

MEXICO SOLIDARITY

Chiapas, Tlaxcala, Mexico City and more all in one trip

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The study abroad program has three stations in Chiapas, Tlaxcala and Mexico City where students work in self-governing communities.

"The Mexico Solidarity Network is a group that was based in Chicago and works with autonomous communities in Mexico who are working for equal rights or autonomous rights," said Dowling-Huppert. "Many of the people are seeking to evade oppression from the government."

"The first place we went to was Chiapas," said Lahowitch. "The first week, we went to a school for the indigenous that focuses on self-sufficiency with trades, and that was really interesting. The next four weeks were spent in Oventic, which is where the Zapatistas live."

The Zapatistas are a revolutionary, self-governing group. Zapatistas, made up of mostly people of Mayan ancestry, declared their autonomy from the Mexican State in response to NAFTA on Jan. 1, 1994.

"Students learn about the Zapatistas' community," said Assistant Director of Study Abroad Daniel Diaz. "They learn about the history of the culture. They learn about the different kinds of people and leaders. They learn about this idea of what it takes to build a grass roots community."

The Zapatistas have received funds from programs like MSN in the past.

"They were able to do this because of the support from MSN and solidarity with other groups," said Lahowitch.

"Funding for health care and schools was possible because of the international groups."

The next stop for students on the MSN trip was Tlaxcala. "I stayed with a family who had 12 kids," said Dowling-Huppert. "This family was focused on social justice and very committed to the cause. Every member of the family was committed to the cause, which was fascinating. The Tlaxcala part was where I felt most immersed into Mexican culture."

The students also learned from inspiring adults. "We have access to these people who are doing so much in their communities through the Mexico Solidarity Program," said Weiner. "There's no other way that I would have been able to meet these kinds of people without the program."

In the final stop in Mexico City, students worked with another autonomous community fighting for housing rights.

"Everybody takes part in building the community," said Weiner. "The people who show the most commitment and work the hardest get rewarded with a house. You pay like 15 percent of your income for housing. Many people in Mexico City do not make a living wage, and this makes a huge difference in people's lives. A family was kicked out because they were not doing their part in the community."

The MSN technically ends in Mexico City, but a trip to Chicago, where the program is based, is encouraged. Chicago is the place where students take what they have learned in Mexico and apply it in the States.

"We did a lot of anti-foreclosure stuff," said Lahowitch.

"We protested a bank."

In addition to their work with the autonomous communities, students' tuition also goes to the MSN when they participate in the study abroad program.

"You're learning what organizing in immigrant communities looks like here and how to apply what you learned in Mexico to the United States, which was incredible," said Dowling-Huppert. "It all comes together."

For more information, contact Daniel Diaz, assistant director of study abroad, at diazdf@guilford.edu.

You can reach out to students who have participated, such as Hallie Dowling-Huppert or Chloe Weiner, who can be reached at dowlinghuppert@guilford.edu and weinerca@guilford.edu.

The Zapatistas have recently been featured in many news articles, such as Al Jazeera, The Guardian and Time Magazine, all of which can be found online.

SENATE UPDATE

This Week's Developments

We are now accepting applications for all Senate Executive positions, which are due March 31. Campaigning begins April 1 and elections are April 15.

We are also accepting nominations for Dick Dyer Awards and applications for student scholarships through April 26. See our Facebook for more. All applications are at the Info Desk.

Next Week's Plans

The Judicial Affairs Committee, a group composed of Senate executives, RAs, and PPS Scholars, will be presenting on their year-long judicial review process.

Any policy recommendations resulting from this process will be submitted to Aaron Fetrow for consideration this summer.

Contact Us

We need to hear your voice! Have an idea? Concern? Great recipe? It's important to us.

Questions? Email: senate@guilford.edu or visit <http://guilfordsenate.wordpress.com>

Compiled by Tim Leisman, Community Senate President

The radical centrist: previewing upcoming Thomas Friedman's Bryan Series appearance

BY ANTHONY HARRISON
STAFF WRITER

Sixteen years ago this September, Thomas Friedman appeared at Guilford College for an on-campus lecture as the first speaker in what later became The Bryan Series. On April 16, 2013, Friedman will return to the series, this time with hundreds of New York Times editorials, five more books and a third Pulitzer Prize under his belt.

"There are a number of people out there who are so compelling that you would want to seriously look at having them back, and Tom falls in that category," said Vice President for Communications & Marketing Ty Buckner via phone interview.

"Tom, in a survey (among Bryan Series subscribers to nominate speakers) we conducted actually more than a year ago, rated very highly — and not unexpectedly. He's simply one of the most popular columnists and authors out there today and particularly popular with our audience."

While Friedman covers topics ranging from globalization to climate change, the proposed theme of Friedman's talk is "The Middle East: An Update on Changing Events."

Few journalists are more qualified to speak on the matter.

Friedman's biweekly New York Times column focuses on foreign affairs, and his three Pulitzer Prizes were for reporting on the Lebanese Civil War, the state of Israel and the threat of global terrorism.

"I think both personally and professionally, he has deep interest in Israel's security," said Campus Ministry Coordinator Max Carter. "He has a dog in the fight."

Friedman often criticizes Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's policies concerning Palestinian and Israeli security, criticism that draws ire from pro-Israel groups.

"Israel needs a wake-up call," Friedman wrote in "Driving Drunk in Jerusalem," an editorial for The New York Times. "Continuing to build settlements in the West

Bank, and even housing in disputed East Jerusalem, is sheer madness."

"Israel plays such an important role in Jewish consciousness that even Jews who criticize Israel — I know this personally from Jewish friends I have — are accused of being anti-Semitic," Carter said. "I appreciate Friedman's willingness to subject himself to that kind of criticism when he is vocally critical of Israeli policies."

However, Friedman himself states allegiance to "radical centrism," a movement that brings together viewpoints from both left- and right-wing sources. Possibly owing to his political pragmatism, Friedman supported the invasion of Iraq.

"Friedman's a realist who doesn't have romantic notions," said Carter. "He's seen awful stuff. And he knows the various evils abroad in the world first hand. I think he made a rational decision for himself that we had to go into Iraq."

"I don't know whether he believed there were weapons of mass destruction, but (the Bush administration) made a case. Colin Powell was snookered. Why wouldn't a journalist like Friedman be snookered, too?"

Buckner expects a stimulating, thought-provoking speech from Friedman.

"(The Bryan Series) present speakers with all sorts of life experiences and viewpoints," said Buckner. "One of the goals is to present speakers who will make us think. Their talks may reaffirm what we believe ... they may cause us to change our opinion."

In any case, Thomas Friedman's return to the Bryan Series promises to be a powerful close to this season's Bryan Series.

"I've heard Tom speak a couple of times, and he's really good at delivering on the topic as promoted, but also bringing some of his other work into the program," Buckner said with a laugh. "We show the speaker the stage, and for the next 45 or 50 minutes, it's all them."