

“The Maya Preclassic”

ANT 384M-LAS 391
Mondays 1-4

SPRING 2012
SAC 5.124

Instructor: Fred Valdez 471-0060 office
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Hrs.: M 11-12 & by appt. fredv@mail.utexas.edu

Course Description: This seminar reviews the general history of Maya Civilization with a focus on the developments of society. What are the foundations of Maya Civilization? How did Maya institutions (economics, political organization, etc.) develop and change over time? What did Maya society look like through the various Preclassic segments? Each of these concerns and more will be explored through the lens of prehistoric archaeology reviewing social institutions as well as material culture of the Preclassic era.

The seminar will also review the development (history and progress) of archaeological research in the Maya region. From earliest historical interests in the area to recent research and a review of significant advances and influences in archaeology are discussed. The first part of the course (presented by Prof. Valdez), will cover the broad interests and developments within Maya archaeology. The latter part of the class will consist of presentations by seminar participants on either institutions or material culture (or both) of a Preclassic era segment.

Purpose: The seminar is intended to provide participants with a history of archaeological research in the Maya region. All will be provided a general “culture history” of the Maya (origins through Terminal Classic) as a backdrop to the detailed study of the Preclassic. A final result should be that we all have a strong understanding of the Preclassic Maya and the foundations of Classic Maya life.

Requirements: Enrolled students will be assigned a particular segment of the Preclassic (i.e., early Middle Preclassic, Terminal Preclassic, etc.) or a material culture of the period for a detailed review and presentation to the class. A final paper must be submitted which includes appropriate references, cited illustrations, etc.

Grading/Evaluation: The final course grade will be determined by way of a combination of attendance (10%), class participation (when appropriate, 10%), the formal presentation (40%), and a final seminar paper (40%). The final paper must include the text (in clear/clean sentences), figures/illustrations, and a bibliography (of references cited in the text).