



PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL PERÚ - PUCP  
FIELD SCHOOL PROGRAM IN PERU  
ARCHAEOLOGY IN SAN JOSÉ DE MORO  
A MOCHE CEMETERY AND CEREMONIAL CENTER  
2016 SEASON

GENERAL INFORMATION

Course:	Archaeology in San José de Moro: A Moche Cemetery and Ceremonial Center.
Location:	Chepén, La Libertad, Perú
Time period:	1month/4 weeks.
Number of hours:	180 hours.
Professor:	Dr. Luis Jaime Castillo Butters,
Associated Professors:	Mag. Elsa Tomasto (PUCP) Lic. Solsire Cusicanqui (Harvard University) Mag. Luis Muro (Stanford University)
Teaching Assistants:	<b>Julio Saldaña, María Claudia Herrera, Raúl Palomino, Karla Patroni (PUCP), Ema Perea (UNT)</b>
Coordinator:	<b>Julio Saldaña</b> ( <i>jmsaldana@pucp.pe</i> )

SUMMARY

San José de Moro is a small village located in the Jequetepeque valley on the north coast of Peru. The modern town sits on top of one of the most important pre-Columbian cemeteries and ceremonial centers of the Moche or Mochica culture.

Since 1991, an international group of field archaeologists and researchers from PUCP and other universities from all around the world have been conducting excavations in San José de Moro and other sites of the region. These investigations have recovered one of the largest

collections of burials in Peru, which allow us to learn about the customs and traditions of the Moches, as well as their political and social complexity. The most outstanding discoveries of San José de Moro Archaeological Program (SJMAP) have been a series of elite chamber tombs containing the remains of Mochica priestesses. In the monumental fortresses of Cerro Chepén and San Ildefonso, and in settlements and ceremonial centers dating from the same Late Moche period as SJM, research focuses on mapping and excavations of standing architecture, 3D modeling using advanced photogrammetry methods, paleoethnobotanical studies, etc.

Students will have the opportunity to study the cultural history of the Moches focusing on the remains recovered from the cemetery, which was occupied over the course of 1,200 years—between the 4<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century—and the associated settlement sites, where survey, excavations and mapping are conducted. The research program, thus, focuses on the birth, collapse and reorganization of the different societies that occupied the area during the pre-Hispanic era. Excavating at San José de Moro site will expose students to its complex occupational history encompassing the Chimú-Inca, Chimú, Lambayeque, Transitional, Late Moche and Middle Moche periods.

## OBJECTIVES

Participating students will have the opportunity to live a unique and intensive field and research experience. The Field School Program allows them to take part in the intensive excavation process at one of the most complex and important archaeological sites on the Peruvian coast. Moreover, due to the close relationship that the program members have with the town population, students are able to learn about and participate in the day-to-day activities of local inhabitants, who host them for lunch every day. Furthermore, SJM is the site of a community development program aimed at creating economic activities that support part of the local population, as well as many actions done in conjunction with local schools. During these activities, students will have the opportunity to interact directly with each other.

Field School students will be trained in the different aspects of archaeological field work, including extensive excavations at SJM. Instructors are the most experienced program members that will train students in the specific work carried out at the site. Students will also be introduced to lab work in order to learn about the next stage in the archaeological research process. They will learn to record and process the artifacts recently recovered from the field. This will lead them to acquire technical and specific skills depending on their particular interest.

By the end of the program, students will have gone through each of the stages required to carry out archaeological excavation processes in a systematic manner. Since the beginning of

our excavations, students have played an active and very important role in the achievement of our goals. Many of our former students now work on their own archaeological programs in other areas of Peru thanks to the experience gained at SJMAP and some of them are currently conducting graduate studies in some of the most advanced archaeological programs in universities in the USA.

## REQUIREMENTS

The program accepts graduate and undergraduate students in the fields of archaeology, anthropology, bio archaeology and related fields.

No previous fieldwork experience is required. Spanish is not required, since most activities are conducted in English. All SJMPA staff speaks both English and Spanish. However, it is convenient for students to have a basic knowledge of Spanish in order to facilitate a fluid interaction with the population of San Jose de Moro.

Many of the English-speaking archaeologists who have worked with us for more than a season are now able to communicate satisfactorily with the program staff and with the population of San Jose de Moro.

## METHODOLOGY

The activities in this program are oriented according to three types of activities:

### a. Field Work at San Jose de Moro

At the site of SJM students will excavate through the different occupational levels of the ceremonial site and funerary contexts, will be able to identify, recognize, understand and applied the field techniques and strategies that archaeologists use in the excavation process. It will be achieved through activities in the field and exercise of recognition and interpretations of different kinds of contexts and materials.

### b. Field Work at Cerro Chepén and San Ildefonso

At Cerro Chepén and San Ildefonso, students will be able to learn the basic skills for archaeological survey of complex sites, mapping and interpretation of architectural features, excavate in domestic and residential components and to identify, recognize and understand the field techniques and strategies that archaeologists use in the excavation process. In both sites students will also spend time processing of materials recuperated in the excavations and survey.

### c. Lectures

In the afternoons, students will attend presentations by staff members, dealing with aspect of the excavations at the site, and by some of the most important Moche archaeologists working in the area, who are invited by the program.

### d. Visit to archaeological sites

Every weekend the students will visit the most important archaeological sites around San José de Moro. These activities will help them expand their knowledge and comprehension of Peruvian and Moche archaeology.

## ACTIVITIES

Field School is scheduled to take place in July. Archaeological excavations are carried out intensively for a period of 4 weeks, adding up to a total of 240 hours of practical work, 32 hours of lectures and site visits. The first week serves as an introductory period during which students will learn the basis of the field work procedure and the proper use of tools necessary for the work. In the following weeks, different activities have been planned for the students. These activities do not take place in any specific order, as the nature of fieldwork is highly flexible depending on what contexts are excavated. At the same time, students will rotate among the different sites and the lab. This is in order to get the full experience of the field work.

### Field Objectives

- Identify and recognize the diverse types of archaeological contexts.
- Digging strategies and use of different tools in the field.
- Learn the basics of archaeological survey.
- Learn and apply archaeological recording techniques in the field and in the laboratory.
  - First stage: Field drawing, written records.
  - Second Stage: Recording methods for special contexts. Photo recording.
- Learn and apply field and laboratory recording techniques. Application of the excavation and recording techniques previously learned in the field and the laboratory during the season. Field photography.

## Lab Activities

- Introduction to the laboratory work.
- First approach to the artifacts. Sorting of objects, classification, recording, labeling and photography.
- Photogrammetry. Learn how to take pictures and process them in different software in order to acquire a 3D model.

Depending on the interest of each student. Learn the use and benefits of a handheld X-Ray Fluorescence for diffraction and elemental analysis of artifacts.

## EVALUATION

**30% Activities in the field**

**30% Participations in lectures**

**40% Performance during the program**

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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