



## **Penn Study Abroad in Guatemala: The Culture and Ecology of Health in Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala**

**Application deadline: April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009 at 5:00 PM by email  
No late applications will be accepted**

### **Program Description**

Since 2005, the Guatemala Health Initiative (GHI) has coordinated interdisciplinary **research, education, and service** programming involving the School of Nursing, School of Medicine, School of Arts and Sciences, School of Dental Medicine, Wharton, and the School of Engineering and Applied Sciences. GHI partners with the Hospitalito Atitlán (HA) and the community of Santiago Atitlán, Guatemala to develop and organize **community relevant programs** in improving the health of the Atitlán community. (Santiago) Atitlán is located in the Western Highlands of Guatemala on Lake Atitlán. The population is predominantly Tz'utujil Maya. The economy is primarily a subsistence economy augmented by tourism and labor emigration.

Through GHI, Penn students have performed independent research and learning programs including community health assessment, research in asthma care and health beliefs, and patient education videos project. Students (>100) from across the university have participated in various GHI programs. In 2007 and again in 2008, approximately 10 Penn students from the college, nursing, and medicine, performed investigations on motherhood and safe delivery. Their transformative experiences demonstrated the need, and marked opportunity, to develop an interdisciplinary academic program in community research training in Atitlán. Students who participated have applied for outside fellowships, found direction in their majors and career choices, and gained motivation in their global and community focus.

During the summer of 2009, we will conduct training in applied field research in public health and anthropology. Those studying with GHI over this summer will be addressing several of the programs' goals and research interests. We will be conducting community-wide surveys to obtain baseline data on women's reproductive histories, capturing oral histories of violence and loss, evaluating water quality issues and developing potential interventions, conducting visual anthropology research concerning the use of multimedia tools in medical health education, and conducting ethnographic interviews regarding midwifery and nursing practice and identity. Student participants will also participate as subjects in increasing the understanding of international and intercultural education and research training.

Students may participate for academic credit or independently. Students from outside institutions must register as Penn students for academic credit.

## Important dates

Application deadline	5 pm, 17 April 2009
Group meeting for eligible applicants	4 pm, 22 April 2009
Students will be notified of acceptance	27 April 2009
Pre-training meeting	6, 13, 20 May 2009
Intensive, on-campus training	26 May 2009
Departure for Guatemala	30 May 2009
End of in-situ data collection	31 July 2009 (may be extended)

## Program details

Students will live in homestays during their time in Atitlán. The homes in which students have been placed vary a great deal. All have indoor bathrooms; some have hot water and some do not; all have flush toilets. Students can take their meals with their families or independently in restaurants around town (not included). Food and water borne infectious diseases have affected students in the past. For communication, there are internet cafes available in town. Mail service is unreliable. Cell phones (bought in Guatemala) are relatively inexpensive and reception is generally good. Guatemala has a history of violence and remains a safety concern of the United States Department of State. It is important for you to understand that some students consider living conditions quite Spartan.

Research will be carried out with mentorship from Penn faculty. Coursework consists of classroom and field based training, relevant readings, and applied field research. All students are required to have a conversational knowledge of Spanish. Most community level data are collected in Tz'utujil; students will use Spanish to Tz'utujil translators.

Students are encouraged to use this experience in the development of senior theses, masters' theses, doctoral dissertations, fellowship proposals, independent studies, and manuscripts for publication. We will be happy to assist you with these efforts.

## Program Costs

Expenses for participation are: \$2000 for program participation and \$1500 for living expenses and airfare. Living expenses include airfare, homestays, all group meals and travel, and program research expenses. Students may apply for fellowships and research support to defray costs.

Participants have the option to register for the Public Health course: *International Immersion in Public Health* (PUBH 598) for credit. Registered students pay only the \$1500 in living expenses. The course tuition covers the participation cost as well as the cost of the credit they would receive. Registered students are eligible to apply for financial aid through the University SFS to cover tuition and living expenses. All participants must pay the 1500 dollars in living expenses and either: register for the course or pay the participation fee.

## Expectations

- **ALL STUDENTS WILL DEMONSTRATE RESPECT FOR THE PEOPLE, CULTURE, INSTITUTIONS AND PROPERTY OF SANTIAGO ATITLAN. STUDENTS WILL RECOGNIZE THAT THEY ARE GUESTS IN ANOTHER CULTURE AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. AT NO TIME WILL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN ACTIONS THAT REFLECT POORLY ON THEMSELVES, THE UNIVERSITY OR THE US. THIS EXPECTATION IS NON-NEGOTIABLE. STUDENTS WILL BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE PROGRAM WITHOUT REFUND AND EXPECTED TO RETURN TO THE US IF FACULTY BELIEVE THEY ARE IN VIOLATION OF THIS EXPECTATION**
- **THE US DEPARTMENT OF STATE MAINTAINS EXTENSIVE INFORMATION REGARDING SAFETY, CRIME, AND VIOLENCE IN GUATEMALA, APPLICANTS SHOULD REVIEW THIS PRIOR TO APPLYING AND TRAVELING. [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) (**Guatemala SPECIFIC**)**
- In order to make this a meaningful experience for all concerned, we will expect all students to participate in a pre-trip intensive training program on campus beginning on May 20. Approximately two pre-training meetings will occur prior to the end of the semester.
- Once we arrive in Guatemala (tentative date: 30 May 2009), students will participate in an in-country orientation.
- Students will choose to work on one of the five research themes for this summer (see this summer's goals in the first page). Each student will work with the faculty to develop a research plan, collect data, write up their findings, synthesize their results and communicate these results to the project faculty.
- Students will be expected to conduct research for a minimum of eight weeks. In addition, they may plan two optional weeks for travel--one week in the middle of their stay and one week at the end of their stay (extending their trip to a total of 10 weeks). Extensions of travel are at the student's expense.
- Students will be expected to work as a team.
- Students will be expected to have up-to-date passports and vaccinations. Students should consult with their own travel physician prior to travel.
- Students with chronic medical conditions should contact their physician for clearance to travel to an area with limited health care resources. *Due to air quality and food/water issues, respiratory and gastrointestinal ailments are frequently exacerbated.*
- Students must have a working knowledge of Spanish (or Tz'utujil)
- Students will complete an on-line Human Subjects Research training program prior to leaving for Guatemala.

**APPLICATION (due by email at 5 pm on April 17, 2009.)**

(please return this application to Dr. Nathaniel W. Smith at [nws@exchange.upenn.edu](mailto:nws@exchange.upenn.edu))

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

When do you expect to graduate? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your major? \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about GHI?

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1. Describe your previous experience with community based service/research (Ok if the answer is "none")

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2. Describe your previous experience with international research/service (Ok if the answer is "none")

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3. Describe your Spanish Language Proficiency.

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