

## **ANT 314C/LAS 315: Introduction to Mesoamerican Archaeology**

Fall 2015

Unique numbers.: 30500, 39410

Instructor: Enrique Rodríguez

T.A.: Emily Dylla

Classroom: CLA 0.112

Class hours: T, Th 11:00-12:30

Office: SAC 4.144

Office hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00 or by appointment

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, human remains, architecture, murals, sculpture, and historical texts (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 Anthropology majors and other students as well.

**Global Cultures flag:** This course carries the Global Cultures flag. Global Cultures courses are designed to increase your familiarity with cultural groups outside the United States. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of several non-U.S. cultural groups in Mesoamerica.

### **Goals of the course:**

1. 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.

**Students with disabilities:** 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.

**Classroom rules:**

1. NO cellphones, laptops, newspapers, or calculators in class or during exams.
2. You may not record lectures or take photographs during lecture. Recording of any of my lectures will be considered academic dishonesty and result in academic penalties for the students involved.
3. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University rules. We will talk about issues related to academic dishonesty in class.

**Grading and other class policies:** 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. Graded materials for this class consist of a series of weekly reading responses and three non-cumulative exams.

Due to privacy concerns, I will not give grades to students over the phone or via email.

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.

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 only on Tuesdays in the weeks that are indicated on the syllabus. There are eight reading responses due this semester. I will drop your two lowest scores at the end of the semester before calculating your grade.

Final grades will be calculated as follows:

- |                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| 1. Reading responses: | 20% |
| 2. Exam 1:            | 25% |
| 3. Exam 2:            | 25% |
| 4. Final Exam:        | 30% |

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### **Textbooks and other readings:**

Course packet. REQUIRED. Available at the Copy Center in the School of Business.

Robin, Cynthia 2013 *Everyday Life Matters: Maya Farmers at Chan*. University Press of Florida. REQUIRED. \*\*\*I obtained an exclusive discount directly from the University Press of Florida. To get the discount, please go to Canvas and click on the files section to find the document that contains information on purchasing the book. You must purchase the book before October 31, 2015 to get the discount and use the code CLAF15 to obtain the discount. The book is not on order at any of the local bookstores. Order as soon as possible so that you receive the book before we need it in class.\*\*\*

There will be several readings available on Canvas, and they are required.

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 [www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)
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, unless you miss more than two weeks of class due to a major emergency.
2. Email me if you need to see me in office hours but you have a time conflict with a class. I will be glad to make an appointment. 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 unless I specifically ask you to do so.
6. My email is: [chanfle@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:chanfle@austin.utexas.edu). Before you click "send", make sure that your email complies with rules 1-5 above. Click "send".

## SCHEDULE

### **Week I (August 27): An introduction to Mesoamerican geography and cultural definitions**

1. Smith, Michael E. and Marilyn A. Masson 2000 Introduction: Mesoamerican Civilizations. In *The Ancient Civilizations of Mesoamerica*. Edited by Michael E. Smith and Marilyn A. Masson, pp. 1-25. Blackwell, Malden. COURSE PACKET.

### **Week II (September 1, 3): On the rise of social complexity: cultural ecology in the Formative Period**

1. Coe, Sophie D. 1994 Chapters 2 and 3, *America's First Cuisines*. Pp. 9-65. University of Texas Press. (\*\*The sections on manioc, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and yams, pineapples, and vanilla are optional. All the other sections are required\*\*). COURSE PACKET.

### **Week III (Sept. 8, 10): On the rise of social complexity**

\*\*Reading response due on Tuesday at the beginning of class. Read both articles, choose one for your reading response, and turn in a response only for that one.

1. Pool, Christopher A. 2012 The Formation of Complex Societies in Mesoamerica. In *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*, edited by D. Nichols and C. Pool, pp. 169-187. COURSE PACKET. Skim pp. 169-172, and focus with greater attention on pp. 173-181.
2. Hill, Warren D., & Clark, John E. 2001 "Sports, gambling, and government: America's first social compact?" *American Anthropologist* 103(2): 331-345. Available on JSTOR or on the following URL: <https://anthropology.byu.edu/SiteAssets/Pages/Faculty/JohnEClark/Sports,%20Gambling,%20and%20Government.pdf>

### **Week IV (Sept. 15, 17): The Olmec.**

No reading response this week. Read all three articles and be prepared for discussion, but do not turn in a response. The articles are posted on Canvas.

1. Grove, David 1998? The Olmec. In *Olmecs. Arqueología Mexicana*. Pp.12-23. Posted on Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.
2. González Lauck, Rebecca B. 1998? La Venta: A great Olmec City. In *Olmecs. Arqueología Mexicana*. Pp.42-47. Posted on Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.
3. Cyphers, Ann 1998? The Colossal Heads. In *Olmecs. Arqueología Mexicana*. Pp.42-47. Posted on Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.

**Week V (Sept. 22, 24): 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 2013 *Everyday Life Matters: Maya Farmers at Chan*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville. Chapters 1 and 5.
2. Marcus, Joyce 2004 *Maya Commoners: The Stereotype and the Reality*. In *Ancient Maya Commoners*. Edited by John Lohse and Fred Valdez. University of Texas Press. Pp. 255-283. COURSE PACKET.

**Week VI (Sept. 29, October 1): \*\*\*Exam 1 on October 1\*\*\***

**Classic Maya commoners**

No readings due this week. Focus on the exam.

**Week VII (Oct. 6, 8): Classic Maya commoners**

No reading response for this week. Do the reading and be prepared for discussion.

1. Robin, Cynthia 2013 *Everyday Life Matters: Maya Farmers at Chan*. Chapters 6, 7, 8.

**Week VIII (Oct. 13, 15): Teotihuacan**

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

1. Sugiyama, N., Sugiyama, S., and Sarabia, A. G. 2013 Inside the Sun Pyramid at Teotihuacan, Mexico: 2008–2011 excavations in preliminary results. *Latin American Antiquity* 24: 403–432. Available on JSTOR.
2. Manzanilla, Linda. 2004. Social Identity and Daily Life at Classic Teotihuacan. In *Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Edited by Julia Hendon and Rosemary Joyce, pp. 124-147. COURSE PACKET.

**Week IX (Oct. 20, 22): Oaxaca**

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

1. Marcus, Joyce and Kent V. Flannery 2000 Ancient Zapotec Ritual and Religion: An Application of the Direct Historical Approach. In *The Ancient Civilizations of Mesoamerica*. Edited by Michael E. Smith and Marilyn A. Masson, pp. 400-421. Blackwell, Malden. COURSE PACKET.
2. Joyce, Arthur A. 2004 Sacred Space and Social Relations in the Valley of Oaxaca. In *Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Edited by Julia A. Hendon and Rosemary A. Joyce, pp. 192-216. COURSE PACKET.

**Week X (Oct. 27, 29): Collapse or change?**

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

1. 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.
2. Webster, David 2012 The Classic Maya Collapse. In *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*, edited by D. Nichols and C. Pool, pp. 324-334. COURSE PACKET.

**Week XI (November 3, 5): \*\*\*EXAM 2 Thursday Nov. 5\*\*\*****The Postclassic**

No reading for this week. Focus on the exam.

**Week XII (Nov. 12, 14, 16): Tula, Cholula, and other Tollans.**

No reading response due. Do both readings and be prepared to discuss.

1. Hendon, Julia A. 2004. "Postclassic and Colonial Period Sources on Maya Society and History" in *Mesoamerican Archaeology*, pp.296-322. COURSE PACKET.
2. Healan, Dan M. and Robert H. Cobean 2012 Tula and the Toltecs. In *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Edited by Deborah L. Nichols and Christopher A. Pool, pp. 372-384. COURSE PACKET.

**Week XIII (Nov. 17, 19): Introduction to the Aztec Empire**

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

1. Smith, Michael 2008 "The Aztec Empire". In *The Aztec World*, edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary M. Feinman, pp. 121-136. Available con Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.
2. Parsons, Jeffrey R. 2008 Environment and Rural Economy. In *The Aztec World*. Edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and Gary Feinman. Abrams, New York. Pp. 23-52. Available con Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.

**Week XIV (Nov. 24, 26): Aztec documentary sources**

Thanksgiving week. We will have class on Tuesday, but not Thursday.

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

1. Durán, Fray Diego. *The History of the Indies of New Spain*. Translated by Doris Heyden. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman. Chapters 33 and 34, pp.251-262. 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. Posted on Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.

**Week XV (Dec. 1, 3) Aztec sacrifice: material evidence and regional and historical variation**

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

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. Postec on Canvas for your Technicolor pleasure.
2. Brumfiel, Elizabeth M. 2000 Figurines and the Aztec State: Testing the Effectiveness of Ideological Domination. In *The Ancient Civilizations of Mesoamerica*. Edited by Michael E. Smith and Marilyn A. Masson. Pp. 468-482. COURSE PACKET.

**\*\*\*FINAL EXAM\*\*\***

Wednesday, December 9, 2:00-5:00 pm

**\*\*\*The final exam will be on December 9 for everyone (including seniors). No exceptions, especially if you are graduating and leaving town. Do not try to take an early final exam. It never works.\*\*\***