

# Summer Community Based Learning Program in Mexico

## 8-WEEK PROGRAM IN CHIAPAS AND OAXACA MAY 24 - JULY 23, 2010

In partnership with the Universidad Iberoamericana (UI), the American University (AU) Community Service Center is creating a new summer abroad volunteer program for students to immerse themselves in Mexican culture and social issues. They will team up with Mexican university students and be placed at various social service agencies in Chiapas or Oaxaca.

AU students will live either in apartments or homestays with UI students. During the day they will work in partnership with various HUMAN RIGHTS, INDIGENOUS GROUPS, OR FAIR TRADE BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS listed below. A faculty member from UI will be in the field at all times, one in Chiapas and one in Oaxaca, to guide the students through this experience via reflection meetings, advising (both personal and academic) and serving as a cultural liaison with the organizations and Mexican students. Students will be supervised daily by their project coordinator at the volunteer site.

Upon arrival in Mexico City, students will partake in a three-day orientation/introductory course, facilitated by UI (in Spanish) covering Mexican history, geography, cultural norms and social/political issues of the region.

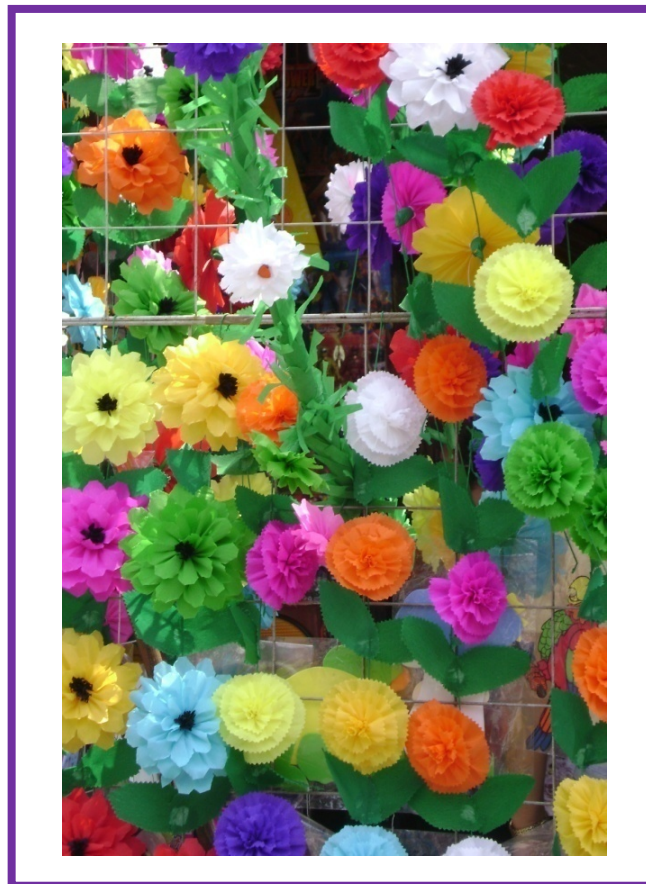
Independent study credits are optional and have an additional cost. They should be worked out individually with a professor identified by the student.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

- Fully enrolled American University student
- Speak a high level of Spanish (proficient)
- Interest in social issues in Mexico (human rights, indigenous groups, fair trade business)
- Ability to work and live with a multi-ethnic team with students from different countries
- Be open and respectful of cultural differences
- Be in good health and physical condition
- Maturity to live independently in rural Mexico

### ESTIMATED COSTS OF PROGRAM

- Airfare to Mexico City (aprox. \$600)
- Housing (aprox. \$200)
- Transportation (\$100)
- Food (\$1200)
- Orientation in Mexico City- 3 days (\$165)
- Application Fee & AU Insurance (\$180)
- *Total estimated cost to student= \$2,445*



### FACULTY ACCOMPANYING STUDENTS

Two professors from the Universidad Iberoamericana will live with the students during the program. One will be based in Chiapas and the other in Oaxaca. Their role is to accompany and advise the students in their work with the social service agencies, as well as academic, personal, professional and cultural issues.

### FIELD WORK

Students will be transported to their sites. Each project will have four students working as a team: two foreign exchange students and two Mexican students. The students will work on the projects according to the schedule worked out by the organization. Students will then have to report back on their progress to their project coordinators.

## SITE PLACEMENTS IN CHIAPAS & OAXACA

### Chiapas:

- CELALI- Centro Estatal de Lengua, Arte y Literatura Indigena (State Center of Language, Art and Indigenous Literature) San Cristobal de las Casas
- RICA- Red de Intercambio y Comercio Alternativo (Network of Exchange and Alternative Business) San Cristobal de las Casas
- Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matias de Cordova (Human Rights Center Matias Cordova) Tapachula (west coast)

### Oaxaca:

- Pina Palmera, Zipolite
- Intercultural Indigenous University Albergue Mixe, Santa Maria Alotepec.
- Jaltepec de Candayoc. Zona Tuxtepec



## TIMELINE

1. Recruitment: April 13 application deadline  
[www.american.edu/altbreak](http://www.american.edu/altbreak)
2. Selection: The AU Community Service Center will interview & select participants based on the above requirements.
3. Orientation: American University will prepare the participants with the following:
  - a. Official documents required for visiting Mexico
  - b. Geographic information about areas where students will stay
  - c. Description of the organizations
  - d. Overview of the projects
  - e. Guidelines for the program

## ORIENTATION

For the first three days that students arrive, they will stay in Mexico City for an orientation course prior to their placement at the field sites.



### Topics to be covered in the Orientation:

1. Mexican History & Geography
2. Origins of community service in Mexico
3. Current political situation
4. Regions where they will be working
5. Presentations about the organizations & projects they will be working with.
6. Psychological Challenges: students will talk about culture shock and coping strategies.
7. Interculturality and Indigenous issues
8. Human Rights
9. Immigration
10. Administrative components
11. Group building

## ASSESSMENT

The professor on site will follow the students' progress and accompany them during the field work projects.

## EVALUATION

At the end of the field work experience, there will be a site evaluation with the students, the project coordinators and the professors. At the conclusion of the program, students will receive recognition from the Universidad Iberoamericana for their participation in the Summer Community-Based Learning Program in Mexico.

Interested in learning more about this opportunity?

Contact - Shoshanna Sumka  
Coordinator of Global & Community-Based Learning  
Phone - (202) 885-2684  
Fax - (202) 885-1554  
E-mail - [sumka@american.edu](mailto:sumka@american.edu)

Apply online: [www.american.edu/altbreak](http://www.american.edu/altbreak)