Mexico Field Research Program

Mentor Profiles & Location Information
Hi! I’m Gracia Imberton, mentor in Chiapas since 2008. I am a social anthropologist (PhD in Mesoamerican Studies, UNAM), and I do research among indigenous people of Chiapas, mainly the Chol group. I work at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas on subjects such as anthropology of illness and suicide, and am currently starting a project on Chol indigenous youth in the face of global changes. What is the impact of globalization on this social sector? For example, most indigenous youngsters are not interested in agriculture any more but want to attend college and/or work and live in the city; dating (in secret) is now common as youth are demanding their right to romantic relationships and to choose their partners; new and varied forms of consumption are introducing different lifestyles (cell phones, fashionable clothes, haircuts, music, among others).

Chiapas is a state with great cultural, linguistic and socio-economic diversity, and there are many different research subjects. FRP students have worked on Central American and Mexican migration to the United States; gender and violence against women; allopathic medicine in the indigenous environment; development policies such as Ciudades Rurales, among several others. Those interested in FRP-Chiapas are invited to join the project on indigenous youth or to work on topics of your choice, with the help of the mentor and specialists in your subject.
I am Marina Alonso Bolaños. I am an anthropologist, ethnomusicologist and historian. I am currently a research professor at the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH). I have been a mentor with the FRP since 2008.

Our combined areas of expertise allow students to focus on a variety of topics of social interest and bearing, but student are also encouraged to look beyond our areas of specialization since our support lies in methodological and theoretical groundwork too. Recent field research subjects in D.F. include: alternative economies; the anthropology of food; traditional Mexican dancers (“concheros”) and their organization; popular and traditional music; the indigenous communities living within Mexico City; women’s human rights and the politics of memory; the current art and meaning of traditional retablos (pop art pieces to thank saints for miracles); among many more.

Mexico City is a major tourist hub and is home to people from all over the nation. It is the nucleus of federal powers and a focal point for civil and minority rights. It has a thriving arts scene and offers many sights and experiences. There are a plethora of opportunities to undertake field research in this city.
I am a social anthropologist, a graduate of the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Mexico City), with a master’s degree in Education from the Center for Research and Advanced Studies of IPN (National Polytechnic Institute) and a master’s in the Sociolinguistics of Bilingual Elementary Education from UPN (National Pedagogical University) in Oaxaca, where I currently teach. My doctorate is in Intercultural Studies, from the University of Granada, Spain.

I have participated in the University of California’s Field Research Program since 2000. One of the lines of research that I have developed is centered on education policies directed toward indigenous populations, which has allowed me to make ethnographic studies of educational processes in indigenous schools in the state of Oaxaca and in other cultural contexts, such as in Bolivia and Nicaragua.

Oaxaca is a place of linguistic and cultural diversity, where one can study phenomena linked with identity and the maintenance and displacement of indigenous languages, for example. There are also themes connected with the impacts of migration, social movements, the transformation of cultural practices, and the organization of indigenous communities, within a framework of globalized societies integrated into national markets. For all these themes there are research projects and researchers in the state who can help those interested in developing their investigations in Oaxaca.
I hold a Ph.D. in Botany from the University of California, Riverside, a Masters degree in Biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from UNAM. Currently, I work for the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán in the Campus of Biological and Agronomical Sciences, in the Department of Management and Conservation of the Natural Tropical Resources where I serve as professor of Agroecology and Agroforestry.

The Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán is well positioned to develop local and regional efforts aimed at improving conservation and management of tropical resources. Currently I work in the establishment of Local Human Development Agencies in three regions of Yucatan State. Research conducted has two characteristics: 1) it is interdisciplinary; 2) it is participatory research. I coordinate the agroecological participatory research and training in management of homegardens and agroforestry systems where students can collaborate with locals on the projects; living in their homes and working with them to exchange knowledge and share ways of living. Perspectives are challenged and shared, while respect is given to knowledge steeped in place and local experience. Through hands-on work, students may apply diverse skills and learn about Mayan rural communities.

Yucatan Peninsula is well known for the Maya culture and is one of the safest places in Mexico.