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## **Course Title:** Ethnographic Field School in Belize

**Program and Date:** June 2-July 6 (June 9-July 1 in Orange Walk Town, Belize), 2025

**Academic Department:** Anthropology

**Instructor Name:** Douglas Hume, Ph.D.

**Instructor Email and Phone:** humed1@nku.edu | (859) 572-5702

### **Get to Know Your Professor**

Dr. Hume is an anthropologist passionate about understanding how humans interpret their environment and how these interpretations shape behaviors toward nature and within social groups. Using cognitive anthropology as his framework, he investigates agricultural, conservation, and community development through ethnosemantics, employing qualitative and quantitative research methods. His graduate work focused on applied anthropology in Madagascar, where he studied the shift from swidden to irrigated rice farming and explored variations in environmental knowledge among American bird watchers and students. Since joining Northern Kentucky University (NKU), Dr. Hume has expanded his research locally and internationally. He founded NKU's Center for Applied Anthropology (CfAA) to engage students in applied research and prepare them for careers and advanced studies in anthropology. Since 2013, he has led an ethnographic field school in Northern Belize, examining community development in sugar cane farming areas. In teaching, Dr. Hume emphasizes active learning and encourages students to dive into anthropology's theoretical and practical aspects. For more details, visit his website at [dwhume.com](http://dwhume.com).

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### **Course Description**

This course immerses students in Belizean culture and trains them in contemporary anthropological field methods. Students will gain valuable research skills (e.g., ethnographic interviewing and qualitative data analysis) to apply anthropology in their future careers (e.g., applied anthropology or other social/behavioral discipline), an appreciation for Belizean cultural diversity, and further their personal growth. While in Belize, students will be primarily engaged in guided applied ethnographic fieldwork. Students will learn about the local culture by doing participant-observation and conducting ethnographic interviews in a community-based research project. Students will learn research ethics, unobtrusive observation, participant observation, field note writing and coding, ethnographic and life history interviewing, ethnolinguistic data collection, community mapping, rapid assessment procedures, qualitative data analysis, and other ethnographic methods in addition to basic ethnographic writing.

### **Course Level**

Upper division undergraduate or graduate level



## Prerequisite(s)

- Upper division undergraduate course — one course in anthropology or other social/behavioral science
- Graduate level course — ANTH 495 [WKU]/ ANT 365 [NKU] Ethnographic Field School or graduate student standing and consent of instructor

## Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of all coursework with a passing grade and full participation in course activities, students shall be able to:

- demonstrate a basic understanding of the culture being studied,
- formulate an understanding of ethical and validity issues in ethnographic research,
- master skills in research design and ethnographic methods of data collection,
- apply basic ethnographic research methods in a non-western culture,
- engage in a community-based research project, and
- analyze ethnographic data resulting in an ethnographic report.

## Required Readings and Materials

All required and optional readings are available on the course Dropbox. The required readings consist of selected chapters and articles that introduce students to specific ethnographic methods. Excerpts of the following books and articles must be read carefully before the online Ethnographic Boot Camp:

- Bernard, H. Russell. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Fifth Edition*. Altimira Press. [read pages 156 to the top of 172]
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Second Edition*. University of Chicago Press. [read pages 1-43 and 171-199]
- Hume, Douglas W. 2023a. *General Information for Students in Belize*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- —. 2023b. *Google Map: Ethnographic Field School in Belize*.
- Hume, Douglas W., et al. 2025. *Prior Ethnographic Field School in Belize Report Compilation*. Unpublished Manuscript.
- Levy, Robert I., and Douglas W. Hollan. 1998. "Person-centered Interviewing and Observation." In *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, edited by H. Russell Bernard, 333-364. Altimira Press.
- Schensul, Stephen L., Jean J. Schensul, and Margaret D. LeCompte. 1999. *Essential Ethnographic Methods: Observations, Interviews and Questionnaires (Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 2)*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. [read pages 95-164]

In addition to the readings above, students in the graduate level course must complete the following readings:

- Borgatti, Stephen P. 1999. "Elicitation Techniques for Cultural Domain Analysis." In *Enhanced Ethnographic Methods: Audiovisual Techniques, Focused Group Interviews, and Elicitation Techniques*, edited by Jean J. Schensul, Margaret D. LeCompte, Bonnie K. Nastasi, and Stephen P. Borgatti, 115-151. Altimira Press.
- Boster, James S. 1994. "The Successive Pile Sort". *Field Methods* 6:11-12.

- Hume, Douglas W. 2005. *Agriculture in Madagascar: Conservation and Cultural Meanings of Rice*. Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut. [read Chapter 4. Cultural Models]
- Hume, Douglas W. 2012. "Malagasy Swidden Agriculture: The Influence of Conservation Organizations on Indigenous Knowledge." *Kentucky Journal and Anthropology and Sociology* 2(1):37-54.
- LeCompte, Margaret D., and Jean J. Schensul. 1999. *Analyzing and Interpreting Ethnographic Data (Ethnographer's Toolkit, Volume 5)*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. [read pages 11-34]
- McCurdy, David W., James P. Spradley, and Dianna J. Shandy. 2004. *The Cultural Experience: Ethnography in Complex Society, 2nd Edition*. Waveland Press. [read pages 3-96]
- Stillitoe, Paul, Peter Dixon, and Julian Barr. 2006. *Indigenous Knowledge Inquiries: A Methodologies Manual for Development*. Practical Action Publishing. [read pages 87-110, 124-130, and 133-211]

## Assignments and Grades

### Preliminary Orientation Meeting

Students are required to attend the Preliminary (Tuesday May 6, 4-6 PM EST, Face-to-face and Online) Orientation Meeting. The Preliminary Orientation Meeting takes place four weeks before departure and includes discussion of the information outlined within the syllabus, schedule, and packing list as well as how students should prepare for the field school.

### Online Ethnographic Boot Camp

The online Ethnographic Boot Camp will take place between Monday June 2 and Friday June 6, 2025. In addition to the first day's Course Introduction/Pre-departure Orientation Online Meeting, the boot camp includes lectures, discussions, and activities on the following topics: Anthropology, Culture, Ethnography, and Theory; Ethnographic Interviewing; Ethnographic Fieldnotes; and Ethnography within Belize Sugar Cane Farming Communities.

### Pre-departure Human Subjects Training

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) training is required by the Internal Review Board (IRB) at Northern Kentucky University (NKU). The NKU IRB is federally required to review and approve human subjects research before it is initiated by NKU faculty, staff, and students. Following the instructions below, complete the CITI training (NKU's IRB requires 80% on each individual training module) and email the instructor PDF copy of the Completion Report by the end of the Ethnographic Boot Camp, Friday June 6, 2025.

### Student Ethnographic Portfolio

For the undergraduate offering of this course (ANT 365 Ethnographic Field School), the ethnographic portfolio is comprised of journal entries (20%), interview notes (60%), and a service learning reflection (20%).

For the graduate offering of this course (ANT 565 Advanced Ethnographic Field School), the ethnographic portfolio is comprised of journal entries (20%), interview notes (60%) as well as a service learning reflection (10%) and diagramming analysis (10%).

The portfolio documents must be submitted on the course's Dropbox.

- **Journal Entries** — Journal entries will be made for each day (starting with the weekend before departure to Belize [Saturday June 7 and Sunday June 8] until one day after return from Belize [Wednesday July 2]) and reviewed throughout the course. Generally, students will write one page (12 point font, single spaced, one inch margins) for each daily journal entry. The journal must be completed by Sunday, July 6. The specific journal requirements and grading rubric will be provided to students during the pre-departure meeting.
- **Interview Notes** — Interview notes will be written and submitted electronically after each interview. Generally, students will write one page (12 point font, single spaced, one inch margins) for each interview. The interview notes are due the day after the interview occurs (except for Saturday interviews, which are due the following Monday). The specific requirements and grading rubric will be provided to students during the ethnographic methods training meetings.
- **Service Learning Reflection** — The service learning reflection will be a 1,000 word essay (one-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt, double-spaced) answering several reflective questions, due on Sunday, July 6. The reflection essay is to be written after returning from the field. The specific requirements and grading rubric will be provided to students before departure from Belize.
- **Diagramming Analysis (ANT 565 Advanced Ethnographic Field School Only)** — The diagramming analysis includes the construction of a diagram (e.g., Seasonal Calendar/Pattern Chart, Taxonomies, Webbing, Flow Chart/Process Diagram, Historical Comparison/Time Lines, and Matrix) and a 1,000 word written explanation of the diagram (12 point font, double spaced, one inch margins), due on Sunday, July 6. The specific paper requirements and grading rubric will be provided to students during the ethnographic methods training meetings.

## Grading Scale

The following scale will be used to compute your grade.

- 100-93% A, 90%> A-, 87%> B+, 83%> B, 80%> B-, 77%> C+, 73%> C, 70%> C-, 67%> D+, 60%> D, and 59-0% F.

## Onsite Learning Experiences and Activities

Onsite learning experiences in this class will likely include the following site visits. This is a tentative list which will be replaced with a detailed daily itinerary of class meetings and field trips prior to the departure date.

In addition to conducting community-based research, we plan to visit the [Belize Zoo](#), [Banqitas House of Culture](#), [Cuello's Distillery](#) and [Ruins, Lamanai Maya Ruins](#) (via boat on the New River), [Nohoch Che'en Caves Branch Archaeological Reserve](#) (Cave Tubing). Locations are subject to change and may be cancelled due to weather or other factors beyond our control.



## Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled activities and class meetings as well as field trip excursions. This includes any virtual meetings before and after the onsite experience. Repeated absences, including for ill health, will require documentation to be excused.

## Academic Integrity Policy

A fundamental tenet of all educational institutions is academic honesty. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for academic evaluation (e.g., papers, projects, and examinations); any attempt to influence improperly (e.g., bribery, threats) any member of the faculty, staff, or administration of the University in any matter of academics or research; presenting, as one's own, the ideas or words of another for academic evaluation; doing unauthorized academic work for which another person will receive credit or be evaluated; and presenting the same or substantially the same papers or projects in two or more courses without the explicit permission of the instructors involved. A student who knowingly aids another student in committing an act of academic misconduct shall be equally accountable for the violation and shall be subject to the sanctions and other remedies.

### Generative AI & Academic Integrity

The use of Generative AI—specifically large language models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Grammarly, and Copilot—to generate ideas or written content (not including spelling/grammar checks) or to produce any other material is prohibited in this course.

All students are bound by their institution's student honor code.

## Physical Expectations

Program requires walking 5-10 miles per day on uneven pavement and roads in all kinds of weather and extended periods of standing. Belize is within the tropics and is subject to tropical storms and hurricanes as well as extreme heat (>100° F), heat indexes (>130° F), and ultraviolet (UV) indexes (>14). Students must be able to carry their own bags/belongings.

## Disability Accommodation

CCSA is committed to providing access to education abroad to the extent possible in a study abroad setting. The earlier CCSA and the faculty know the needs, the more likely we can accommodate them. At a minimum, students seeking accommodations are to contact both the CCSA office and the faculty one month in advance of the program's beginning. Students seeking such accommodation must provide CCSA with a copy of the letter on file with their own Office of Disability Services outlining what services they receive on their home campus.



## **Title IX Policy**

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sexual discrimination violate CCSA policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain support from the Onsite Program Director or the CCSA Executive Director. To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact either of these two officers. Disclosure to faculty instructors or CCSA officers of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on the program or involving a visitor, student or employee is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and other CCSA employees are required to forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the CCSA Executive Director.

## **Statement about Final Syllabus**

Please note that all CCSA syllabi are subject to change, but every effort will be made to ensure participants receive notice of such changes in a timely manner.

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