Looking for an exciting way to spend your summer?
Interested in researching fascinating cultures in a beautiful county?
Want to do all of these things *and* get school credit?
Consider Dr. Michael Alvard’s Ethnographic Field School in Dominica!
Overview

Students will learn about culture, geography, and history of the small Caribbean island nation of the Commonwealth of Dominica with a focus on its rural east coast. The course will expose students to local cooperative social institutions in the ethnographic context of the small village of San Sauveur. This course will immerse students in Dominican culture while training them in contemporary ethnographic field methods. Students will develop skills necessary to plan a research project, learn fundamentals of research project design, data analysis and interpretation of results, and writing research results. Students will gain research skills including ethnographic interviewing, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. The experiential aspects of the school will provide students with an appreciation for Caribbean cultural diversity as well as for the common humanity that we all share.

This course will take place from May 31st to July 1st in 2016. The course is formally listed as ANTH 330 in Howdy.

An orientation will take place in College Station from May 31st to June 9th, 2016 prior to travelling. The purpose of this will be to prepare students for the cultural differences in Dominica. Following this, students will spend from June 10th-July 1st travelling to, living in, and returning from, Dominica.
The Location:

Dominica is a Caribbean island nation of the Lessor Antilles and is among the least developed economies in the Eastern Caribbean with a total population is around 70,000. It is poor, developing, and diasporic with a long colonial history. The majority of Dominicans have ancestors who were descendants of African slaves and colonial European (French and English). The island was also the last redoubt for the pre-Columbian indigenous Carib people and today hosts a population of 3,000 in the Carib Territory along the northeast part of the island. This field school will take place at the village of San Sauveur, which has a population of around 100 and is smaller than the two villages located approximately 1 km to the north and south along the coast, each with a population of around 500–700 people. The rural inhabitants of the region have been characterized as marginalized, open, non-corporate peasantry. Most families in the study area practice small-scale, part-time farming supplemented with income from limited small business, wage labor (construction), and remittances. Some men fish. While small, the village is the hub in a regional network. It contains a regional Catholic church, a primary school, a medical clinical, a fish landing site and fishing cooperative, five rum shops, and a gas station. It is also the site of a small pineapple plantation and a bay oil factory.
What You Will Learn:

Students will develop skills to help them confidently travel safely and live in challenging international contexts. Students will develop skills in research design and ethnographic methods of data collection, including behavioral observation, GPS tracking, field mapping, ethnographic interview, and photo documentation.

What You Will Be Doing:

Students will keep a research journal to document their experiences. Journal entries will be made for each day. Generally, students will write at least one page for each daily journal entry. The specific journal requirements and grading rubric will be provided to students during the pre-departure meeting.

For one or more days, students will be assigned to assist data collection for the fisheries research project. Students will collect in-out data for all boats at sea; they will complete the GPS data collection protocol and provide a short report documenting the days fishing activities.
Each student will conduct two life history interviews with San Sauveur residents. Interviews will work to document individuals lives in the context of the rapid modernization occurring on the island. Each interview report will be minimum of 10 pages. Details and grading rubric will be provided to students during the pre-departure meeting.

During field trips to various sites around San Sauveur (Bayside, Bay oil factory, primary school) one student will be assigned the task of documenting the visit with photographs and producing a PowerPoint presentation with text that ethnographically documents the visit.

**How You Will Be Graded:**

This is the best part... documenting your visit! The daily journal you keep, the interviews you conduct, the time you spend travelling on boats, your written impressions of the field trips you take around the island, and your enthusiastic participation during this visit will make up your grade!

**Who to Contact:**

**Dr. Michael Alvard**

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**Full Schedule:**

**Week 1**

1. First week at TAMU: Introductions and overview
2. Dominican history and geography (Honychurch 1995)
3. Risk amelioration and situational awareness; Scenario training
4. Fundamentals of research design and analysis, plan group and individual projects
5. Discuss structure of trip, logistics, and packing.

**Week 2**

1. Depart CS; Overnight in San Juan
2. Arrive Dominica at Douglas–Charles Airport; Transportation to San Sauveur; Brief Orientation and move-in.
3. Settle in and San Sauveur and environs community tour
4. Day Trip to capital Roseau; supplies, bank, city tour, market, split into teams and do walking tour. Meet for lunch and lecture
5. Morning and afternoon: Bayside fish landing site. FAD project data collection training.
6. Mapping the village, learning to use GPS (Alvard et al 2013)
7. Sunday… Open… Wash clothes, hike up the river, swim in the ocean, go to church or not, sleep late…

**Week 3**

8. Half Day: Morning local agriculture… Afternoon, work on assignments
9. Hike to Rosalie Forest Eco Lodge; tour and discussion of ecotourism
10. Cooking lessons… traditional Dominican cuisine and cookout.
11. Half day: Meet with village council; discussion of local community governance; Afternoon, work on assignments
12. Childcare in Dominica (Petite Soufriere mother child youth development project
13 Rastafarian Day... Half day with Nyabinghi priest. Afternoon, work on assignments
14 Sunday... Open... Wash clothes, hike up the river, swim in the ocean, go to church or not, sleep late...

Week 4
15 Bay oil factory and/or Cassava factory; (Macfarlan 2010, p1-40)
16 Hike to Boiling lake, in the Morne Trois Pitons National Park - Dominica's World Heritage site
17 Half day visit to primary school; discussion of primary education in Dominica
18 Visit to Kalinago Indigenous Territory
19 Work on research projects
20 Bush medicine and house gardens (Quinlan 2004)
21 Attend cultural event (Isadore village Fete or St. Peter fishers Saint day)

Week 5
22 Finalize research projects. All assignments due by 11:59pm
23 Travel to San Juan... Overnight transit
24 Arrive back in College Station