

Cuba Ethnographic Field School 2024
Saber escuchar – To know how to listen

Department of Anthropology, University of Victoria
and Casa Dranguet, Santiago de Cuba

**CUBA ETHNOGRAPHIC
FIELD SCHOOL 2024**

Saber Escuchar



BASED IN:
SANTIAGO DE CUBA

DATE OF FIELD SCHOOL:
MAY 27-JUNE 17, 2024

APPLICATION DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 8, 2023

ARTWORK BY: CARLOS RENE AGUILERA TAMAYO

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION:**
ALEXBF@UVIC.CA

**ORGANIZED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF
ANTHROPOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**



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Field school: May 27 - June 17, 2024
Pre-field-school: @Uvic, dates TBC

Instructors:
Alexandrine Boudreault-Fournier, UVic
Mélissa Gauthier, Uvic

DESCRIPTION

The theme of the 2024 summer school in Cuba is “*Saber escuchar* / To know how to listen” which is the title of the art piece painted by Carlos Rene Aguilera Tamayo, a well known artist from Santiago de Cuba. Cubans are currently experiencing difficult daily life conditions because of an economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the enduring U.S. embargo. *Saber escuchar* is a skill that anthropologists need to develop to create sincere and empathetic relationships with people they meet during their journey. After consultation with our collaborators in Cuba, we decided to offer the fieldschool despite economic and logistical challenges. Our collaborators told us that welcoming the Cuba Ethnographic Fieldschool students to their home, in their cultural centres and institutions and in their communities will be a great help in supporting their projects. They also told us that students from abroad need to come and exchange with Cuban people so that information can be shared in both ways and that we can learn from each other’s life experiences. *Saber escuchar* is something we can do as students, anthropologists, friends, etc. It goes beyond the learning outcomes of this field school. It connects with all spheres of life.

This is our 5th edition of the Cuba Ethnographic Fieldschool and we look forward to continue our long-lasting partnership with our Cuban collaborators. This field school is addressed to students who are interested in exploring ethnographic approaches and methodologies with concrete experiences in the field and in a Spanish speaking context. In taking the students off the beaten track, this summer school will allow them to discover some of the unique contemporary cultural practices and social and economic dynamics that characterize the biggest island in the Caribbean.

The 2024 field school is based in Eastern Cuba (Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo and Baracoa) and combines two courses: Cultural Anthropology Field School Regional Topics (ANTH 382) and Cultural Anthropology Field School Methods (ANTH 381). ANTH 382 will adopt an anthropological perspective in examining the themes of economy, official and illicit systems of circulation and distribution, as well as Afro-Cuban religion, contemporary culture, and music. As part of ANTH 381, students will conduct small-scale ethnographic exercises (observation, participant observation and interview) that will provide a concrete feel of what is involved in conducting ethnographic fieldwork in a different cultural and linguistic context.

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The field school is organized in collaboration with [Casa Dranguet](#), a cultural centre located in the city centre of Santiago de Cuba. Students will visit and participate in two of Casa Dranguet's community-engaged projects: La Fraternidad Eco-archaeological site and the Caminos del Café's cooperative.



This field school is addressed to students who are interested in; acquiring in-depth knowledge of a local cultural milieu, engaging with Anthropology and Cuban Studies, contributing to diverse local projects, and meeting Cubans who contribute to the cultural and artistic life of Eastern Cuba.

COURSE CREDITS



Students will receive a total of 3 credits for ANTH 381 and ANTH 382 combined. 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 (UVic), Dr. Mélissa Gauthier (Uvic), and Dr. José Miyares (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 Casa Dranguet in Santiago de Cuba.

Detailed course syllabi will be available for download from the Department of Anthropology's website in March 2024.

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ACCOMODATIONS AND AMENITIES

Students stay with 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 rare occasions, 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 and in Cuban restaurants.



FIELD TRIPS

We will spend one day in Guantánamo and three days in the beautiful city of Baracoa. Three days will be spent in the remote area of La Fraternidad located outside of Santiago de Cuba. Field trips are organized almost every 2 days. For instance, as part of ANTH 382, we will learn Afro-Cuban dances with a dance group from Guantánamo and we will meet a religious priest 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 spend time with 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.

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LANGUAGE

Alexandrine and/or MéliSSa 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 \$2,800** is **IN ADDITION TO** the cost of mandatory registration in ANTH 381 and 382 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 \$1,500 CAD (return) though subject to change. The approximate total cost for the field school for Canadian students is **\$5,300**. This does not include personal expenses while in Cuba (souvenirs, free time, etc.) and private health/travel insurance. The field school fee (\$2,800) includes accommodations, workshops and fieldtrips, land transportation within Cuba, and food for the duration of the field school.

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTORS



Dr. 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 has already organized and coordinated four ethnographic field schools in Cuba offered by the Department of Anthropology at UVic (2014; 2016, 2018, 2023), which were great successes. She looks forward to embarking on her fifth experience with another group of motivated students!

Dr. MéliSSa Gauthier is a cultural anthropologist who specializes in economic anthropology and border studies with particular attention to the intersections of culture and economy. As part of her work on urban livelihoods and informal economies, she has conducted extensive fieldwork with Mexican cross-border traders along the U.S.-Mexico border and the border between Mexico and Belize. Her teaching interests include economic anthropology, borders, migration, globalization, research methods, street economies in the Global South and consumption. MéliSSa led and taught the 2023 Cuba Ethnographic Field School and she is excited to participate again in 2024.

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In Cuba, Dr. José Miyares from the Casa del Caribe, will share his wide-ranging knowledge and passion for Cuban culture and history.

TESTIMONONIALS FROM PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIELD SCHOOLS



“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

Monday, November 6, 11:30AM-12:30PM and **Thursday, November 9, 11:30AM-12:30PM, Cornet Building, room B237:** Information sessions.

December 8, 2023 - Friday: Application and waiver forms returned to Department of Anthropology main office in Cornett B228 by 4:00pm. These forms will be available by the end of October for download from the Department’s website on the field school page.

December 18, Friday: Applicants notified of acceptance by email.

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January 15, 2024, Monday: 50% deposit due in the Anthropology main office Cornett B228 by 4:00pm (refundable only if the field school is cancelled).

February 26, 2024 - Monday: Full balance of payment due in the Anthropology main office Cornett B228 by 4:00pm (refundable only if the field school is cancelled).

March – 4 days: Intensive **mandatory** workshops at UVic. Dates TBC. It is possible for students who are not in Victoria to join via zoom.

May 27-June 17, 2024: Field 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:

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