

The Noble-Wieting Archaeological Project, Illinois, USA

Program Information

PROGRAM SPECIFIC FIELD CONDITIONS

What are the average weather conditions during the time of the field school?

Average temperature: 90s (F)

Humidity: 60-70%

Amount of rain: variable. When it does rain it is in the form of a thunderstorm, but it usually only lasts for a short time.

Wind: variable. On a normal day, 5-10 mph. Windy days see up to 30 mph gusts.

Variation between day and night: variable. Normally, nights cool down to 60-70 degrees F.

Please describe the site(s) where the students will work.

The majority of this project will take place outside, performing archaeological excavations. These excavations will mostly take place in a farmer's field located a mile north of a small town (Heyworth, Illinois) in east-central Illinois. Most days it will be sunny, hot, and humid. Several shade tarps will be available to shade the excavation area.

Students will also do some work in an archaeological laboratory in Champaign, Illinois. This lab is at Parkland College, a community college, which will be inside and air conditioned.

Are there special features of the program site?

The Noble-Wieting site, where we will conduct the excavations, is an isolated farmer's field just outside a small town in central Illinois; thus, there are no areas, activities, or infrastructure directly related to this cultural site. However, students will be staying in the nearby town of Champaign, home to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where there are a number of interesting cultural areas, scenery, parks, and museums that are worth visiting. The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts has regular concerts and events of varying genres; the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures has numerous exhibits on artifacts and materials from cultures all over the world; and the Krannert Art Museum has numerous exhibits and galleries featuring a wide variety of art in various mediums. There is also a well-maintained arboretum with walking trails. Additionally, there are numerous parks, restaurants, bars, shops, and other attractions that are available. In fact, students will be staying in an Airbnb house right next to downtown Champaign, which has a number of shops and restaurants.

There are several other nearby towns that are worth visiting. Springfield, the Illinois state capital a little over an hour drive to the west, has a thriving downtown with numerous museums and attractions (e.g., Illinois State Museum, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Lincoln Tomb, and more). Chicago, which is a 2 hour drive or train ride to the north, has plenty of places and activities that are worth visiting, such as the Field Museum of Natural History, the Adler Planetarium, the Shedd Aquarium, the Chicago History Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, Millennium Park, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Botanic Garden, and much more.

We will take field trips to two historical sites that do have relevance for the site and project – Cahokia Mounds State Park, which is 2 and a half hours from Urbana-Champaign, and Dickson Mounds Museum, which is about 2 hours from Urbana-Champaign. Both sites have museums with various displays talking about the Mississippian culture history of these places, and we will discuss how they are relevant to our field project. I will set up a tour of Dickson Mounds with my friend and colleague, Logan Pappenfort, who is a member of the Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma.

Will there be other people onsite with the field school or working in the same area?

An IFR curation field school will join us in the field for several weeks. They will excavate alongside us, and students from both field schools will interact and work together. In fact, students from both of these field schools will be staying in housing only a few blocks apart.

Additionally, there will be a number of other visitors to and volunteers at the field school. This includes professional archaeologists from the surrounding area, community volunteers, and potentially Tribal representatives.

What does an average week look like?

7:00 am-8:00 am: travel to field site

8:00 am-3:00 pm: fieldwork

3:00 pm-4:00 pm: travel to lab

4:00 pm-5:30 pm: lab work

6:00 pm-7:30 pm: dinner

After 7:30 pm: free time, readings, writing field journals, prepping for next day

1 day a week, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm: reading discussion

Weekends: free time, shopping, visiting nearby sites/attractions/cities, preparing for next week

What are the options for students to access money?

All typical options for accessing money in the USA are available in Champaign, where they will be staying. Students can pay with a card at most stores, shops, restaurants, etc. If they ever need cash, there are plenty of ATMs in downtown Champaign, a few blocks from where students are staying.

ACTIVITY LEVEL & ACCESSIBILITY

Please provide information about the physical requirements of the program.

Excavation during this program requires moderately strenuous physical activities like lifting 40 pounds, bending, kneeling, crouching, carrying. We will do minimal pedestrian survey, which will require walking about a mile at a time.

Please comment how accessible your site is for people with mobility challenges. Would someone using a wheelchair be able to participate? Someone who uses crutches or other assistive walking devices?

Given the field conditions, it is not possible for those in wheelchairs, crutches, or other assistive walking devices to participate.

PROGRAM COUNTRY & CULTURAL INFORMATION

What do you love about the country and area you work in? What do you think students will be most excited to discover?

The simplicity of life. Champaign is a medium sized college town, which is nice with all of the amenities that it brings, but we are working in a rural area just outside a small town, which is a nice change. Champaign is also close to a number of nice cities and attractions that are worth visiting. Also, the prairies of central Illinois are beautiful in their own unique way.

How large is the community where students will be staying? Will students have opportunities to interact casually with local residents? Please describe.

Champaign is a medium sized college town. Champaign is the sister city of Urbana. Together, the Urbana-Champaign area has about 150,000 residents. Students will undoubtedly have opportunities to interact with local residents. They will be staying in an Airbnb next to downtown Champaign, so they will be able to interact with people as they go about their business.

What are some things students may find surprising about the local culture?

Friendly, easy-going atmosphere with a fair amount of diversity.

What cultural enrichment opportunities are students likely to have outside of the program?

Champaign is home to the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where there are a number of interesting cultural areas, scenery, parks, and museums that are worth visiting. The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts has regular concerts and events of varying genres; the Spurlock Museum of World Cultures has numerous exhibits on artifacts and materials from cultures all over the world; and the Krannert Art Museum has numerous exhibits and galleries featuring a wide variety of art in various mediums. There is also a well-maintained arboretum with walking trails. Additionally, there are numerous parks, restaurants, bars, shops, and other attractions that are available. In fact, students will be staying in an Airbnb house right next to downtown Champaign, which has a number of shops and restaurants. There are also always a series of summer festivals and farmer's markets in the area at this time of year.

Will students have opportunities to explore other areas of the country?

There are several other nearby towns that are worth visiting. Springfield, the Illinois state capital a little over an hour drive to the west, has a thriving downtown with numerous museums and attractions (e.g., Illinois State Museum, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Lincoln Tomb, and more). Chicago, which is a 2 hour drive to the north, has plenty of places and activities that are worth visiting, such as the Field Museum of Natural History, the Adler Planetarium, the Shedd Aquarium, the Chicago History Museum, the Museum of Science and Industry, Millennium Park, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Chicago Botanic Garden, and much more. Indianapolis, Indiana, is a 2 hour drive to the east. I'm not as familiar with that city but there are numerous cultural sites, museums, and places to visit there.

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

Please describe student accommodations.

Students will be staying in an Airbnb (a large 2 story house) that has 6 bedrooms, 2 full bathrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, and a common area. It does not have laundry facilities. It has several parking spaces, and more parking spaces on the street.

Please describe how/how often students can do laundry.

Unfortunately, the Airbnb does not have laundry facilities, but there are numerous laundry facilities around Champaign where students will do their laundry. It will be most convenient for students to do laundry over the weekend, but it is certainly possible to do it in the evening if necessary.

How are room assignments made? If rooms are assigned according to gender, how will you assign rooms for non-binary, trans and queer students?

Before the field school begins, I will ask each student to fill out a form that indicates their roommate gender preference. I will make room designations based on their responses. The final designations will depend in part on whether there is an even or odd number of students who apply. It is likely that students will have to share a room, and I will make sure that those who do need to share are comfortable with their arrangements. That said, all students will have to share the kitchen and living room as well as bathrooms

Are there options for single rooms?

It depends on the number of students. We have a fixed number of bedrooms. If there is an odd number of students, there is no extra charge for staying in a single room; it will largely depend on people's roommate preferences (see previous question).

Will the program provide meals?

Yes, all food will be purchased by the program. I will take students shopping 1-2 times a week at local grocery stores to purchase food, but students will be in charge of planning and preparing the majority of their meals at the Airbnb. We will likely go out to eat 1-2 times a week to promote social cohesion, depending on the group feeling and budget.

Please describe typical meals that are offered by the program.

All meals will be planned and prepared by students. However, due to the schedule, breakfasts will be simple and quick – oatmeal, granola/breakfast bars, fruit. Lunch will also be simple, and it must be portable; examples include crackers, fruits and veggies, sandwiches, and chips. Dinners will be more planned, elaborate, and group oriented, specifically geared toward feeding a large group. Possible meals include salad bars, stir-fries, spaghetti, sandwich bars, personal pizzas, “breakfast for dinner” (e.g., pancakes, eggs, bacon), etc. Again, exactly what dinners students make is up to them. However, it is strongly recommended that students limit breakfast and lunch foods that require refrigeration, since fridge space will be limited.

TRAVEL (TO AND DURING THE PROGRAM)

If students will fly, what airport should they fly into?

Students are in charge of their own travel arrangements. The closest airport is the University of Illinois's Willard Airport, which is a 15-minute drive from the student house. It is possible to fly into other airports, but students will need to take Amtrak to get to Urbana-Champaign. For example, students can fly into Chicago O'Hare International Airport. However, they will need to take the Amtrak down to Champaign, which takes about 2 and a half hours. Students may also fly into Peoria International Airport, but again they will need to take Amtrak to Champaign, which takes about 2 hours. The Amtrak station in Champaign is a 7-minute walk from the Airbnb house; they can also take an Uber or taxi if they prefer.

If there are other ways students can get to the program, please describe.

Some students may prefer to drive to the field school if they are from the Midwest; there are several parking spaces that are available at the Airbnb, and on the street. They may also ride Amtrak the entire way if they prefer.

Where will you meet students? If not at a primary arrival point, like an airport, how should students get to the meeting point?

I will meet students at the Airbnb, or at the Amtrak station or Willard Airport, to help them get settled in the Airbnb. I will coordinate with each student so I am aware of their travel arrangements.

If the field site is not close to student accommodations, how will students get there? How long does it take?

I will rent a small bus from Parkland College and drive students out to the field site every day. It is about a 45 minute drive one way.

PACKING LIST

Required

- Water bottle(s) or jug(s) - must total at least 1 gallon
 - o Insulated containers are best
 - o I will have a large water cooler, but that is for backup/emergencies – bring enough for yourself each day!
- Sunscreen – at least SPF 30
- Hat – one with full brim is best
- Leather or garden gloves
- Sunglasses
- Bug spray
- Epi-pen (if applicable)
- Lunch box – we will eat lunch in the field, so have something insulated that keeps food cool
- Laptop or Chromebook – you'll need it for the lab portion of the course
- Field clothing
 - o Comfortable clothing is obviously ideal
 - o I wear shorts and a t-shirt during excavation
 - o If you are sensitive to the sun (meaning sunscreen isn't enough to keep you from getting sunburned), bring light long pants and long sleeves
 - o Bring a lot of socks, in case they get wet, trashed, etc.
 - o In addition to field clothing, bring casual clothes you can wear during evenings (after coming in from the field and showering) and weekends
 - o You'll be able to do laundry at least once a week
 - o Bring at least 5 sets of field clothes to cover the work week, plus several more sets of clothes to change into during the evenings/weekends
 - o Please understand that your field clothing will get dirty and beat up!
- Shoes
 - o Close-toed is a must – no sandals! Tennis shoes are a good choice because they are light and cool
 - o Bring 2 pairs in case one gets wet

- o Boots are not necessary for excavations, but they might be helpful (but not necessary) during pedestrian survey - no need for steel toed boots.
- Mosquito net hat (google it and you'll see what I mean!)
- Laundry detergent - you'll have access to coin operated machines in town
- Raincoat/rain jacket - we won't excavate in the rain, but having them for sudden storms and field trips is a good idea
- Knee pads or foam pad – useful if you have bad knees
- Bedding
 - o Pillow, if you have a particular preference
 - o Bedding will be provided!
- Toiletries
 - o Towel
 - o Washrag
 - o Soap
 - o Shampoo/conditioner
 - o Deodorant
 - o Toothbrush
 - o Toothpaste
 - o Brush/comb
 - o Nail clippers
 - o Feminine hygiene products
 - o Prescription Medication - enough for the entire program period
- Extra glasses/contacts, if worn

*Try to pack everything in one large suitcase and one backpack so that everyone has room for their stuff

*If you need/forget anything, there are grocery stores, Walmarts, Targets, etc. in Urbana-Champaign. Somebody will be able to take you if necessary.