



## GUATEMALA

February 15 to February 24, 2019

Faculty Leader: Shelley Price (Business)

Fee: \$2800

*Guatemala, a country of breathtaking splendor and diversity, is situated in central America between the Caribbean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Twenty-one Mayan ethnic-linguistic groups comprise fifty percent of Guatemala's population of fifteen million, and include indigenous Maya, Xinca, Chorti and Garifuna communities. Historically, a small elite has concentrated wealth, land and political power in its hands. Over four decades up to the 1990's, efforts on the part of non-governmental organizations to promote fair land distribution and the rights of the poor were met with repressive measures favouring the political and economic elites. Conflicts between guerilla movements and the Guatemalan army had brutal consequences for human rights activists and people in rural communities. Since 1996 and the signing of peace accords, communities, non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, and churches have been hard at work on the challenging process of reconstruction and peace-building.*

This Immersion Service Learning experience, organized for StFX by Lisa Rankin of Tatamagouche Centre, focuses on deepening awareness of community development in a post-war situation. The week begins near San Lucas Toliman, on the edge of beautiful Lake Atitlan and concludes north of Guatemala City in Rabinal, a community that has suffered from genocide. This experience provides students with an opportunity to gain an understanding of the hopes, efforts, and obstacles Mayan communities face - in land distribution, sustainable environmental and economic development, education, health, and fair trade. They will learn of human rights challenges community groups have faced in the past and are facing today and gain an understanding of the role development organizations play in building rural communities.

### Transportation

Participants fly to Guatemala City. A tourist van will transport participants to San Lucas Toliman, where they will use local transport. Participants later travel by tourist van to Rabinal, where they will again use public transport. The group will depart from Guatemala City Saturday afternoon and arrive in Halifax on Sunday.

### Housing and Meals

The group will stay in modest but comfortable hotels/residences. All meals are eaten as a group, with a preset menu. The menu is mostly local foods, as part of the immersion experience. Students will NOT have a choice of foods.

### Service Placements and Group Sessions

While visiting San Lucas Toliman, service opportunities will take place with community development projects in the region. These may include hands on learning at the Mesoamerican Permaculture Institute (IMAP), and the fair-trade coffee project of the Comité Campesino del Altiplano CCCDA (Committee of Rural Small Farmers of the Highlands). In Rabinal, participants will experience a cultural exchange with New Hope Foundation, a high school for Mayan students who normally are not able to continue their education.

*Immersion participants **do not need to speak Spanish** as a translator accompanies the group.*

**Friday February 15<sup>th</sup>**

Evening departure. Overnight flight to Guatemala City

**Saturday February 16<sup>th</sup>**

Morning arrival in Guatemala. Overnight in Guatemala City

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>**

Travel to Rabinal, visit monuments of genocide in Rabinal

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup>**

Visit New Hope Foundation School, Hike to Kayup

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup>**

Travel to Rio Negro

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>**

Hike to massacre site Pacoxom, return to Guatemala City

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>**

Travel to San Lucas Toliman, meet with the Highland Small Farmers Committee

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Day with the Mesoamerican Permaculture Institute (IMAP)

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Midday departure from Guatemala City. Overnight in Toronto

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>**

Afternoon arrival in Halifax



*Please note this schedule is **subject to change** based on a number of factors. Flight delays, available space and staff at facilities, to name a few factors, all play a role in the scheduling process. Students should be prepared to be flexible.*