

## First ethnographic field school off to promising start

### The group of anthropologists leaves Monmouth for Mexico mid-July

By Danielle Kuehnel

At the crack of dawn on July 11, a group of budding anthropologists will energetically load a 15-person van with their clothes, food and perhaps even some watercolors. But they're not preparing for any ordinary road trip.

They're the first team of Western students to participate in the anthropology department's ethnographic field school, which will take place along the U.S.-Mexico border from mid-July to mid-August.

The pilot project, led by fourth-year WOU anthropology professor and veteran Latin American anthropologist Dr. William "Doug" Smith, gives students the opportunity to conduct fieldwork and engage in cross-cultural experiences in Agua Prieta ("Dirty Water"), Mexico, the sister city of Douglas, Ariz.



**(LEFT-TO-RIGHT) Professor Doug Smith, Caterina Cortese, Amy Franzen and Scott Buhl ask questions and discuss the trip at a recent meeting.**

psychology, one post-baccalaureate student and Smith, with diverse projects that include ethnographic documentary, environmental-impact surveys, education studies and gathering women's oral histories.

"This is my first time leading a field school," Smith said. "Well, it's really my first time leading students anywhere."

"I'm excited, but with trepidation. This is new for me, and it's easier to negotiate challenges by myself, but it's different when you're in charge of a group," he said.

The research team consists of six undergraduate students with majors ranging from anthropology to

For senior anthropology major Scott Buhl, 32, the decision to participate in the field school was an easy one. After spending two years in Sierra Mista and Fort Huachuca, along with living in other areas of Latin America, Buhl said that the field school simply "sounded good."

“I’ll be looking at the effects of the industrialized civilization on people’s health,” he said. “I’m excited to be a part of the pilot group and the growing anthropology department at Western.”

Like many U.S.-Mexico border towns, Agua Prieta has become home to “maquilas,” or large factories, which impact the surrounding region in several different ways. While Buhl has decided to focus on health issues, Smith, who will also be conducting his own fieldwork, is interested in housing, and plans to create a documentary with the help of



**Kristin Andree (LEFT) and Caterina Cortese fill out paperwork with the Study Abroad office on Tuesday, June 28, 2007.**

between children and maquilas,” Franzen said. “I want to let [these kids] express themselves through a medium like painting, and I want to show the people at Western and the Monmouth community what it’s like to be a child living on the U.S.-Mexico border in the early 21st century.”

Ladrillera (“Brickworks,” a community within Agua Prieta) residents.

Senior anthropology major Amy Franzen, 22, on the other hand, plans to work with the children of Agua Prieta, who are also very much affected by the maquilas.

“I want to get in contact with the children whose mothers are factory workers because I’m very interested in the connection

between children and maquilas,” Franzen said. “I want to let [these kids] express themselves through a

“I’m really excited,” she said. “I was born to do this.”

Other students participating in the field school are senior psychology major Caterina Cortese, 20; senior psychology and anthropology major Kristin Andree, 21; senior international studies major Allison Thompson, 22; senior anthropology major Daniel Sprinkle; and Danielle Kuehnel, 22, who graduated in June 2007 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Anthropology.

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