

South Texas Archaeology Field School

SUMMER 2009

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Anthropology 3390, Course Syllabus 6 Units



Course: South Texas Archaeology Field School, Anthropology 3390 (Special Topics in Anthropology)

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Dates: May 31 to July 23, 2009 (Summer Sessions I and II).

Credits: 6 units. Two 3-unit sessions.

Tuition: see TAMU-CC web page (<http://falcon.tamucc.edu/~business/>).

Field Fee: The field school is co-sponsored by the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History. In addition to the University tuition, each student is required to pay a \$400 field fee. This covers meals, housing, most equipment, and local transportation costs for all 8 weeks. Food is provided for breakfast and lunch. Evening meals will be prepared by a cook. This fee is collected the first week of the Field School.

Prerequisites: None.

INTRODUCTION

The Summer Archaeology Field School offers a high quality academic experience for undergraduate students. This 8-week, six-unit course is taught entirely in the field and introduces students to field and laboratory methods and techniques. The course

provides students with hands-on training in archaeological, historical, and environmental research. It sharpens students skills in archaeology and, for most people, provides a life-altering experience.

Field School headquarters is located on a private ranch in San Patricio, Texas. Work involves survey to locate prehistoric sites, excavation of features within sites, and analysis of artifact collections in the field laboratory. At the end of the course, students prepare a written field report and a public presentation of research results.

The Lower Nueces River Valley is the area of research. Hunting, gathering, and fishing populations ancestral to the 18th century Aranama and Karankawa Indians occupied this area from Late Archaic to Late Prehistoric times (1150 BC to AD 1750). Over the past eight years, Field School students have identified a network of base-camps, temporary hunting camps, and quarries associated with this long prehistoric hunting/gathering/fishing tradition.

The 2009 season will focus on the Fort Lipantitlán site (NU-54), one of three major Late Prehistoric settlements in the Valley. The site contains both prehistoric and early historic components and extends over 2 hectares of terrace-top land fronting the Nueces River.



Survey will be conducted in and around the site to map its overall size and locate nearby hunting camps and quarries affiliated with the prehistoric settlement. Excavations will be conducted to identify domestic features, collect stratigraphic information, and obtain larger artifact collections for laboratory study. Tool manufacturing, pottery use, food preparation, hunting and fishing were important activities in this settlement that need further documentation. In the

late 1700s Late Prehistoric occupation ended and was quickly replaced by a Spanish/Mexican colony evidenced by European and Mexican ceramics, metal items, and military hardware recovered at the site. Continued excavations should reveal more information about the nature and temporal duration of this important transition. The site provides exciting research opportunities for students interested in history and archaeology.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students participate Monday through Friday. Each week students will rotate among survey, excavation, and laboratory teams to learn different research procedures. They will gain experience and training in systematic field methods used to locate sites, determine their distribution and density, date cultural components, and document patterns of social complexity, subsistence, and settlement organization.

Students must be prepared for strenuous outdoor work: hike to survey quads and archaeological site locations, excavate, carry heavy loads, and process field collections in the laboratory.

COURSE GOALS

At the end of the course students will be able to demonstrate:

1. A theoretical and practical knowledge of archaeological research methods.
2. A general understanding of South Texas prehistory and history.
3. A specific understanding of settlement patterns and land use patterns in the lower Nueces River Valley

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK (available at the bookstore)

Hester, Thomas, R. Harry J. Shafer, Kenneth L Feder (1997) *Field Methods in Archaeology*. Mayfield Publishing Company, Mountain View (7th edition; ISBN: 1559347996).

FIELD SCHOOL HEADQUARTER LOCATION

The field school headquarters is located on the Bluntzer Ranch, a 100-acre property located along the lower Nueces River. This ranch is off Highway 666, 30 miles northwest of Corpus Christi, near the modern town of San Patricio (population 300). The property contains river and stream channels, terraces with mature mesquite forests, and prairie grasslands, all containing a diversity of endemic wildlife.

FIELD SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS AND OPERATION

The field school has a field headquarters, laboratory, and dining/seminar area. The field headquarters is a cottage-style ranch house with modern facilities, including showers and electricity. Students sleep in

tents on a grassy area adjacent to the field house. The evening meal is buffet-style and prepared by a local cook at the community center.



Occasionally local archaeologists, anthropologists, and historians will offer evening talks on subjects related to the field research. Local residents are invited to attend.

COURSE FORMAT

Week 1

Set up field camp and laboratory; review course content and requirements; natural and cultural history overview of the region. Previous archaeological work in South Texas. Identification of research interests and preparation of student research designs.

Weeks 2-6

Field work: survey, excavation, and laboratory analysis. Evening discussions on field work strategies, individual student progress and topics associated with field data. Evening seminars with invited regional specialists. Daytime excursions to nearby archaeological/historical sites.

Weeks 7-8

Preparation of research reports based on field data collected during the course. Oral presentations to local San Patricio residents.

GRADING

The final grade for the course will be calculated on the following points and class requirements:

Attendance and Participation	100
Field Notes and Summary	100
Final Paper	<u>100</u>
Total Points	300

Letter grades will be based on total points achieved. The breakdown is indicated below:

<u>Total Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
300-270	A
269-239	B
238-208	C
207-177	D
176-Below	F

PERSONAL SUPPLIES

Students should bring basic supplies for fieldwork and camping. Critical items include a tent, sleeping bag, rain poncho or jacket, closed-toe shoes (tennis shoes or boots), grubby, lightweight clothes,

toiletries, a hat, sunscreen and insect repellent. A camera is optional.

Field equipment includes a backpack, refillable water bottle, compass, protractor, pencils and pens, a 3-meter tape measure, a Marshalltown trowel (available at Home Depot or other hardware store), and a whisk broom. Students are encouraged to bring a laptop computer if they own one.

The Field School provides eating utensils, cooking gear, food, specialized equipment, and transportation while in the field.

INSURANCE WAIVER

Students that register for the course must show proof of insurance. A waiver form will be required for students to complete before attending the field school.

COURSE REGISTRATION

Registration is done on-line beginning in April 2009 at the TAMU-CC website (<http://www.tamucc.edu/>). For students from universities other than TAMU-CC, registration is a two-step process. First, apply for admission to TAMU-CC. An on-line application is available at <http://admissions.tamucc.edu/>. Send a copy of your transcripts to: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, Office of Admissions, 6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5774, Corpus Christi, TX 78412-5774. Second, once confirmation of your admission is received, you can register for the course. The course



is listed as **ANTH 3390 Special Topics in Anthropology** in the TAMU-CC 2009 Summer Class Schedule which is available on-line. The Office of Admissions at TAMU-CC (361.825.7024 or 1.800.482.6822) can assist students in this registration process.

WEB INFORMATION

Further information is available at the Archaeological Institute of America web site <http://www.archaeological.org/webinfo.php?page=10037&entrynumber=330>