 

**Medicinal Plants and Medical Anthropology in Cuba**

**Course Number: ##### Summer 2020**

**Dates: May 21 – May 30**

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**Course Description**

Cuba’s health care system is one of the most highly developed and innovative in the world. Cuba has a health care system that covers all its people. Medicinal plants are an important part of the Cuban health care system. This is both part of the Cuban culture and an economic necessity due to the high cost of importing pharmaceuticals from other countries.

This course on “Medicinal Plants and Medical Anthropology in Cuba” will explore the role of medicinal plants in the Cuban health care system. The course involves these educational components:

* Lectures on Cuban History and Health Care
* Visits to a medicinal plant farm, the Cienfuegos Botanical Garden, and an Art and Ecology Center
* Visit to the historic city of Trinidad and a visit to a Santeria Temple there
* Language exchanges with Cuban students to share Spanish and English

The program is being organized in collaboration with Rutgers Global – Study Abroad and the University of Cienfuegos, Cuba. The program is coordinated with Civitas - Global Education Services. The program goes for ten days. Each day will be packed with activities to get to know Cuba and its health care system, as well as broader ecological issues in the Cienfuegos area.

**University of Cienfuegos, Cuba**

Founded in 1979, [**La Universidad de Cienfuegos**](https://www.ucf.edu.cu/) is one of the fastest growing universities in Cuba. Its robust and active history of high performance and quality achievement makes UCf one of the institutional leaders in preparing Cuban society for the demands of the 21st century. Fully accredited by the Cuban Ministry of Higher Education, La Universidad de Cienfuegos system has nine campuses, two in the city of Cienfuegos and one in each of the other seven municipalities. The main campuses, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez and Conrado Benitez Garcia, flank the historic center of the city. The city center is a UNESCO World Heritage site in one of the most affordable and safest cities in Cuba.

**Course Learning Goals**

This course is one of the programs of the Rutgers Global – Study Abroad. Students will learn about the realities of Cuban society: through direct participation and interaction with people; through work projects at some of the places we visit; and through visits to key cultural, environmental and historical sites. Students will not only learn about Cuban health care, but they will develop a deeper understanding of what it is like to live in another society, where much of their taken-for-granted assumptions about social life are challenged on a fundamental level. As in any course whose basis is the discipline of Anthropology, I want students to appreciate the lack of clear-cut answers to deeply structural social problems. More specifically, my learning goals for the course are that students:

* Learn about the Cuban health care system, understanding the social context of medicine in a socialist country and in the context of globalization;
* Understand the realities of life in Cienfuegos, Cuba, with a special emphasis on the issues of access to health care for local families and communities;
* Develop a multinational perspective on health care systems as they operate in Cuba in comparison to the United States;
* Improve their Spanish language skills through language exchanges with Cuban students and participation in all aspects of the program;
* Participate wholeheartedly in work projects in the community;
* Reflect on their learning experiences;
* Face the challenges of life in a foreign culture with humor and graciousness, showing a respect for local customs and a maturity to deal with the inevitable challenges that will arise;
* Act as ambassadors for Rutgers University and their country, remembering at all times that they are guests in another land.

**Requirements and Grading**

Students receive grades in Medicinal Plants and Medical Anthropology in Cuba (1 credit) and Spanish-English Language Exchange (1 credit) through the Rutgers Center for Global Education. One of my roles as Faculty Director is to assist you in transferring those credits to fit with particular curricular requirements. Course outcomes are assessed using the following methods:

* Quality of student participation in the various program activities
* Student reflections on the language exchange experience
* Student post-program essay that assesses what they learned on multiple dimensions

**Attendance:** Participation in every class meeting, group outing and event is mandatory, unless excused for a valid reason directly by the Faculty Director. This is a short, intense program and every element is designed to further your understanding of the program learning goals.

**The following book is required for the course:** Linda M. Whiteford & Laurence G. Branch. 2009. *Primary Health Care in Cuba: The Other Revolution.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

**Assignments and Evaluation:** Assignments should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted to the Sakai Dropbox on the dates indicated. The grades are determined as follows:

* **Participation** (30%): Students are expected to attend and participate in all meetings and class events, including research and service activities.
  + - **Journal** (20%) – Students are expected to keep a daily journal of their experiences. This will be critical for writing the final papers. The journal should focus on different learning experiences each day.
    - **Final Papers** (50%) –After the program, students will write a final paper that reflects on the learning and growth that occurred as a result of all the activities in the program. Students will also develop a video and paper to reflect on their language exchange.

**Assignment Descriptions: *Final Paper***

After the end of the program, students will write a 5 page reflection paper. Students should assess their learning along a number of dimensions: What did you learn about health care in Cuba? What did you learn from living in Cuba for ten days? What did you learn about yourself in terms of your skills, cross-cultural strengths and weaknesses, and interests in possible future careers? You have had a wide range of experiences living, studying and working in Cuba for ten days. When I ask you what you learned, I am thinking of all these different experiences. Students can choose to review each dimension of the program as a learning experience or to focus on themes that cut across program activities. Feel free to be creative in how you do this.

***Reflection on Language Exchange***

With your Cuban student partner, discuss what you learned from the various language exchanges. Record at least a three minute video of a conversation about what you learned. In addition, write a two page reflection paper on what you learned about Spanish in Cuba and about what it was like to live and work in another language.

**Language:** Most readings, writing, and classroom discussion for this course are in English. Some of our field trips, events and activities are in Spanish. There will be interpretation services available during programs in Spanish. There will be several language exchanges with Cuban students where U.S. students will practice their Spanish and Cuban students their English. These language exchanges will be part of the Rutgers Language Engagement Project.

**Disciplinary policy:** There is a zero tolerance policy for student misbehavior while on this trip. Cuba is a more socially conservative society than the U.S., and you should conduct yourselves accordingly. Any reports of students getting into trouble with host families or local authorities may result in disciplinary action, possibly including the student returning home immediately and receiving a failing grade in the class. Students should know and abide by the Rutgers University academic honesty policy in preparing course work.

**Course Schedule:** Below is a list of the daily activities of the program. Students will receive a more detailed agenda for the program at the Rutgers Global-Study Abroad Orientation.

5/21 **Arrival Day**: Flight to Havana, Cuba; Bus to Cienfuegos; Check into Casas Particulares; Welcome Dinner

5/22 **Orientation:** Tour of University of Cienfuegos; Lecture on Cuban History; Walking tour of the city of Cienfuegos

5/23 Lecture on use of herbal medicines in Cuban Health Care System; *Language exchange with Cuban students*; Visit and work project at Museo “Gallego Otero,” an herbal medicine farm

5/24 Visit to UNESCO World Heritage Site of Historic Trinidad; Visit to Templo de Santeria Yemaya; Visit to coastal ecosystem of Ancon

5/25 *Language exchange with Cuban students*; Tour of Cienfuegos Botanical Garden; Meeting with Profs. Guarnaccia & Ojeda

5/26 *Language exchange with Cuban students*; Visit to Jobero Verde/Teatro de los Elementos

5/27 *Language exchange with Cuban students*; visit to El Nicho Nature Reserve

5/28 *Language exchange with Cuban students*; Visit to El Castillo de Jagua historic site; Visit to coastal ecosystem of Rancho Luna

5/29 **Depart for Havana:** Tour of Plazas of Habana Vieja; Final Dinner

5/30 **Departure Day:** Visit to Artisan’s Market San Jose; Visit to Plaza de la Revolucion; Fight to Newark, NJ