

Summer Ethnographic Field School in Lake Atitlán, Guatemala

About the Program: The NC State University Summer Ethnographic Field School is a seven-week program with three main goals:

- Help students interested in ethnographic methods achieve a level of methodological proficiency to enable them to undertake future fieldwork independently and confidently.
- Provide a deeper understanding of the impacts of tourism in human societies and the consequences of tourist activities for local communities. Although students are not required to focus their research on tourism, the pervasiveness of tourism in the communities in the research site will inevitably require students to take some note of the role of tourism in their projects.
- Produce useful information and analysis concerning tourism impacts for the local community in which the student projects are carried out.

Program Activities: During orientation and classes, students develop their research project and are then placed with indigenous Mayan families in communities around Lake Atitlán. Excursions to other communities in the Western Guatemalan highlands are planned. The program emphasizes: designing a field research project, selecting appropriate research methods, defining and utilizing appropriate sampling procedures, developing daily and weekly research goals, writing and coding field notes and keeping a journal, doing systematic observation techniques, understanding ethical issues implied in field work, doing formal and informal interviewing, working effectively with informants (collaborators) and translators, developing appropriate rapport building devices, doing community and cognitive mapping, understanding rapid appraisal techniques, understanding time allocation study techniques, surviving and overcoming culture shock, using laptop computers for simple research tasks, analyzing ethnographic data, and writing research reports.

Other Information: The program takes place between mid-May and mid-July each year.

For more information:

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