

**MAYA LANGUAGE STUDY IN GUATEMALA
OXLAJUUJ AJ: Kaqchikel Maya Language & Culture**

Intensive Summer Institute

ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

June 22 – July 31, 2009

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 20, 2009

Kaqchikel, one of the principal Mayan languages, is spoken by more than half a million people in highland Guatemala. The region's long traditions of language and literature, including texts from the 16th Century, continue today as new works in modern Kaqchikel are published in ever-growing numbers. Efforts to preserve and protect the language are playing a pivotal role in the Mayan struggle to regain control over their political and cultural destiny.

The Stone Center for Latin American Studies offers an intensive six-week course in this vital language and its culture, a unique opportunity to observe and study the complex process as a traditionally marginalized language is standardized for use in education and publication. Judith M. Maxwell, associate professor of anthropology and director of the Interdisciplinary Program in Linguistics at Tulane, is director of the program and serves as a resource and guide for students. Walter Little, SUNY-Albany, is the course co-director. Dr. Little works on tourism and selling the indigenous image. With the assistance of Kaqchikel teachers he plans cultural activities, develops discussions about Maya life, and organizes guest lectures from noted Maya scholars, activists, educators, and other professionals. The program is open to graduate students and advanced undergraduates with appropriate academic backgrounds and a working knowledge of Spanish.

This program is envisioned as a shared learning experience between students and teachers. While gaining access to Mayan culture, students also provide their Mayan collaborators with access to the large body of scholarship on their culture which has been published in the United States and in Europe.

The Kaqchikel course, Oxlajuj Aj, offers a unique opportunity to learn a Mayan language and develop an appreciation of a rich and vital culture in a congenial setting central to indigenous communities. The goals of the course are threefold: (a) to aid American scholars enhance their knowledge of a Mayan language and set of communities, (b) to supply Kaqchikel scholars with teaching materials in their languages and with "academic" perspectives on and references to their cultural reality, (c) to provide a forum for the interchange of knowledge between Mayan and non-Mayan students of Mayan languages and culture.

The elementary course participation is limited to approximately 10 non-Kaqchikels and 12 Kaqchikel Maya, so that cultural programming can include visits to communities, sites and institutions without undue disruption of each.

The course has two foci: language and culture. The language sessions are typically presented in the mornings and cultural activities in the afternoons. The following is a mock-up of a normal class day:

Daily Schedule:

8 - 9 a.m. Kaqchikel grammar, taught in Spanish, analytic presentation of materials already learned in group sessions; a group activity

9 - 9:30 a.m. New vocabulary/structures, team-taught monolingually in Kaqchikel, playlets, directed activities, and questions; group

9:30 - 10 a.m. Practice with new material, "patio" work, students address doubts, explore collateral areas of interest; triads, two students - one teacher

10 - 10:30 a.m. Second lesson presented; group

10:30 - 11 a.m. Practice with second lesson; triads

11 a.m. - 12 p.m. Student presentations of new material, games; group

12 - 2 p.m. Lunch break; down time

2 - 3:30 p.m. Cultural topic: lecture, visit to museums, sites, communities, artisans, etc.; group

3:30 - 5 p.m. Cultural activity; group

Location and Housing:

Students are responsible for getting to Guatemala and arranging for housing during their stays in Antigua. The course will arrange for housing during the stays in Juk'anya' and Tecpán. Students may choose to stay in hotels (moderately expensive \$20/day to \$100/day), in *pensiones* (relatively inexpensive (\$6-10/day), or with families as boarders. Room and board was running about \$100/week in 2007. If students are interested in the boarding option, the course can facilitate connection to families, but it helps to have some lead time, i.e., please indicate your interest in this option at least a month before the course begins.

For those students who do not board, food may be obtained in a variety of restaurants. Antigua has a gamut of eating establishments (and prices): from local cuisine (rare) to vegetarian to Pollo Campero (Central America's answer to KFC) to sushi, pizza, and falafel. Meals in restaurants cost \$3-6 dollars for mid-range food. You can spend \$100 on a meal in Antigua if you want to. Alternatively, you can eat in the market. Meals there run about \$2- 3 and typically are heartier than restaurant fare. Breakfast is served after 7 a.m.; dinner is only served until 6 p.m.

Health Advisories:

Antigua Guatemala is in the highlands, at a pleasant mile high. Temperatures are usually mid-70s in the daytime and high 50s at night. Tecpán and Comalapa are higher in elevation and so colder in temperature.

Daytime temperatures may reach 70, but with rains it may feel colder. Houses are not heated, so you need to have enough clothes to keep warm.

Dengue: Supposedly, Antigua is just above the cut-off altitude for dengue mosquitoes. Last year several locals contracted dengue, nonetheless, perhaps being bitten during their commutes to Guatemala City. The capital is in dengue habitat. Prophylaxis: Use mosquito repellent.

Hepatitis: The US Department of Health recommends prophylaxing for hepatitis in Guatemala as well. Gamma globuli is still the indicated treatment. You should take care of this in the States.

Cholera: Several cases are reported in Guatemala each year. Prophylaxis: make sure you do not drink unboiled water.

Bottled water is good. Soft drinks are a "healthy" alternative.

Amoebic dysentery: This is still the 3rd biggest killer of Guatemalans, disease-wise. We average 1-2 cases a year in the course, though our students get help right away and so are not life-threatening. Even though it is fairly easy to diagnose and treat "*turista*", it is a drag to be sick during the short time one has to experience Antigua, the course, Guate, etc. Prophylaxis: avoid unwashed vegetables and unpeelable fruits. Don't eat in the street, unless the food is cooked just for you, like roasted corn on the cob.

Malaria: Antigua is above the malaria line as well, as is the capital. However, if you go to the coast to swim, see archaeological sites, or just hang, you will need to prophylax. You can buy anti-malarial pills to take during sojourns in the low country for very reasonable prices in any pharmacy in Antigua, or in Guatemala. Consult with your physician for other preventative measures.

Time commitments, research, and getting a life:

As the mock-up of a typical day indicates, the student's time is pretty thoroughly scheduled during the *horas hábiles*. In off hours, the student is free to pursue his/her own interests.

Research – The following institutions could serve as valuable resources for participating students throughout the program.

The Proyecto Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín (PLFM), our host institution, is dedicated to the study, documentation, and dissemination of Mayan languages. They pioneered the teaching of Spanish as a cottage industry in Antigua.

Centro de Investigaciones Regionales de Mesoamérica, (CIRMA), has one of the best regional libraries. They also have an excellent photographic archive and darkroom.

CEDIM (Centro de Documentación e Investigación Maya) – is located in the capital. They also have a good research library and a staff of indigenous researchers. They are interested in forming research teams with academics working in Maya areas; they can provide liaison, institutional affiliation, and some person-power.

Archives – The national archives in the capital are available to foreign scholars, but their hours would preclude use during the course except on Saturday.

Museo Ixchel – This textile museum is affiliated with Universidad Francisco Marroquín in the capital. The museum conducts yearly studies of weaving in Guatemala, and accepts associate researchers. The museum houses a magnificent collection of *traje*, only a fraction of which is on public display. However, researchers may make appointments to study the archived holdings, under supervision. Appointments must also be made for photographing these holdings. Copies of all photos taken must be donated to the museum.

Other – Over the years, the course, Oxlajuj Aj, has established contacts with Maya working to promote their language and culture in a variety of communities and ways. Representatives from a

number of groups give lectures in the course and are willing to facilitate cooperative projects with course participants.

Recreation – Antigua is a tourist town. Amusement abounds. The town is a historical monument, recognized by the United Nations. Streets within the city must be cobbled; no neon is allowed, signs may not project from buildings. All facades must maintain a colonial air. There are a host of colonial ruins, open to the public. There are concerts in the park on week-ends. The course is in Antigua during the titular fair, and so we get the benefit of nightly concerts, fireworks (including the *torito* of Roman candles that runs out amongst the packed spectators), exhibitions, a book fair, foot races, and presentations by school children. Antigua has several good bookstores; most cater to non-Guatemalans. There are books in English, French, German and some Japanese. There are several coffeehouses /reading rooms. Three or four bookstores have structured sell-back plans. There is no real lending library. Note: CIRMA does not lend out its books.

Antigua also has several video-ramas, where you can go pay money to watch videos on a TV. Doña Luisa's, the unofficial gringo-headquarters of Antigua, a fairly decent restaurant, if you're not in a hurry, and a good bakery, has listings of what is on every day of the week at a couple of these places; plus there are a couple of English-language "What's Happening" newsletter published in Antigua and available at Doña Luisa's (and other spots), like Café Flor. (Doña Luisa's is also a good place to check for apartments to rent. They have a bulletin board just inside the entrance.)

Then there are bars. Sexta Avenida is the "strip." There are several bars along here. A couple of them have music on Friday and Saturday, with the usual postage stamp dance floor. There are several dance places: Macondo, where the capitalinos go to be seen; El Afro, with a tiny dance floor and good canned music; La Canoa, with a frisk search for men on entrance, but a big dance floor and varied canned music.

The coffee shop "place to be" Cafe Ópera has cappuccino, blends of coffee, and a wild assortment of cookies named after Indian language groups of Guatemala with no apparent rhyme or reason. A "hot" spot to see and be seen, but expensive, as you might expect. Café Condesa also serves good coffee and lets people study at tables unmolested except at peak hours. They have a Sunday all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet, which, for pensionistas who don't get fed Sundays in their homes as that is the *dueña's* day of rest, is a boon.

One of the local restaurants on Sexta Calle has art openings from time to time. These often feature local and Indian artists.

Gyms - There are a couple of gyms that cater to tourists, with some free weights, a few machines, and aerobics. You pay a daily fee or get a short-term membership. The course owns a basketball and there are several public courts in Antigua, as well as one high school that opens its gym for skirmishes. Soccer, of course, is the big sport, but the course's ball "disappeared." Nonetheless, teachers can scrounge a ball if someone wants to get up a game.

Dirt bikes can be rented on Séptima Avenida. If you are going to bike, you probably want a dirt bike. Bigger tires almost make it possible to sit down while still on Antiguan streets. La Retana, one of the local *finca's*, rents horses for riding. Occasionally, a squire will come right to the central square to rent the animals.

Several Indian communities are within walking or riding distance of Antigua. Care should be taken in hiking or riding, however. Muggings have been known to occur and gringos make likely targets. There are swimming pools, some with natural hot springs, in several communities around Antigua. In Jocotenango, there is a group of *naturistas* who run a sauna and reportedly give great massages, plus making a mean smoothie for dessert.

Volcanoes: Agua, a majestic volcano (Junajpu in Kaqchikel), towers over Antigua. It should not be climbed alone. One must check in with the town authorities in Santa María de Jesús, the highest community on the flanks of the mountain, before ascending, so that rescues can be attempted. Sometimes, teachers from our course will lead a group up for an overnight visit. This is a very iffy venture, since it is the rainy season and it gets cold up there even without being winter. Entrepreneurs in the streets of Antigua will offer to take you up Pacaya, which is actively erupting. This can be a very adrenalin-heavy trip, as the volcano ejects large chunks of rock, non-molten as well as molten. Lava does not just passively flow over a lip. People get killed every month or so on this particular trip so we strongly discourage attempting it.

Note on traveling: While the student can plan his/her down time as s/he pleases, we ask that we be apprised of any travel away from Antigua, so that we can facilitate attempts at "rescue" or communication from the States or elsewhere. We ask that during the course the student be informed by our community contacts about what regions are "safe." Most of our teachers do not live in the immediate environs of Antigua, but when the course moves out from Antigua they usually roam with it. This makes them available for socializing after hours; they make excellent companions for all sorts of activities. Past classes have taught the teachers several good American card games, including poker and "bullshit". Some students need the non-class hours to decompress and not speak Kaqchikel or Spanish; but if you are going for immersion; the teachers are *disponibles*. The course requires schedules activities for two of the week-ends of the class period. One during travel to the host communities, and one for the final "field" trip to a classic site.

Other towns: In recent years we have been making an effort to spend as much time as possible out of Antigua in Kaqchikel towns. In 2006, we were in Antigua only for the first two weeks and the last exam and party days of the course. We stayed for one week in Tecpán and for two in or near Panajache'l at Lake Atitlán.

Grand finale: The last day of the course, July 31, is the *clausura*. The class hours are dedicated to celebratory activities, skits, games, vengeance activities like teaching English to the Maya using the course methodology and sharing among the participants. The night is allotted for a "graduation" party, to which representatives of supporting Mayan organizations, such as the Academia de Las Lenguas Mayas de Guatemala, the Maya schools, and the Proyecto Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín, and our guest speakers are invited. There are formal *actas*, speeches (in Kaqchikel) by the students and as few others as possible, tamales, and marimba. The party lasts as late as the *guardián* is willing to stay up. This is a "must-attend". Do not schedule a flight out for Friday night. Saturday morning would be possible, especially if you don't go to sleep.

If you can stay on in Guatemala after the course, this is a good time to cement relationships. The teachers are very hospitable, both during and after the course. They will happily facilitate visits to and stays in their communities.

Courses:

The following courses will be offered during the program. Students have the option of taking either language-only for 3 credits or the 6-credit option. Course titles and numbers are as follows:

ANTH 684-60 BEGINNING KAQCHIKEL LANGUAGE
ANTH 757-61 INTERMEDIATE KAQCHIKEL LANGUAGE
ANTH 758-62 ADVANCED KAQCHIKEL LANGUAGE
ANTH 687-60 KAQCHIKEL MAYAN CULTURE

A final evaluation of spoken and written skill in Kaqchikel will be administered by the Kaqchikel instructors. An additional final prose evaluation can be supplied to the student and/or the sponsoring institution upon request.

Fees and Costs:

The cost of the six-week program is \$3,500 for the three-credit option and \$3,900 for the six-credit option. The cost will include the following:

- three or six 600/700-level credits from Tulane University
- medical insurance
- specialized tours and outings designed for participants in the program
- travel in between sites on the program

Please note that airfare and housing are NOT included in the cost of the program. Students can expect to pay upwards of \$600/700 for airfare and an additional \$600 for housing. Students participating in the program should expect to bring additional money to cover entertainment and other incidental costs.

FLAS Summer Fellowships for Kaqchikel Maya

This program does qualify as a FLAS-approved program. The FLAS Summer Fellowship program at Tulane is very competitive and involves a separate application process to be submitted directly to the main Tulane Stone Center for Latin American Studies office. Interested graduate students are advised to visit the Stone Center web site at <http://stonecenter.tulane.edu/> (see “Grants & Funding” section) for information regarding application procedures and deadlines. Students from other universities may apply, but priority will be given to those students who are enrolled in graduate programs at Tulane University. Please note that FLAS-fellowships are only available to those students at the graduate level of study. **Also note that the FLAS award funds only cover the three-credit version of our Kaqchikel program.**

Application Deadlines:

Complete applications (including application form, transcript, recommendation, and certification of Spanish competence) and a \$200 non-refundable deposit (to be applied toward full program cost) are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, March 20, 2009.

For more information and an application, contact:

SCLAS Summer Program Coordination Office
Cuban and Caribbean Studies Institute
Caroline Richardson Hall
Tulane University
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118-5698
504.862.8629 FAX 504.862.8678
e-mail: nporto@tulane.edu
Oxlajuj Aj Web Site: <http://www.tulane.edu/~maxwell/>

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Personal data

Name: _____ Social Security Number: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Maya name: (If you would have a Maya name, or prefer to have one ascribed by trait rather than date of birth, please list the trait(s) you would like to be identified by.)

Institutional affiliation: _____

Academic status: undergrad graduate faculty/staff field linguist other (please specify)

Academic Background – Degree-seeking students, please list or summarize relevant course work. Post-graduates, faculty, and other professionals, state degree and sub-field.

Experience - Summarize relevant field or career experience

FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS: a) Do you or have you applied for a FLAS fellowship to attend this program? b) If answered YES to a): Have you been awarded a fellowship? from what institution? If you have not been informed yet, when will you know?

Statement of Purpose

Please address the following considerations: (a) how learning a Mayan language (and Kaqchikel in particular) will help you in your work, (b) how a co-learning experience with Kaqchikel Maya speaker/instructor/co-learners will help you, (c) what future work you foresee for yourself that will feedback into the host community ("host community" to be defined as narrowly as Kaqchikel or as broadly as you may)

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Letter of Recommendation

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of recommender:

Position:

How long have you known the candidate?

In what capacity?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (where higher is better), how would you rate the candidate's chance of successful participation in the kind of group learning situation described in section # 3 of the following page?

On this same scale, how likely is the candidate to go on to work with Maya or other communities which would benefit from this training?

The person named above is applying for admission to the Kaqchikel Maya Intensive Summer Language and Culture Course. Please make your comments in light of the following considerations as well as your knowledge of the applicant. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

1. Background in:

- # development/modernization
- # indigenous cultures
- # language theory and use
- # Latin American history
- # anthropology/ethnology

2. Intellectual ability:

- # language aptitude
- # motivation for independent inquiry
- # ability to integrate and synthesize information in a variety of formats

(continued next page)

3. Emotional maturity and flexibility:

willingness to participate in group activities (Here please note that the course is "intensive". A group of 20 people learn, often travel, and live together for six weeks. Down time and alone time are at a premium. Moreover class activities constantly require individual participation before, in and with the group.)

willingness to experience alternate teaching styles (The course uses a full-body involvement methodology. Analyses are presented only after vocabulary and structures have been situationally acquired. This may stress-out those who are wholly left-hemisphere dependent.)

respect for others, other cultures, other values and belief systems

tolerance for inefficiencies, especially, though not exclusively, those ascribable to third world bureaucracy

willingness to assume responsibility for self-directed study

4. Career potential

ability to apply knowledge/experience gained to furthering personal career goals

ability to use this professional development in furthering the needs/goals of Mayans

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Spanish Fluency Evaluation Form

Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Evaluator:

Position:

Affiliation:

The person named above is applying for admission to the Kaqchikel Maya Intensive Summer Language and Culture Course. This course involves six weeks of living and studying in Guatemala. The participant will live in Antigua Guatemala and two Indian communities and will need Spanish to carry out daily activities. More crucially, the part of the course dealing with culture will be taught primarily in Spanish, with only later lectures and demonstrations being conducted in Kaqchikel. Speakers will, by and large, speak Standard Guatemalan Spanish, though a few demonstrations such as cornfield care, bone-setting, midwifery, and basket-making, will be presented by rural speakers. Ability to understand spoken Spanish at a normal speed is a sine qua non for adequate interaction in the course. Nevertheless, the focus of the course is not Spanish. The student need not be a proficient speaker, though oral participation is required. The student must be intelligible and able to frame ideas coherently in Spanish. Grammatical correctness, idiomatic polish, and familiarity with literary works are not required, (though a working knowledge of hot salsa and soca hits is helpful). The need is for functional language use, not aesthetic form.

With this in mind, please rate the individual's control of Spanish along the following crude scale:

- _____ hasn't a clue,
- _____ can communicate basic needs (Tarzan Spanish),
- _____ can carry on conversation concerning immediate experience,
- _____ can discuss abstract ideas, argue, persuade, joke,
- _____ can discuss academic/technical issues easily,
- _____ native fluency

Please indicate method of evaluation:

Please add any additional commentary which would aid us in the selection process.

Thank you for your helpfulness!