# ANT 310L/LAS 310: Introduction to Mesoamerican Archaeology

Fall 2011

Unique nos.: 30945, 40110 Instructor: Enrique Rodríguez

Classroom: WAG 101

Hours: M, W, F 11:00-12:00

Office: SAC 4.144

Office hours: Mondays 1:30-3:30

Email: see email instructions on page 3

This course is an introduction to ancient Mesoamerica, the area roughly covering Mexico and the northern half of Central America, from the time of emerging social inequality in the Formative Period until the Spanish conquest of Mexico-Tenochtitlan in the sixteenth century. By studying archaeological evidence from several sites in this region we will address a few important theoretical issues in archaeology. These issues include: 1) the relationship between people, the environment, and social organization 2) the study of elites and commoners in archaeological cultures, and 3) the use of historical and archaeological data in reconstructing the past. During the course of the semester we will examine varied lines of evidence, including archaeological artifacts (especially pottery, obsidian, and ceramic figurines), human remains, architecture, murals, sculpture, and historical evidence (esp. codices and colonial accounts) to assess the role of evidence and theory in how we conceptualize the past in Mesoamerica. In addition, we will address issues that have captured the general public's imagination in recent years, including the end of the world, the Maya collapse, human sacrifice, and others. Thus, the class will be of interest to archaeology majors and other students as well.

#### Goals of the course:

- To provide an introduction to Mesoamerican prehistory and the main substantive and theoretical debates in Mesoamerican archaeology during the last several decades.
- 2. To increase student literacy in archaeology by creating an understanding of how archaeological evidence and theory are used in building models about life in the past.
- 3. To learn about the role of material culture in everyday life, the economy, and politics in ancient Mesoamerica.

<u>Students with disabilities:</u> Any student with disabilities should talk to me as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements that will make for a better learning experience and that will allow the student to show his or her abilities fully.

#### Other classroom rules:

NO cellphones, laptops, newspapers, or calculators in class or during exams.

Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University rules. We will talk at length about issues related to academic dishonesty in class.

**Grading:** Successful completion of this course will require learning from readings, lectures, Power Point presentations, in-class exercises, and film. Topics covered in the readings and in the classroom will, at times, be entirely different. Written assignments will cover material, sites, and lines of evidence discussed in class and in the readings.

I will not post grades on the internet or give them to students over the phone or via email. I do not post lecture notes on the internet.

Instructions for reading responses will be given in class. Reading responses are due at the beginning of class. Once the lecture begins, responses will be late.

Students may discuss their exams with me individually. Students who request that I re-grade their exams, must present their request in writing. If I agree to re-grade their exam, students should be aware that their grade might suffer if I find errors that I did not find on my first grading. Therefore, students are advised to make sure they have specific reasons why their grade should improve before they challenge their grade.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Reading responses: 20%
 Exam 1: 25%
 Exam 2: 25%
 Final Exam: 30%

## **Textbooks and other readings:**

Hendon, Julia A. and Rosemary A. Joyce 2004 *Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Blackwell Pulishing, Malden. REQUIRED

Sheets, Payson 2006 The Ceren Site: An Ancient Village Buried by Volcanic Ash in Central America. Thomson Wadsworth. REQUIRED

Course packet. REQUIRED. Available at Abel's Copies.

Some of the readings are available online, including those marked as "On jstor". To access readings on jstor follow these steps:

- 1. Go to a computer terminal on campus (the computer must be linked to the campus network).
- 2. Open a web browser and go to <a href="www.jstor.org">www.jstor.org</a>
- 3. Select "search".
- 4. Select "advanced search".
- 5. Click on the box next to Anthropology and next to Archaeology on the list of disciplines included.
- 6. Type the name of the author or the title of a paper in the fields provided on top of the page, and select "author" or "title".
- 7. Click on "Begin search", and you will get a list of papers. Choose the paper assigned. You may choose to download or print the paper.

#### Email rules:

- 1. Email if you have a medical emergency that will prevent you from making it to an exam. No need to email if you will miss class.
- 2. Email me if you need to see me in office hours but you have a time conflict with a class. Otherwise, you may just show up during office hours.
- 3. Email if I ask you to email me.
- 4. Do not email to continue class discussion; please use office hours. Also, if you have a question about the material, please bring it up in class. Other students might benefit from it.
- 5. Do not use email to turn in assignments or to send attachments.
- 6. My email is: <a href="mailto:chanfle@austin.utexas.edu">chanfle@austin.utexas.edu</a>. Before you click "send", make sure that your email complies with rules 1-4 above. Click "send".

#### **SCHEDULE**

Week I (August 24, 26):

An introduction to Mesoamerican geography and cultural definitions

Week II (August 29, 31, September 2):

On the rise of social complexity: cultural ecology in the Formative Period

1. Joyce, Rosemary A. 2004. "Mesoamerica: A Working Model for Archaeology" in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Pp.1-42.

Week III (Sept. 7, 9):

On the rise of social complexity: enter the aggrandizers and house societies.

Reading response due at the beginning of class.

- 1. Rathje, William L. 1971. "The Origin and Development of Lowland Classic Maya Civilization" *American Antiquity* 36(3):275-285. Available on jstor.
- Clark, John E. 2004. "Mesoamerica Goes Public: Early Ceremonial Centers, Leaders, and Communities" in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Pp. 43-72.

# Week IV (Sept. 12, 14, 16): The Olmec.

No reading response this week. Read the article and be prepared for discussion, but do not turn in a response.

1. Lesure, Richard G. 2001. "Shared Art Styles and Long-Distance Contact in Early Mesoamerica" in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, pp.73-96.

## Week V (Sept. 19, 21, 23): Classic Maya commoners

Reading response due at the beginning of class on Monday. Read both of the assigned readings, and write a response for just one of them.

- 1. Robin, Cynthia. 2001. "Social Diversity and Everyday Life within Classic Maya Settlements", in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Pp.148-168.
- 2. Sheets, Payson. 2006. The Ceren Site. Chapters 1 and 2.

# Week VI (Sept. 26, 28, 30): \*\*\*Exam 1 on Sept. 30\*\*\* Classic Maya commoners

# Week VII (Oct. 3, 5, 7): Classic Maya elites

- Chase, Arlen F. 1992 "Elites and the Changing organization of Classic Maya Society". In *Mesoamerican Elites*, edited by Diane Z. Chase and Arlen F. Chase, pp. 30-49.
- 2. Sheets, Payson. 2006. The Ceren Site. Chapters 4, 5, and 8.

### Week VIII (Oct. 10, 12, 14): Teotihuacan

Reading response due at the beginning of class. Read both papers, and then pick just one for your response.

1. Sugiyama, Saburo. 2001. "Governance and Polity at Classic Teotihuacan", in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, pp. 97-123.

2. Manzanilla, Linda. 2001. "Social Identity and Daily Life at Classic Teotihuacan", in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, pp. 124-147.

### Week IX (Oct. 17, 19, 21): The end of the world

Reading response due at the beginning of class. Read both reading assignments, then write a response for the article by McAnany and Gallareta Negron.

- McAnany, Patricia A. and Tomás Gallareta Negrón 2010 "Bellicose Rulers and Climatological Peril? Retrofitting Twenty-First-Century Woes on Eighth-Century Maya Society". In *Questioning Collapse*, edited by P.A. McAnany and N. Yoffee, pp. 142-175. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. COURSE PACKET.
- The second reading for this week is available at: <a href="http://www.famsi.org/research/vanstone/2012/">http://www.famsi.org/research/vanstone/2012/</a>. Read the main page (very brief) and the FAQ page. They are both very short readings.

### Week X (Oct. 24, 26, 28): The Postclassic

Reading response due at the beginning of class. Read both assignments, and then pick one of the readings for your response, not both.

- Marcus, Joyce and Kent V. Flannery 2000 (1994). "Ancient Zapotec Ritual and Religion: An Application of the Direct Historical Approach" in *The Ancient Civilizations of Mesoamerica: A Reader.* Edited by Michael E. Smith and Marilyn A. Masson, pp. 400-421. Blackwell Publishers: Malden. COURSE PACKET.
- 2. Hendon, Julia A. 2004. "Postclassic and Colonial Period Sources on Maya Society and History" in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, pp.296-322.

# Week XI (Oct. 31, Nov. 2, 4): \*\*\*EXAM 2 Friday Nov. 4th\*\*\* Tula

1. Smith, Michael E. and Frances F. Berdan 2003. "Postclassic Mesoamerica" in *The Postclassic Mesoamerican World*. Edited by Michael E. Smith and Frances F. Berdan, pp. 3-13. Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press. COURSE PACKET.

# Week XII (Nov. 7, 9, 11): Introduction to the Aztec Empire

 Smith, Michael 2008 "The Aztec Empire". In *The Aztec World*, edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman, pp. 121-136. COURSE PACKET. 2. Nichols, Deborah. 2004. "The Rural and Urban Landscapes of the Aztec State", in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, pp. 265-295.

# Week XIII (Nov. 14, 16, 18): Aztec documentary sources

Reading response due at the beginning of class. Do both readings, and then pick one of the readings for your response, not both.

- Durán, Fray Diego. Book of the Gods and Rites and The Ancient Calendar. Translated by Fernando Horcasitas and Doris Heyden. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Chapters 11 and 34, pp.194-202, and 258-262. COURSE PACKET.
- 2. Boone, Elizabeth 2008 "Aztec Writing and History". In *The Aztec World*, edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman, pp. 179-194. Abrams. COURSE PACKET.

## Week XIV (Nov. 21, 23):

Aztec sacrifice: material evidence and regional and historical variation
Reading response due at the beginning of class. Pick one of the readings for your response, not both.

1. López Austin, Alfredo, and Leonardo López Luján 2008. "Aztec Human Sacrifice". In *The Aztec World*, edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman, pp. 137-152. COURSE PACKET.

## Week XV (Nov. 28, 30, Dec. 1) Different kinds of Aztecs

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Reading response due at the beginning of class. Pick one of the readings for your response, not both.

- Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 2001. "Asking about Aztec Gender: The Historical and Archaeological Evidence". In *Gender in Pre-Hispanic America*, edited by Cecilia Klein. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C. Available online at: http://www.doaks.org/publications/doaks\_online\_publications/Gender/g
- Nichols, Deborah L. 2008 "Artisans, Markets, and Merchants", in *The Aztec World*, edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman, pp. 105-120. COURSE PACKET

Final exam: December 10 (Saturday), 9:00AM- 12:00 noon. We will verify the exam time and place as we near the end of the semester.

\*\*\*The final exam will be during finals week for everyone (including seniors). No exceptions, especially if you are graduating and leaving town.\*\*\*