which lists the people in the nuclear and extended family and also in the household. This kinship chart is then used to study things like the division of social and economic roles how change takes place, language use, and many other things of interest to anthropology. Begin making up a kinship chart of the family you are living with which shows the relationships between people, the terms they use to refer to these people (for example, “tia” or “cuñado”), as well as their names. You might also want to include “fictive kin,” or those people who are in a “compadrazgo” relationship based on god-parent ceremonies.



Week Three:

Language and language use. Make a list of at least ten phrases in Mayan, their translations into Spanish and into English. Make a second list of at least 20 words for things you find fascinating in Yucatan in Mayan: names of medicinal plants, animal names, etc. Take pictures of businesses in Mérida and surrounding areas that have Mayan names. You can do this journal in conjunction with one other person on the program.

Week Four:

Popular culture of young people in the Yucatan. Talk to young people in Merida about their lives, goals, strategies, and hopes for the future. Describe in detail at least one leisure time activity and how it differs from a similar activity in the United States.

Examples might be dating, going to clubs, spending time at the beach, involvement in environmental activities, sports, attending church, or shopping. While many of these activities might look exactly the same as what you are used to from the United States, you should look for subtle points of difference.

Week Five:

Chiapas is the site of the 1994 uprising known as the “Zapatista” rebellion, carried out by the “EZLN” (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional). While the majority of people in Chiapas are Maya, many people say that the historic and contemporary social conditions of Chiapas are so different than those found in Yucatan that the uprising would not occur in the Yucatan. What differences do you see in the social conditions of people in Chiapas that are different from what you have seen in Yucatan? Be very careful taking pictures in Chiapas; people are much more sensitive about having their pictures taken than in Yucatan. Always ask permission before you take a picture and be prepared for people to tell you that they would rather not have their picture taken.

**FINAL PROJECT:
Yucatan Powerpoint**

The project for this class is a power-point ethnography that you do with the help of two or three others in the class. An ethnography is a description and analysis of life in the Yucatan that includes text, photos, perhaps sound clips or music, and links to other sites, all written in a lively and engaging style. You should work on your ethnography throughout the course, using each week’s excursions to round out your final presentation.

The topic for the final project is “Informal culture: economy and globalization.” The project will look at the economic impacts of the informal economy as seen through street vendors, children selling flowers or chewing gum, etc. In addition to the informal economy, the project should include an exploration of

1. informal religion – religious ideas or practices that are not part of a formal religion.
2. informal health – what people do when they get sick or injured when there is no health care available.
3. informal communication – graffiti, street musicians, etc.
4. informal groups – friendship groups (perhaps in your home family), children’s play groups, etc.

Lombardi Scholars: Lombardi scholars on the program will do a group project different from the projects described above. The project will consist of the following:

1. A Map of Mérida that has each of your homes on it. The locations of the homes will be done using the gps units. The map should also contain other major points of interest in Mérida, including common points and your favorite places. Pictures of the houses and family members should be included in this section. Each of you should make arrangements to visit two other houses so that everyone is familiar with three houses. Be sure all homes are included in this section of your report.
2. A description of what each family member does in your host family. How did they decide their occupation? What influenced them to do it? What are any young people in your family thinking of doing in the future? Describe some typical times when families do things together, such as the Sunday meal or going to the beach together. Take pictures of these things.
3. Markets: Create a map of the different sections of the market in Merida. Select two sections and document the proportion of local or regional items as compared to global items. For example, in the food section, you could document the number of stalls with fruits grown locally (such as mangos) with those imported from other areas (such as apples). How will you know which are local and which are from outside of the region?
4. Cemeteries. Visit at least one rural cemetery during our excursions as well as the big cemetery in Mérida. What do the cemeteries tell you about people in the Yucatan? Do grave markers give indications of people's status or jobs? Take down the birth and death dates of at least 10 grave markers during a given time period and discuss life expectancy during that time period.

A Note On Travel

It is tempting to travel extensively during our summer in Mérida. Distances between Yucatán and other areas of México are quite far; however, and trips beyond the peninsula will be difficult to do without careful planning. It is far more effective to plan your travel to areas close by. This anthropology class as well as the Spanish language classes are designed to complement what you learn in your everyday experiences in Mexico. Weekly and weekend fieldtrips are planned so that you do get out into the countryside and learn about the Yucatán first hand. Be careful not to plan trips that extend beyond the weekends into the class times. Classes may only be missed in case of illness or other unforeseen circumstances. Your final grade will be reduced one grade if you have missed four classes without cause. If you miss eight classes, you will automatically be given a failing grade. Of course if you do not feel well or have a good reason for not making it to class, be sure to contact Allan Burns or Carmen Laguer-Diaz.

Schedule of Courses, Readings, and Field Trips for the Yucatán Summer "B" Program, 2009



- I. **Anthropology Course.** The Anthropology course presents the ethnography, linguistics, history, archaeology, traditional medicine and sociology of the Yucatán. The instructor for the course is Professor Allan Burns of the University of Florida Department of

Anthropology and weekly guest lecturers from Anthropology professors from the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán (UADY). Professor Burns has done research on Maya linguistics, applied anthropology, and education in Mexico and Central America. Dr. Alba Amaya Burns will assist with the first several weeks of the course focusing in public health issues affecting the Mayan communities in Yucatan. Dr. Amaya Burns is an associate professor of public health at the University of Florida with specialties in tropical medicine, infectious diseases, and global health policy. Prior to coming to UF, Dr. Amaya-Burns worked for the US Embassy in El Salvador in the USAID health office. Dr. Carmen Laguer-Diaz is a graduate student at the University of Florida. Her interests include historic and prehistoric archaeology.

II. II. Spanish Courses. You will be placed in an appropriate Spanish Course at during the first meeting of the classes. Please be sure to be on time to class. All course materials will be provided for you in the class.

III. Daily Class Schedule:

8:30 am – Anthropology Course. Location: Annex of the School of Architecture (Calle 59 X 50^a)

10:15 am - break

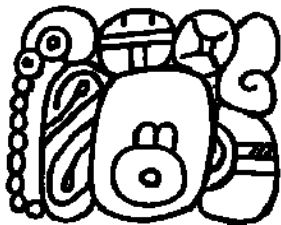
10:30 am – 12:15 pm - UADY Spanish Classes (same location).

Wednesday, June 22: Arrival in Mérida. Students will be met by families and taken to homes.

Thursday, June 23: 9 AM meet at the main university building, Calle 57 X 59 for orientation and ID's. Your family should bring you there. We will have our pictures taken to get a University of Yucatan ("UADY") ID.

Following your ID's we will walk to the School of Architecture for an orientation. Your host family will meet you at noon to take you back to your house.

Friday, June 24-Sunday, June 26: EXCURSION TO THE CARIBBEAN COAST. Meet at



Arquitectura at 7:30 am for first field trip to ruins of Ek Balam, the Caribbean coast, and Coba. (The bus leaves promptly. If you do not make it in time, you will not go on the fieldtrip!):

Description: The ruins of Ek Balam. Lunch in Valladolid Bus ride to Tulum where we will spend the night in a beach front hotel in Tulum. Saturday: Snorkel trip to Akumal, Ruins of Tulum and then visit the ruins of Coba. Saturday night: Hotel in Valladolid. Sunday: visit Valladolid market and underground "cenote" or lake of Dzignup. Visit to state prison; purchase hammocks if you would like. Lunch in Valladolid. Return to Mérida Saturday afternoon, approximately 6pm.

Readings: Wright: "Prologue," Wright, "Tulum," Burns, Chapter One from *An Epoch of Miracles*.

Daltabuit, "Bio-social impact of tourism...";

Be sure to bring your "field trip" supplies: sun-block, a good hat, comfortable walking shoes, bathing suit, etc. We will provide meals, entrances to ruins, and lodging at the hotels.

Monday, June 27. Living in Yucatan: Health in the tropics, General Ecology of the Yucatan. Readings: Brown, "Mayas and Tourists in the Maya World; Juarez: "Ecological Degradation, Global Tourism, and inequality"

Tuesday, June 28. Dr. Amaya-Burns: Health in Mexico: ethnomedicine and biomedicine. Culture shock, heat stress, and environmental stress. Readings: McClulloch, "Heat Adaptation,"

Wednesday, June 29. Recent issues in Maya Archaeology. Guest speaker from the Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan. Preview of week two excursion. Readings: Readings: Tedlock: "Torture in the Archives." Readings: Ankli: "Yucatec Mayan Medicinal Plants.."

Thursday, June 30-Saturday, July 2. EXCURSION II to Western Yucatan (The Puuc Route). 8:00 am at Facultad de Educacion. Description: Begin with a visit to the town of Maxcanu to see traditional home garden, Dr. Amaya-Burns will facilitate discussions among students and natural healers who use medicinal plants, stingless bees of the Yucatan, and town of Maxcanu. Lunch in a rustic inn in the town of Calcetok. Travel to the town of Halacho to visit Mayan families. Then on to Ticul for overnight stay at Hotel Plaza. Friday: visit to craft home-industries for ethnographic fieldwork. Maya lunch and Maya dance lessons. Saturday: Visit to underground caves of Lol Tun, then depart for Mani. Mid-day lunch in Mani, the town where Diego de Landa's burned many Mayan books as part of the Spanish Inquisition. Return to Mérida in late afternoon.

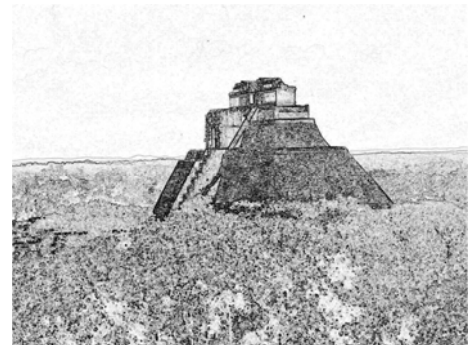
Sunday, July 3. Free day. Spend time at "Mérida en Domingo," downtown, where the streets are given over to markets, art, and pedestrians. The night before, Saturday night, is also worth exploring.

Monday, July 4. Language and culture in the Yucatan. Readings: Burns, "Yucatec Maya Oral Literature," Anderson, "Ecologies of the Heart"

Tuesday, July 5: Bilingualism in Yucatan; Learning Mayan.
Readings: Bray: "The Maya of Central Quintana Roo"

Wednesday, July 6, Guest Lecture on Mayan linguistics.

Thursday, July 7. Excursion III. 8:00 am, Meet at Arquitectura. Visit to fishing village and ecological reserve at Celestun. Flamenco reserve, seafood lunch, and return the same day.



Readings: Goben, "The Flamingos of Celestún."

Friday, July 8. Excursion IV. 8:00 am, meet at Arquitectura. Visit near-by ruins of Dzibilchaltun, then the coastal city of Progreso.

Saturday, July 9: Free Day

Sunday: July 10. Excursion V. 8:00am, meet at Arquitectura. The ruins of Uxmal.

Monday, July 11: Carmen Laguer-Diaz. History and Ethnohistory. Readings: Moseley, "From Conquest to Independence"

Tuesday, July 12: Anthropology Class Midterm Examination.



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Wednesday, July 13: Guest Lecture on the history of the Yucatan

Thursday, July 14. Excursion VI, meet at 8:00 am at Arquitectura. Visit the town of Acanceh (with prehispanic, colonial, and modern cultures in the same location. Then on to Cuzuma' to see cenotes and a henequen hacienda. Return to Merida 5pm.

Friday, July 15, Midterm examination in Spanish.

Saturday, July 16, Free time.

Sunday, July 17. Excursion VII. Meet at 8:00 am at Arquitectura. One day visit to the ruins of Chichen Itza. Return 5pm.

Monday, July 18: Ethnography of the Yucatan. Major cultural areas of the Yucatan. Problems that anthropologists study when doing ethnography. Readings: Re Cruz, "Disruptions of People's Health.."

Tuesday, July 19: Ethnography, continued. Readings: Anderson, "Pathways of Decision Making Among Yucatan Mayan Traditional Birth Attendants"

Wednesday, July 20: Guest Lecture from the Autonomous University of the Yucatan on Ethnography

Thursday- Sunday, July 21-24: Excursion VI. Field Trip to Chiapas, 8:00 am - Meet at Facultad de Educacion. Description: Travel to the port city of Campeche; Visit to ruins of Edznah, lunch and overnight in Campeche. Day Two: Travel to Palenque, explore the town of Palenque. Day three: Ruins of Palenque. Visit waterfall of Misol Ha for lunch. Day four: Return to Merida (9 hour bus ride).

Readings: Schueler, Donald, "Temple of the Jaguar"
Wright: "Palenque"

Monday, July 25. Urban issues. Readings: Gaskins, "From Corn to Cash"

Tuesday, July 26: Guest lecture on Urban issues in the Anthropology of the Yucatan: Vargas Cetina: "Of Mirrors.."

Wednesday, July 27: Power point presentations of groups

Thursday, July 28. Excursion to craft village of Dzitya. End of Program Lunch.

Friday, July 29. Free day

Saturday, July 30 Leave Mérida for U.S. and points North: Be at the airport one and a half hours before your flight!

Important addresses and telephone numbers. Please leave a copy of this list with someone in the U.S. Add the number of the family you will be staying with in Mérida to it. In the case of an emergency, you can always be reached by telephoning the Office of International Studies and Programs (University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. (352) 392 5323 FAX (352) 392-5575 or the University of Florida Police Department (24 hours; 352 392-1111). To dial a number **from** the States, dial 011-52 999 and then the rest of the number. To dial the U.S. from Mérida, dial 01-(area code)-(number).

To dial when you are in Mérida, just dial the last 7 numbers of the numbers below.

Dr. Allan F. Burns:
Calle 17 # 99E X 18 y 20
Col. Chuburna de Hidalgo
Mérida, Yucatan 97200
Cell Phone up until departure time on
June 22:
352 870 1028

**Cell phone for Dr. Burns
While in Merida:**
044-999-994 2332 (dial all numbers)
To dial from the US:
011 52 1 999 994 2332

A voice mail message from the US can
also be left for me at the home number
of Prof. Viera:
011 52 (999) 945 3185
From Merida: 945 3185

Profesor Gabriela Quintal
Coordinadora de Programas Para
Extranjeros
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