

****Prospective Syllabus****

Civilizations of Ancient Latin America Introductory-Level Undergraduate Class

Semester
Dates:
Class Time: Mon., Weds, Fri.
Classroom:

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Mendelsohn
Office:
Office Hours:
Email: mendelsohnr@si.edu

Course Description

This course takes a comparative anthropological perspective to Pre-Columbian civilizations of Latin America, beginning with the peopling of the New World and ending with Spanish conquest. The cultures discussed, spanning from Mexico to the Andes will serve as case studies for the exploration of broader themes in archaeology, including the development of complex societies, contact between cultures, and collapse. Using evidence from archaeology, art, architecture, Pre-Columbian writing systems, and ethnohistoric documents this course surveys the political, religious, social, and economic organization of civilizations of ancient Latin America.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Differentiate between Pre-Columbian cultures
- Explain how archaeological artifacts can be used to understand the politics, religion, social structure, and economic organization of a group
- Identify to which of the cultures an example of art or architecture belongs
- Describe cyclical patterns of the rise and fall of societies

Texts:

- All course readings will be available through Blackboard (see reading list below)

Assignments:

I am particularly interested in using team-based learning (TBL) for this course. If taught as a TBL course, assignments would include:

- Quizzes
- Readiness assessment tests (RATs)
- In Class-application activities (see examples in table)

| Week 1: Introduction | Readings | In-Class Activity, Assessment |
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| Introduction | | |
| Peopling of the New World | TBD | |
| Archaic (Hunter-Gatherers) in the Americas | Voorhies 2004, Excerpt | Archaic Technologies |
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| Week 2: Early Mesoamerica | | |
| How do we define Mesoamerica? | Creamer 1987 | |
| Origin of Agriculture, Sedentism, Pottery | Blake et al. 1992 | |
| The San Lorenzo Olmec and neighbors | Cheetham and Blomster 2017; Lesure 2004 | <i>RAT 1</i> |
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| Week 3: Mesoamerican Chiefdoms | | |
| The La Venta Olmec and neighbors | González Lauck 2010; Pool 2007, Chapter 5 | |
| Middle Formative Chiefdoms | Houston and Inomata 2009, Chapter 3 (pp. 65-86) | |
| Izapa | Guernsey 2006, Chapter 2 | Izapan Art or LiDAR Data |
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| Week 4: Urbanization in Mesoamerica | | |
| Early Maya Cities | Houston and Inomata 2009, Chapter 3 (pp. 86-104) | |
| The First Maya Collapse | Estrada Belli 2011, Chapter 6 | Video: The Dawn of the Maya |
| Zapotec | Marcus and Flannery 1996 | <i>RAT 2</i> |
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| Week 5: Classic Period Mesoamerica | | |
| Teotihuacan and its Influence | Manzanilla 2009 | Survey Data |
| Late Classic Maya | Coe 2005, Chapter 5 | Maya Calendrics and Writing |
| The Classic Maya Collapse | Chase and Chase 2010 | Interpreting Environmental Data |
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| Week 6: Postclassic Mesoamerica | | |
| Toltecs, Postclassic Maya | Sharer and Traxler 2006, Chapter 10 | The Maya Market System |

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| Mixtec | TBD | Mixtec Codices |
| The Aztec in Central Mexico | Smith 2003, Chapter 5 | RAT 3; Codex Mendoza- Online Resource (Tribute Maps) |
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| Week 7: The Intermediate Area | | |
| Greater Nicoya Region | Lange 1992 | |
| Costa Rican Chiefdoms, Greater Chiriquí | Hoopes 2014; Fernández 2014 | Determining status from burials |
| Gran Coclé | Cooke 2004 | Animal Imagery on Coclé Pottery |
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| Week 8: Intro. to the Andes | | |
| Columbia, Ecuador, Amazon | TBD | <i>RAT 4</i> |
| Introduction to the Andes | Isbell and Silverman 2008 | |
| Early Coastal Civilizations | Standen and Arriaza 2014 | |
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| Week 9: Early Horizon, Early Intermediate | | |
| Chavin | Burger 1995, Chapter 7 | |
| Moche | Benson 2012, Chapter 9; Quilter 2010, Chapter 13 | Moche Iconography |
| Nasca, Recuay | Lau 2011, Chapter 8 | <i>RAT 5</i> |
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| Week 10: Middle Horizon, Late Intermediate | | |
| Tiwanaku | Janusek 2008, Chapter 4 | |
| Wari | Jennings 2015 | |
| Chimú | Shimada 2000 | |
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| Week 11: The Inca (Late Horizon) | | |
| Inca: Part 1 | D'Altroy 2003, Chapter 7 | Quipus and Counting Systems |
| Inca: Part 2 | Matos and Barreiro 2015, Excerpt | |
| TBD | | <i>RAT 6</i> |
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| Week 12: Contact Period | | |
| Contact in Mesoamerica | Ethnohistoric Excerpts | |
| Contact in Central America | Ethnohistoric Excerpts | |
| Contact in South America | Ethnohistoric Excerpts | |

Reading Assignments

Week 1: Introduction

Voorhies, Barbara

- 2004 Excerpt from *Coastal Collectors of the Holocene: The Chantuto People of Southwest Mexico*. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Week 2: Early Mesoamerica

Creamer, Winifred

- 1987 Mesoamerica as a Concept: An Archaeological View from Central America. *Latin American Research Review* 22: 35-62.

Blake, Michael, Brian S. Chisholm, John E. Clark, and Karen Mudar

- 1992 Non-Agricultural Staples and Agricultural Supplements: Early Formative Subsistence in the Soconusco Region, Mexico. In *Transitions to Agriculture in Prehistory*, edited by Anne Birgitte Gebauer and T. Douglas Price, pp. 133-151. Prehistory Press, Madison.

Cheetham, David and Jeffrey P. Blomster

- 2017 Materializing the San Lorenzo Olmecs. In *The Early Olmec and Mesoamerica: The Material Record*, edited by Jeffrey P. Blomster and David Cheetham, pp. 9-36. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Lesure, Richard G.

- 2004 Shared Art Styles and Long-Distance Contact in Early Mesoamerica. In *Mesoamerican Archaeology: Theory and Practice*, edited by Julia A. Hendon and Rosemary A. Joyce, pp. 73-96. Blackwell Publishing, Malden.

Week 3: Mesoamerican Chiefdoms

González Lauck, Rebecca

- 2010 The Architectural Setting of Olmec Sculpture Clusters at La Venta, Tabasco. In *The Place of Stone Monuments: Context, Use, and Meaning in Mesoamerica's Preclassic Transition*, edited by Julia Guernsey, John E. Clark, and Barbara Arroyo, pp. 129-148. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C.

Pool, Christopher A.

- 2007 Olmec Transformations: The Middle Formative Period. In *Olmec Archaeology and Early Mesoamerica*, pp. 145-178. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Houston, Stephen D. and Takeshi Inomata

- 2009 Beginnings. In *The Classic Maya*, pp. 65-104. Cambridge University Press, New York.
**Read pp. 65-86

Guernsey, Julia

- 2006 The Site of Izapa in Context. In *Ritual & Power in Stone: The Performance of Rulership in Mesoamerican Izapan Style Art*, pp. 17-41. University of Texas Press, Austin.

Week 4: Urbanization in Mesoamerica

Houston, Stephen D. and Takeshi Inomata

2009 Beginnings. In *The Classic Maya*, pp. 65-104. Cambridge University Press, New York.
**Read pp. 86-104

Estrada-Belli, Francisco

2011 The Preclassic-Classic Maya Transition: A New Beginning? In *The First Maya Civilization: Ritual and Power before the Classic Period*, pp. 117-139. Routledge, New York.

Marcus, Joyce and Kent V. Flannery

1996 The Golden Age of Zapotec Civilization. In *Zapotec Civilization: How Urban Society Evolved in Mexico's Oaxaca Valley*, edited by J. Marcus and K. V. Flannery, pp. 208-235. Thames and Hudson, New York.

Week 5: Classic Period Mesoamerica

Manzanilla, Linda R.

2009 Corporate Life in Apartment and Barrio Compounds at Teotihuacan, Central Mexico: Craft Specialization, Hierarchy, Ethnicity. In *Domestic Life in Prehispanic Capitals: A Study of Specialization, Hierarchy, and Ethnicity*, edited by Linda R. Manzanilla and Claude Chapdelaine, pp. 21-42. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Coe, Michael D.

2005 Classic Splendor: The Late Period. *The Maya*, 7th edition, pp. 110-160. Thames & Hudson, New York.

Chase, Diane Z. and Arlen F. Chase

2010 Framing the Maya Collapse: Continuity, Discontinuity, Method, Practice in the Classic to Postclassic Southern Maya Lowlands. In *After Collapse*, edited by Glenn M. Schwartz and John J. Nichols, pp. 168-187. University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Week 6: Postclassic Mesoamerica

Sharer, Robert J. and Loa P. Traxler

2006 Reformulation and Revival in the Postclassic. In *The Ancient Maya*, sixth edition, pp. 589-630. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Smith, Michael E.

2003 The Commercial Economy. In *The Aztecs*, 2nd edition, pp. 106-124. Blackwell, Malden.

Week 7: The Intermediate Area

Lange, Frederick W.

1992 The Search for Elite Personages and Site Hierarchies in Greater Nicoya. In *Wealth and Hierarchy in the Intermediate Area*, edited by Frederick W. Lange, pp.109-139. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C.

Hoopes, John W.

- 2014 Authority in Ancestral Central America. In *Revealing Ancestral Central America*, edited by Rosemary A. Joyce, pp. 45-58. Smithsonian Latino Center and the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Fernández, Patricia

- 2014 Between Beliefs and Rituals: Material Cultures of Ancestral Costa Rica. In *Revealing Ancestral Central America*, edited by Rosemary A. Joyce, pp. 59-67. Smithsonian Latino Center and the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Cooke, Richard

- 2004 Observations on the Religious Content of Animal Imagery of the 'Gran Coclé' Semiotic Tradition of Pre-Columbian Panama. In *Behavior Behind Bones: The Zooarchaeology of Ritual, Religion, Status and Identity*, edited by Sharyn Jones O'Day, Wim Van Neer, and Anton Ervynuck, pp. 114-127. Oxbow, London.

Week 8: Intro. to the Andes

Isbell, William H. and Helaine Silverman

- 2008 Regional Patterns. In *Andean Archaeology III: North and South*, edited by William H. Isbell and Helaine Silverman, pp. 3-19. Springer, New York.

Standen, Vivien and Bernardo T. Arriaza

- 2014 The Chinchorro Culture: Hunter, Gatherers and Fishers of the Atacama Desert Coast. In *The Chinchorro Culture: A Comparative Perspective. The Archaeology of the Earliest Human Mummification*, edited by Nuria Sanz, Bernardo T. Arriaza, and Vivien G. Standen, pp. 35-52. UNESCO, Mexico.

Week 9: Early Horizon, Early Intermediate

Burger, Richard L.

- 1995 Florescence and Collapse of Chavin Civilization. In *Chavin and the Origins of Andean Civilization*. Thames & Hudson, London.

Benson, Elizabeth P.

- 2012 Rulers, Warriors, and Priests. In *The Worlds of the Moche on the North Coast of Peru*, pp. 83-94. University of Texas Press, Austin.

Quilter, Jeffrey

- 2010 Moche in Andean Prehistory. *The Moche of Ancient Peru*, pp. 21-30. Peabody Museum Press, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Lau, George F.

- 2011 A Prehistory of Recuay Culture, In *Andean Expressions: Art and Archaeology of the Recuay Culture*, pp. 243-264. University of Iowa Press, Iowa City.

Week 10: Middle Horizon, Late Intermediate

Janusek, John Wayne

2008 The City of Tiwanaku. In *Ancient Tiwanaku*, pp. 107-168. Cambridge University Press, New York.

Jennings, Justin

2015 Tenahaha, Wari, and, Middle Horizon Peru. In *Tehahana and the Wari State: A View of the Middle Horizon from the Cotahuasi Valley*, edited by Justin Jennings and Willy Yépez Álvarez, pp. 199-212. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa.

Shimada, Izumi

2000 The Late Prehispanic Coastal Sites. In *The Inca World: The Development of Pre-Columbian Peru, A.D. 1000-1534*, edited by Laura Laurencich Minelli, pp. 49-110. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

Week 11: The Inca (Late Horizon)

D'Altroy

2003 Inca Ideology: Powers of the Sky and Earth, Past and Present. In *The Incas*, pp. 141-176. Blackwell Publishing, Malden.

Matos Mendieta, Ramiro and José Barriero (Eds.)

2015 Excerpt from *The Great Inka Road: Engineering an Empire*. Smithsonian Books, National Museums of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.

Week 12: Contact Period

Ethnohistoric excerpts TBD