First, I'd like to say THANK YOU to Tom who addressed us before our tour...And to Herbert, for taking us thru Pu`uhonua o Honaunau, on his day off no less... Both my daughters and I enjoyed every part of the field trip...Thank you Drew, for allowing them to be a part of it...
It is always good to revisit cultural sites and reaffirm ones roots...
The area itself hasn't changed much since my last visit many years ago...Well, except for a bigger parking lot and a larger visitor facility...
The area has been kept, as much as possible, to its original construction due to the talents of the master carver and the crafters who maintain the structures and Kī'i's... Also to be commended are the many park rangers who diligently enforce, protect, and preserve the site... as well as educate the visitors...which is not an easy task for there are a wide range of cultural differences with each...I'm sure that some of the rangers cringe when they see them coming... Overall, a very enjoyable and informative field trip...

-Henri
It was such a fun, enjoyable, and additional learning experience for me. I was surprised to learn that the only way in, and out of the 'Place of Refuge' for those seeking refuge, was by swimming. I always thought that the length of time spent there was for a month or longer. It was interesting to know that one could only stay for several hours, or not more than a day. I had such a pleasant time shared with my fellow peers and instructor. Mahalo plenty!

-anonymous

Here is my reflection about our field trip on Saturday. Pu’uhonua O Honaunau exhibited welcoming beauty of Ancient Hawaiian History. With its majestic royal grounds that portrayed many Hawaiian aspects of the preserves of the traditional Hawaiian life. It was stated that Pu'uhonua is also known as "The Place of
Refuge”. It was interesting to know that Kanōa-Bowls carved into the rock have said to be used to hold dye another use was to mirror the sky. The casting beauty of the turquoise colored ocean was breath taking. Over to the white sands of the pu'uhonua bay where the Honu came to seek their place of rest. Then there standing "The Great Wall", surrounded by Ki'i (wooden images), Herbert asked "If we ever here someone use that word incorrectly to please tell them its rightful name". This wall has a story of its own it is special in its own way for its "Mana" within the wall is i'iw bones of the high chiefs. As we ventured on there Ki'i also known as Ancient Village as we proceeded our walk along the Alakahakai Trail we discovered the cliffs of Keanae'e along side of that cliffs held remains of ancient Hawaiians. As we got closer to the end of our walk we came to the Waiu-O-Hina lava tube some of us gals took the liberty of venturing into the lava tube it was amazing to see how the lava formed within the tube for me it is indescribable. The day was filled with both experience and knowledge. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explore and learn about the history of that of my culture. Likewise, I feel it will be a life long experience as I will be able to share Pu'uhonu o Honauanu with children of my own as well as children that I work with. Again thank you both Drew & Herbert, looking forward for more life long experiences in the future. Mahalo.

-LoriLynn

I really enjoyed the field trip to Pu’uhonua o Honauanau from its beginning to end including the ride. What impressed me the most and the highlight of this experience was the hike after lunch. I never knew about the hiking trail pass the lunch areas that goes around the island! It was a pleasant to hike! The cave
(forgot the name), about 1/2 mile in was the most impressive. As six of us daring girls - Lorilyn, Janielle, Rochelle, Henri's daughter, Diane, and myself ventured inside. It actually wasn't very dark but some areas were quite low. The ceiling was like smooth, black, flattened icicles. Pretty cool. The smaller other end of the cave opened up at the edge of a high cliff. It was awesome to walk towards it and see the gorgeous blue ocean. The turquoise blue, crystal clear waters below made us want to jump in. We all took pictures together before we left the cave. (Sorry I took the pictures on my 35mm camera so I'm not able to send it email, but I'll show all after I have it developed). The rugged coastline also made a picturesque view too! Mahalo! Mahalo too for all the drinks. Thanks Marilyn K. for the candy, Evelyn for the chips, Marilyn T. for the kimchee, Rochelle for the juicy tangerines, and Henri for the bottled water. Aloha,

-Debra

My experience at the Pu `uhonua o Ho` naunau, was one filled with excitement, one filled with the knowledge of another part of history of our island, and its people would be revealed to me. Well after hearing from the Park Ranger A. J. he told us about the background and history of the Park, it set the pace for the wonderful tour given to us by Herbert. As we walked from places such as the bowls and the idea of the reason for them, such as filling up with water at night you can see the stars and other things. The Great wall of it construction, the sacredness of it, and the time for us to realize as we go in that it is a scared place so get out of it what you will. As I walked in from the ocean side, it was wonderful to read about the history of each place, the rock were it is said that Queen hid under, till she was found. The turtle coming out of the water and watching him make himself comfortable in the sand, reminded me that it is what we need to do relax and see what you can discover while doing that. The walk up to the caves, the Ki`ilea Village, the lava flow and the ramp (Alhaka) or Keokea holua (slide) was really fun and walking into the Waiu-o-hina lava tube and discovering the excitement at the end of the tube was the Pacific Ocean
many feet down from us. The trip in the car to and from the Park was fun and we all found that we had a connection to each other, small world. Thank you Drew for taking us on this trip it was great.

-Diane

Thru out my life here on the big island, I have encountered the surroundings of the city of refuge. It was mostly playing tourist with family and friends who have been away from the islands. Except for the parking area and the “fee” the grounds have not changed much as intended to be. The sacredness of the city is shared and we, those who did not experience the reason for this area, walk around and try to vision those who did. Although, I have been there many times, I never ventured to the ancient village of Ki’ilae. After Robert gave his brief talk of the village, our walk along the coast was hot. Watching every step along the sandy, rocky, uneven path made me wonder what different things Drew would present to us. As the cliffs came into view, I could see the caves that was mentioned in the introduction and got excited. I wanted to see the bottom of the cliffs that would sink into a bay that I imagined would be there. Was a little disappointed when the cliffs ended on land, but as my eyes looked beyond, there was the Alahaka ramp, that was built with pohaku rocks, up along the hill. It was an awesome sight to see. I felt, momentarily, drawn back to the days when carriages were pulled by horses. Having taking in this sight, the ladies of the class were adventurous, and we crawled into the lava tube to experience, feel
and see all that there was to offer. Walking like ducks with our wings above our heads, the females, screamed, giggled, laughed, and encouraged each other to move on. It was great to see the light as the sky shone into the tube and lighted the end of our short journey. Took some pictures, got yelled at from up above, and waddled our way back to the group. Cute yeah us :). You always bring us to some place "new" in an old place...you come from off island...you the haole teacher know mo than us...thank you for sharing and wanting to spend some weekends with the class...

-Ro.

I appreciated the cultural perspective of our excursion. I had a hard time walking into pu'uhonua. It didn't feel right. Even now as I write this my eyes are tearing just like they did when we walked in and started our approach towards Ka'ahumanu’s stone. I learned that to enter Pu’uhonua you needed to swim in. Moku ola was the same, is it for all places of refuge? Herbert was great. Too bad this was our last excursion. Mahalo for a great time.

– Vanessa
our field trip to pu'uhonua o honaunau was educational but fun. i learned the correct way to refer to this national park in english is place of refuge. not city of refuge as i was told to call it when i visited about 12 years ago. my overwhelming impression of the whole place was peace, peacefulness, quiet and calm. the park rangers have done an excellent job of rebuilding, and preserving the intent of the structures, the great wall and the feeling of security. my overwhelming favorite and it made the scenic but long drives worth it was the green turtle. we saw one beach itself and take a nap. that was the closest i have ever been to the turtles, so it was very worth it for me. - janielle
I enjoyed my self on this trip to Honaunau and Ki’ilae. I also enjoyed the company of my fellow haumana. Honaunau will always be special to me because I have a lot of connection to that area. My great great great great great grand father Keouakupuapaikalalaninui was the chief of that area and his pohaku, known today as the Keoua stone was actually his measuring stone which showed the height of this chief. In Raiatea, in the land called Te po is an ancient measuring stone known as Tepapatearuea. It stands 9’1” high and 4’ wide at its middle and 1’ thick in the marae called Hauviri. This stone came to the arm pit of the 1st ariki of Raiatea known as Tahitoe, and the next alii, Tamatoa, it towered 1’ above his head.

Thinking back to Ki’ilae, while on the bus, I recalled that there was a famous spring there called Waiku’iokekela. In the old days, some fishermen would go fishing there with their dog and the dog would leave them and return soaking wet in fresh water. This area was known to have no fresh drinking water. Any way they followed their dog and found out where he was going to drink and swim in the fresh water. They called to the people in the area to gather plenty fire wood and they burned the lava rock area above water table for days to make the stones brittle and with o’o, the broke apart the pohaku to find the water underneath. I have never been to that site Ki’ilae, but I can imagine what it was like before. Mahalo for a wonderful day at these special wahi. Here is a pict. Of the stone Tepapatearuea. The big man standing next to it stands 6’ 7” tall. [new two images]

-Keani
Thank you again for taking our class to Pu’uhonua o Honaunau. I truly learned a lot of new and interesting things that day. For me it was hard to pick just one thing that I found the most interesting. The story that Herbert told us about the water in the bowls which may have been used to look at the stars was very interesting. It sounded like the early Hawaiians were very clever! The walk after lunch was very much another great part of the trip. This is an area that I have never visited before. Seeing up close and walking right up to the burial cave was an experience. It was truly worth the walk.

-anonymous
It was an awesome trip to Pu'uhonua o Honaunau in Kona. I had so much fun and I definitely learned quite a lot. I've been there several times before but never on a thorough guided tour of the area. It was interesting to learn that there's an underground spring where fresh water was collected. I was also impressed with the ingenious idea the Hawaiians had using the Kanoa, bowls carved into the rock. It was not only for kapa dyeing and salt and awa preparations, but to study the stars by filling the bowls with water and look at the sky's reflection. Another fascinating part of the trip was the hike to Ki'ilae Village. This was a treat; I have never gone beyond the Visitor's Center. The scenic trail took us to the Alahaka Ramp and the Waiu-o-hina Lava Tube, which only a few of us dared to venture. Crouching and feeling our way through the dark tunnel 'til the end was worth it. Beyond the cliff, we had a clear view of the landscaped mountains and the beautiful ocean! This whole experience will be cherished forever. Mahalo Herbert and Drew for this memorable day!

-Evelyn

The fieldtrip to Hōnaunau was almost spiritual for me. It put a new light on the place of refuge. I really felt connected to the place. It made me feel connected to this island. I am very happy that I was able to go to Hōnaunau and be reconnected to my culture.

-Carrine
Mahalo, once again, for allowing me to spend part of a weekend with you, my students! The highlight for me is your companionship in a special place. Honaunau represents different things for different people, I think, based partly on people’s ancestral connections to the site or area, to Hawaiian society, and to the Islands, in general. I have always found Puʻuhonua o Honaunau and the area just beyond its walls to be a place of serenity, a place where the past can no longer be appropriately called ‘the past’ since it is so alive, and so current. I remember walking along ke Ala Kahakai ma Kiʻilae and being struck by the smells carried on the air: the salty sea, the pohuehue and tamarind, even the hot, dry earth. Landscapes are so beautiful and so complex, and there are so many ways to appreciate them from applying different ‘lenses’ and using our many senses and, of course, our hearts. Mahalo for a wonderful day.

-Drew