



# [Indiana Jones Lied to Me] [Michelle Contreras, Art History, 2020]

[Intellectual  
Achievement]

## SUMMARY

*The archaeological field school took place near San Ignacio, Belize and was honestly one of the best experiences I've had. We traveled to Belize for about a month and worked for the Mopan Valley Pre-Classic Project. Every week day we went out into the field and helped open units, excavate, and on the whole, learn the procedures and protocols of field work in archaeology. I worked with a few of the other undergrads at Xunantunich and our particular goal was to learn the purpose and function of a set of mounds behind the main Castillo. We dug through to find architecture and sometimes, past the architecture to find bedrock and artifacts. On the weekends we took trips to other local sites and learned about Belizean culture.*



## SPICES

*I classified this as intellectual achievement because that was what we did. We spent the month learning about archaeological practices, local culture, and Maya structures and life.*

## HERBS

*Often you're not finding burials or mounds of jewels. By the end, a bit of plaster or a wall is incredible, so learning to be resilient in the face of lots of dirt is important. It helps that you're not alone and you have support around you.*

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

*I have to say, the most important motto or phrase we learned there was "be flexible." When you're working in teams and near the jungle, sometimes plans don't work out. Sometimes what happens is that you get stuck hauling a jug up a mile walk or you have to dig another half meter down. It happens. Thankfully while you're digging, you have all the time in the world to self reflect and think about how these experiences have changed you.*



## IMPACT

*I definitely realized my love for art and while I would like to combine it with archaeology, I know a bit more about how to narrow it down. There is so much culture that is just buried out there beneath dirt and misguided perceptions. I think one of the best things I got from this trip was the ability to educate how complex the world is beyond our scope. There is so much to learn and it was incredible to see that in front of me and be able to share that with others.*

## ADVICE

*Don't be afraid to try. There is so much to the world out there and it's a little scary going somewhere new by yourself, but you'll learn so much and meet some pretty incredible people in the process.*