Title: The Ch’orti’ Project: Research, Practice, and Community

Presenters: Robin Quizar, PhD; Rebecca Forgash, PhD
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Abstract: Ch’orti’ is a Mayan language spoken by approximately 22,000 indigenous people in eastern Guatemala. The Ch’orti’ Project, directed by Dr. Quizar in collaboration with the MSU Denver Ethnography Lab, is a multifaceted language research and revitalization project that promises exciting training and research opportunities for MSU Denver students and faculty. There are a number of concurrent language and literacy efforts going on in the community of Jocotán, and MSU Denver student employees and interns have been supporting the work that local people are doing. This colloquium talk will outline the various facets of the project and explore a number of new possibilities related to community development, heritage preservation, and archaeology. Linguists, epigraphers, and anthropologists are now arguing that Ch’orti’ is the language that was used to inscribe the glyphs at Copan, one of the three big city states during the Mayan Classical Period, located just across the border in Honduras. This contradicts the historical narratives that archaeologists have put forward over the past half-century and that appear in the museums at Copan. We have been asked to help with two new museum projects that will rewrite Copan’s history in ways that validate the local Ch’orti’ community and bring in tourist dollars that will serve to support their literacy efforts.

Date and Time: 3:30-4:45pm, Feb. 25, 2015
Location: CN103 (CFD conference room)
Free and open to the public