

Cuba Ethnographic Field School 2020

Audio-Vision in Revolution

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



Field school: July 13 to August 3, 2020
Pre-field-school: April 18-19 and 25-26, 2020

DESCRIPTION

The theme of the 2020 summer school in Cuba is “Audio-Vision in Revolution.” This field school is addressed to students who are interested in exploring ethnographic audio-visual approaches and methodologies.

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.

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The 2020 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 instructors, 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. As part of ANTH 395, you 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.

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 393 and ANTH 395 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. Eleonora Diamanti (University of Antwerp / John Cabot University (Rome)) and Dr. José Miyares (Casa del Caribe), as well as workshops led by

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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 2020.

ACCOMODATIONS AND AMENITIES

We will 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 (*paladares*).



FIELD TRIPS

The core of the summer school will take place in Santiago de Cuba during the famous carnival. 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 393, 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

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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.

LANGUAGE

Alexandrine and/or Eleonora 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, 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 three ethnographic field schools in Cuba offered by the Department of Anthropology at UVic (2014; 2016 and

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2018), which were great successes. She looks forward to embarking on her third experience with another group of motivated students!

Dr. Eleonora Diamanti is a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Visual and Digital Research Center, Department of Communication Studies at the University of Antwerp and teaches at John Cabot University (Rome). Her research interests relate to visual culture, urban life, arts, creativity, and media. She participated to the second ethnographic field school and was an instructor and coordinator for the third field school. She speaks fluently Spanish, and has an in-depth knowledge of local conditions.

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

- **October 17, 2019 - Thursday:** Information session, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Cornet A319.
- **November 15, 2019 - 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 September for download from the Department’s website on the field school page.
- **November 21, 2019 - Tuesday:** Applicants notified of acceptance by email.

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- **December 13 2019 - Friday:** 50% deposit due in the Anthropology main office Cornett B228 by 4:00pm (refundable only if the field school is cancelled).
- **February 19, 2020 - Wednesday:** Full balance of payment due in the Anthropology main office Cornett B228 by 4:00pm (refundable only if the field school is cancelled).
- **April 18-19 and 25-26, 2020:** Intensive **mandatory** workshops at UVic. These occur on a Saturday and Sunday.
- **July 13 to August 3, 2020:** 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:

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

<http://anthropology.uvic.ca/>

