Cuba Ethnographic Field School 2016:  
Media and Visual Anthropology under Transformation  

University of Victoria  
in collaboration with Oikos Experimental  
and the Universidad de Oriente in Cuba  

Field school: June 28 to July 24, 2016  
Pre-field-school: April 20 to 29, 2016  

DESCRIPTION  
The theme for the 2016 summer school in Cuba is “Media and Visual Anthropology under Transformation.” This field school is addressed to students who are interested in acquiring in-depth knowledge of a local cultural milieu through the use of visual and sound recording and editing.  

This field school explores two landscapes that are currently undergoing transformation, namely Cuba, on one hand, and the discipline of Visual Anthropology, on the other. Cuba is changing extremely fast; now is the time to explore the only socialist country in the Americas! You will be impressed by Cuba’s rhythms, beliefs and cultural patterns, not to mention its extremely rich historical and social background. In terms of the discipline of Visual Anthropology, we believe in the full creativity of the anthropologist while conducting fieldwork and we strongly encourage anthropological exploration through various media such as cameras and sound recording devices. In taking you off the beaten track, this summer school will allow you to
discover some of the unique contemporary cultural practices and social dynamics that characterize the biggest island in the Caribbean.

The 2016 field school is based in Eastern Cuba and combines two courses: Contemporary Cuban Culture (ANTH 393) and Qualitative and Audio-Visual Field Methods in Ethnography (ANTH 395). The ‘Contemporary Cuban Culture’ course will adopt an anthropological perspective in examining the themes of media, communication, Afro-Cuban religion, contemporary culture, and music. In teams, and with the help of the instructor and the Oikos Experimental team, you will be directing and producing an audio-visual text (short film, photo series, soundscape, graphic novel, etc.) about a topic that captivates your interest.

COURSE CREDITS

Students will receive 1.5 credits for ANTH 393 and 1.5 credits for ANTH 395 for a total of 3 credits. Non-UVic students are responsible for arranging the transfer of credits to their home institutions where applicable. Students will attend lectures by Dr. Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, Dr. Yamile Haber from the Universidad de Oriente, and José Miyares from the Casa del Caribe, as well as workshops led by different artists and cultural and religious figures living in eastern Cuba. Courses will take place at the Universidad de Oriente and at the Alliance Française of Santiago de Cuba.

Under the supervision of Dr. Boudreault-Fournier, the students will develop a research project using audio-visual and qualitative methods of data collection and exploration (ANTH 395). This will provide practical and concrete experience with visual anthropology and qualitative data collection in a foreign milieu. Project proposals must be submitted to Dr. Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier in advance for an assessment of their feasibility and of their compliance with Research Ethics protocols.

Detailed course syllabi will be available for download from our website in March 2016.

ACCOMODATIONS AND AMENITIES

We will be staying in Cuban host families who are legally registered as Casa Particular (Bed & Breakfasts). Students will stay two per room and will share a private bathroom. They will also eat breakfast and some dinners with their host families. Staying with families will allow the students to interact with Cubans and get a sense of their everyday life. All the houses will be located in the same neighbourhood.
FOOD

Cuban food is delicious and we will have the opportunity to eat different types of meals. Vegetarian dishes should be available most of the time. In some cases, full vegetarian meals may not be available. However, students will have other options such as rice, eggs, vegetables and fruit. Students will eat with their host families, in Cuban restaurants (paladares) and in hotel cafeterias.

FIELD TRIPS

The core of the summer school will take place in Santiago de Cuba during the month of July. Two important events take place during this month: the Festival del Caribe and the Carnival of Santiago de Cuba. Many cultural events happen during this amazing period of the year. We will also spend one day in Guantánamo and three days in the beautiful city of Baracoa. Field trips are organized almost every 2 days. For instance, as part of ANTH 393, we will learn Afro-Cuban dances with a dance group from Guantánamo and we will meet religious priests of the Santería religion in a small village called Palma Soriano. We will also visit various sites associated with the Slave Route, such as the Cimarrón monument in El Cobre (UNESCO sites). In addition, we will meet visual artists, musicians and traditional figures involved in contemporary Cuban culture. We will have the opportunity to discuss with them and learn from their experiences.

LANGUAGE

A professional interpreter will translate meetings and workshops. However, students will have to cope with linguistic constraints outside of the course schedule. Very few Cubans speak English and we strongly encourage students to take Spanish courses before their departure.
COST

The field school fee of **CAD $2,300** is IN ADDITION TO the cost of mandatory registration in ANTH 393 and 395 courses (approximately $1,000 for Canadian students; international students should consult the Office of the Registrar’s website for registration information http://registrar.uvic.ca/safa/annual-costs.html). International airplane fares from Victoria to Cuba are approximately $1,200 CAD (return) though subject to change. The approximate total cost for the field school for Canadian students is **$4,500**. This does not include personal expenses while in Cuba (souvenirs, free time, etc.) and private health/travel insurance. The field school fee ($2,300) includes accommodations, workshops and fieldtrips, land transportation within Cuba (including to and from the Frank País International airport in Holguín), and food for the duration of the field school.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in Cuba since the year 2000. She speaks Spanish fluently and knows the local culture very well. She organized and coordinated the first ethnographic field school in Cuba offered by the Department of Anthropology at UVic in 2014, which was a great success. She looks forward to embarking on her second experience with another group of motivated students!

In Cuba, Alexandrine will be accompanied by Dr. Yamile Haber from the Universidad of Oriente and Dr. José Miyares from the Casa del Caribe, who will also share their knowledge and research on Cuban culture, media and communication.

About OIKOS EXPERIMENTAL

Oikos Experimental is a team of four dedicated young Cubans, all from Santiago de Cuba, who work to promote and elevate Cuban popular culture. Oikos proved to be an excellent coordination team during our 2014 field school. All of the group members have extensive experience producing and directing audio-visual projects (check out their FB page!: Guampara Music).
TESTIMONIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE 2014 FIELD SCHOOL

“I highly recommend the field school for any of those who seek to get a hands on experience of what the actual lives of Cubans entail; as well as a deeper and better understanding of Cuban culture as a whole.”

“I was so fortunate to be able to attend this once in a life opportunity. It was an amazing life changing experience.”

“This field school was unbelievable! I still look back and wonder if it really happened 😊 Every day was such a unique adventure, as Cuba filled my senses to the brim.”

IMPORTANT DATES

Deadline for applying has been extended to November 6, 2015

Application and waiver forms will be accepted until 4:00pm in the Department of Anthropology’s main office, Cornett B228. These forms are available to download from the Department’s website.

November 13, 2015: Applicants notified of acceptance.

December 4, 2015: 50% deposit due by 4:30pm on December 4th in the Anthropology Office Cornett B228, (refundable only if the field school is cancelled). The $1150.00 in Canadian dollars may be paid for with a personal cheque or a bank money order.

Payments are to be made out to the: University of Victoria – Anthropology Department

February 19, 2016: Full payment due by 4:30pm on February 19th, 2016 in the Anthropology Office Cornett B228, (refundable only if the field school is cancelled). The $1150.00 in Canadian dollars may be paid for with a personal cheque or a bank money order.

Payments are to be made out to the: University of Victoria – Anthropology Department

April 25 to 29, 2016: Intensive mandatory workshop at UVic.

June 28 to July 24, 2016: Summer School in Cuba.

Note: Students who wish to stay in Cuba after the field school ends are responsible for their own accommodations, travel, health and safety.
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS EXCITING OPPORTUNITY:

Dr. Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Victoria  
250-721-7052  
alexbf@uvic.ca

http://anthropology.uvic.ca/