

Mount Royal College

Ecotourism and Outdoor Leadership

Field School to

Central America 2007

Information Package

**Mount Royal College
Department of Physical Education and Recreation
Studies**

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ETOL Field School to Mexico and Belize 2007

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1. Introduction

During May of 2007 the Ecotourism and Outdoor Leadership (ETOL) program at Mount Royal College will offer the (third) ETOL international field study opportunity to Central America. For the first time the ETOL program would like to extend this opportunity to students from select institutions in Canada. There will be approximately 6 non-ETOL student spots available (10 ETOL students and 6 non-ETOL students and 2 instructors)

The ETOL Field School to Central America is intended to provide senior students with an opportunity to experience and study different approaches to Ecotourism and to contribute to its responsible growth internationally. The field school will take place during May 2007 and it will include two courses (6 credits) the ETOL 4405 Ecotourism Issues and ETOL 4409 Applied Leadership course. A student considering this experience should expect to pay about \$4,900 CN, and includes all cost pertaining to the six credits offered. Registration will occur in September of 2006.

2. Educational Objectives

The goal of the ETOL Field School to Central America is to facilitate the following educational outcomes within each participating student:

- Sound knowledge of Ecotourism development and issues within Mexico and Belize;
- Ability to understand the planning and execution an international Ecotourism travel experience;
- Ability to conduct basic primary research towards addressing an applied Ecotourism question;
- Ability to compare the strengths and weaknesses of different Ecotourism systems;
- Ability to recognize various Ecotourism development strategies and understand the role, advantages and disadvantages of each;
- Enhanced understanding of international travel within the context of Ecotourism; and
- Enhanced leadership skills which translate into heightened marketability



3. Timing and Duration

The ETOL Field School will operate during the month of May 2007. It will involve:

- On going communication with the instructor from October 2006 to May 2007
- Pre-trip preparation from May 1 to 3 2007
- Field School from May 4 to May 26 2007
- Final assignments are due June 7, 2007

4. Program Cost

The total cost of the field school is **approximately** \$4,900 CN for the following:



\$2,400 - Personal student expenses including: Tuition, General Fees, Airfare, Meals not covered by group excursions, insurance, typical spending money; and

\$2,500 – Group Travel Costs including, accommodation, ground transportation, field trips, gratuities, other (airport, net. fees), contingency Fee, administration fee, international Instructional costs

*Note that the College has allowed tuition to be directly applied to the cost of the field school operation that significantly reduces the cost to the student.

The itinerary will be developed to ensure that the cost to the student is minimized for example wherever possible the group will stay at camp grounds versus hotels, travel using public transit, and utilize MRC outdoor gear where needed.

The International Office of Mount Royal College will collect a total of \$2,500 (Section B, above). The remainder of \$2,455 (Section A, above) consists of pre-trip purchases and travel funds.

The \$2,500 fee will be collected in three (3) separate instalments.



5. Credit Transfer and Courses Involved

Students should communicate with their department head and/or academic advisor to determine whether the two MRC courses that are offered through the field school (ETOL 4405 and 4409) will be recognized for transfer credit to the students' home institution. Students should undertake this process well in advance of applying to participate in the field school. Faculty at the home institution that are require further details about the course in order to ascertain transferability should contact Joe Pavelka (instructor for the field school) and Mark Lafave (Chair, Department of Physical Education and Recreation Studies).



I. ETOL 4405 Ecotourism Issues

This course will involve the conduct of secondary and primary applied research in Belize and to a lesser extent Mexico. Students will also be required to do research and present interpretative presentations along the way.

II. ETOL 4409 Applied Leadership

The focus of this course is the study of travel leadership in group situations. It will involve intense study of trip planning aspects including risk assessment and mitigation, program planning in an international context and peer instruction.

Detailed course outlines are available upon requests.

6. Student Eligibility

Students eligible to enrol in the 2007 ETOL Field School to Mexico and Belize are:



- Registered as full time students at one of the targeted institutions
- Will have completed courses related to community development, tourism development, 'eco' or sustainable tourism, cultural tourism
- Be able to partake in physical activity at a medium level – sea kayaking, and jungle trekking
- Have a valid passport and legally eligible to travel internationally

7. Selection Criteria

First students must be deemed to be eligible for the course (Section 6) and once that is determined other selection criteria will include:

- Academic standing – those with higher grades will have preference
- Letter of intent – those who can demonstrate a strong fit between the course and his/her education and career objectives will have preference
- Letter of reference from an instructor who can speak to the students' potential for an international group educational experience
- Other factors such as ability to speak Spanish, related background and courses and demonstrated ability to work independently will also be considered
- Ability to pay for the course – those who can demonstrate a sound ability to pay for the course will have preference



8. Application Requirements

Application for the ETOL Field School to Central America will involve:

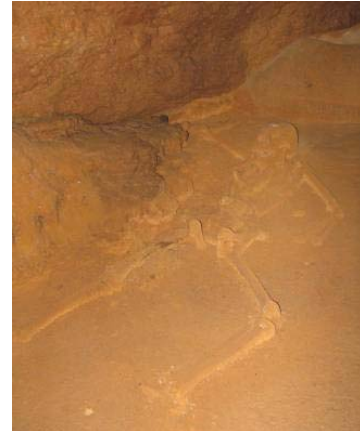
- Submission of letter of intent – a one-page explanation of how the student believes the field school experience will enhance her/his education and career goals; along with
- Letter of Reference
- Transcript – unofficial is acceptable
- Payment strategy – a one-paragraph explanation of how the student intends to obtain the funds to pay for the course.
- Completed application survey (posted on the MRC website)
- A check for \$700 CN made out to Mount Royal College re: ETOL Field School 2007

Note that students who are not successful will have the \$700 check returned to them – those who are successful will have that amount credited towards the total amount due.



9. Tentative Itinerary

The **tentative** itinerary for the 2007 Field School will include 3 to 4 days of intense preparation at Mount Royal College prior to departure. Departure scheduled is May 6th 2007 and we arrive in Belize City and travel to Caye Caulker to begin our research projects. A second leg of the field school will involve a in-land or jungle site where we spend the majority of our time studying eco-tourism and guiding practices. This will be followed by a 4 to 5 day sea kayak trip in through the cayes but within the reef. The last leg of the field school will involve a week to 10 days in Mexico working with students at the Universidad de Quintana Roo in Chetumal and studying tourism impacts along the Costa Maya.



A more detailed travel itinerary will be provided at the November group meeting and a finalized itinerary will be provided at the March group meeting.

A Typical Day...

A typical day, that is not a travel or special activity day, will involve a morning group meeting to ensure that each group has a plan for the day. The day itself will require that each student focus (and expend a great deal of time and energy) on the conduct of the research. Consider that a



minimum of 40 interviews are required – that will likely only be obtained on non-travel and non-special activity days –additional time will be needed to orient and get established within each site, initial analysis of each interview will also be required. This does not include work to be carried out on all other assignments. The day will end with a de-briefing meeting.

10. Important Dates

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| a.) Student applications are due (with \$700 deposit) | October 6, 2006 |
| b.) Students are notified of status | October 20, 2006 |
| c.) Second instalment of fees (\$900) due | November 24, 2006 |
| o Evidence of passport is due at this time | |
| d.) Third instalment of fees (\$900) due | February 23, 2007 |
| o Evidence of valid airline ticket | |
| o Evidence of course registration | |
| o Evidence of all required inoculations, etc. | |
| e.) Course begins | May 1, 2007 |
| f.) Travel begins | May 6, 2007 |
| g.) Travel ends | May 28, 2007 |
| h.) Final assignment ETOL 4405 due | June 10, 2007 |

11. Assessment of Health and Security Risks

Belize is a safe third world country, where outside of Belize City crime is rare. Guidebooks differ in their opinions as to whether the dangerous reputation of Belize City is deserved or not. This trip is planned so as to minimize time in Belize City. The country is politically stable and is relatively prosperous in Central America. The fact that English is the official language of Belize reduces the potential for danger due to misinformation or misunderstanding. For students in this field school, who will be well prepared (i.e. trained before we go) to conduct themselves safely and courteously in their dealings with the people of Belize, the health and security risks will be minimal. Belize is also a very popular Ecotourism destination and host to numerous Canadian visitors each year.



The rain forests of Belize and Mexico (Quintana Roo region) contain several potentially dangerous species such as the fer de lance snake, jaguar and the mosquito – malaria is present in these regions. All appropriate precautions will be taken including minimization of time spent in the jungle, liberal use of insect repellent, malaria medication if a student insists, and the use of professional local guides when on the water or in the jungle.

Travel safety and jungle safety will be discussed along with other risk assessment and management topics within the mandatory meetings and pre-trip classes.

Chetumal, Mexico is small coastal city that encompasses the Universidad de Quintana Roo which Mount Royal College has an on-going relationship. The town is small, safe, and Spanish speaking. Our activities will be carried out within the city or with Universidad de Quintana Roo faculty as guides (e.g. sea kayaking). Student assignments and travel will be carried out in groups of three so as to maximize both language capability and safety. Any additional excursions will be carried with professional guides/services.