

Archaeology Field School, 2009



A Colorado—and Idaho—Rocky Mountain High!

The "Rocky Mountain High" field school has operated for nearly a decade, and it has become increasingly popular because students gain a broad range of experiences that most other field schools do not offer. In summer 2009 this will be truer than ever before.

The summer 2009 field school will encompass most of the summer. Rather than simply working in a 1X1 m excavation unit for a few weeks and then heading home, students will participate in every element of a robust archaeological research program, starting in the field, and concluding with artifact analysis and the write-up of results.

Participants will earn 8 credits: 5 for "archaeology field school" (Anth 5310) and 3 for "archaeology lab" (Anth 5310). These credits have always readily transferred to other universities and colleges, for students who join us from institutions other than USU. To earn the credits, students will work four 10-day sessions in the field and two 10-day sessions in the archaeology lab on the USU campus.

The first three 10-day sessions will be based in the Gunnison Basin of Southwest Colorado. There, with National Science Foundation support, students will learn to conduct archaeological survey and will participate in a geoarchaeological project that involves recording prehistoric stone quarries. The PI and other project personnel are developing geochemical techniques to fingerprint quartzite (as we currently do obsidian), and students will help collect the samples we need to characterize the range of quartzite in the Gunnison Basin. In the process, students will learn to read geologic and topographic maps, work alongside geologists to reconstruct landscape formation process, and learn and practice traditional survey and site recording techniques.

The fourth 10-day session will again be field-based, but this time the team will move to a Paleoindian (11,000 - 8,000 year-old) site in southeastern Idaho, where Dr. Pitblado recently began a new field program. This will expose students to excavation techniques, including mapping using a total station, keeping detailed records of finds, and so forth. The Idaho project area is located within an hour or so of the USU campus, but we will establish a base camp nearby the site for the session. Students will

enjoy about a week off between the third session in Colorado and the Idaho field session, and it will fall over the 4th of July holiday.

The final two 10-day sessions will be lab-based, and will convene in the USU archaeology lab. Here, students will learn what most field school participants never do: how to process (curate) finds, analyze them, manipulate the data gathered, and write-up reports of field work. Students committed to careers in archaeology may opt to go one step further, presenting elements of our fieldwork at the fall 2009 Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference, an experience that can bring the work full circle (and provide wonderful networking opportunities for job- and grad program-seekers. Conference participation is optional, and something students can decide to do or not do over the course of the summer's work.

Students may wonder whether they can register for the field component of the project only. There may be slots available for such students; however, the P.I. will preferentially accept those students willing to commit to the entire summer. That is because the chance to participate in all phases of an archaeological research program is very rare, and students who take the plunge will by definition be highly motivated.

Important details:

- In-state and out-of-state students pay the same, low tuition during summer term at USU. An estimated \$1,600 in tuition plus a \$500 course fee will cover the costs of the 8 credits students will earn, plus camping, food and in-field transportation for the four 10-day field sessions.
- Qualified students will be accepted in the order applications are received. Upon acceptance, students must remit a \$250 deposit to hold their space. If a student later decides not to participate in field school, the deposit will be returned if the P.I. can still fill the spot (usually possible, because there is typically a waiting list)
- Non-Logan based students will have access to their choice of free or low-price housing for the lab-based parts of field school. Free camping is available within a ten-minute drive of campus, as is camping at more developed campgrounds. In addition, the P.I. has made arrangements for students to access rooms and apartments on the USU campus through August 13th, the final day of the project (the web site indicates an earlier required check-out date; ignore that). The PI can facilitate whatever accommodations a non-USU student may wish to pursue. For a sense of the costs of on-campus housing, access the USU housing web site: <http://www.housing.usu.edu/htm/summerhousing/summer-lodging>.
- All students are responsible for their own meals during the final two 10-day sessions in the USU lab. Non-USU students can rough it or opt for an on-campus dining plan (for info on the latter, see <http://www.usu.edu/dining/htm/mealplan>).
- Students are responsible for transporting themselves to the Colorado base camp, Idaho base camp, and to/from the Logan campus during the lab sessions. If you plan to fly out west, you will likely want to fly into the Salt Lake City airport and then ride to/from project areas with other participants. The P.I. will work with all accepted students to ensure they have a way to get where they need to be.
- Field camps will be rustic, with students occupying tents (which they need to supply) and the camp chef working in a hunter-style cook tent. However, there will BE a camp cook (a nice luxury), and showers will be available (though perhaps at least sometimes of the sun-shower variety).

- Non-USU students accepted to the program will need to complete an application form as if they were matriculating to USU permanently. This is just a formality (but it does cost \$25). The process facilitates transfer of credits to home institutions after field school/lab end. The P.I. will help admitted students through the application process.
- 8 credits represent more than half-time enrollment during summer semester, which means that some forms of aid and loans may be available, depending on a student's circumstances. USU students should check with the USU financial aid office to see if they qualify. Non USU-students should investigate options through their home financial aid offices.
- The six session dates are as follows: May 25-June 3 (Colorado); June 8-17 (Colorado); June 22-July 1 (Colorado); July 8-17 (Idaho); July 22-31 (USU lab, Logan, UT); Aug. 4-16 (USU lab, Logan).
- Students will enjoy breaks June 4-7; June 18-21; July 2-7; July 18-21; and Aug. 1-3. Students are free to do whatever they like over break, and all our bases, including Logan, are wonderful launching points for trips to truly wonderful places in the west.
- Application forms can be accessed at <http://www.usu.edu/anthro/intothefield.html>. The P.I. prefers to have the completed forms and scanned transcripts e-mailed to her (bonnie.pitblado@usu.edu). If you fill out a form by hand, please write legibly.
- Students should apply as early as possible and if accepted into field school, commit to the experience as quickly as possible. Slots fill very quickly.