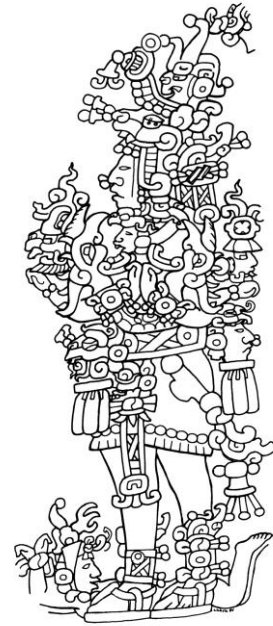


ANTH 360 CULTURES OF MEXICO AND CENTRAL AMERICA

T-TH 9:30-10:45
Flagg 211

Instructor Information

Lydia Rodríguez
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Course Description

The course focuses on Mesoamerican indigenous cultures, from pre-Columbian times to present day. Although the course covers basic information about several Mesoamerican civilizations (Olmec, Aztec, etc.), the emphasis of the course is on Maya cultures. The current Maya are the recipients of one of the most important cultural legacies of the history of Mesoamerica. Some institutions and cultural traits that characterized the pre-Columbian Maya have survived after five hundred years of cultural contact, while others have blended with Western culture in many fascinating ways. By the end of the course, you should have developed a good understanding of the following topics:

- What are the main regions, ethnic groups, and languages spoken in Mesoamerica and the Maya area.
- Fundamental traits that define Mesoamerican cultures, and Maya identity and worldview.
- The main stages in the history of the pre-Columbian Maya, and some of their most famous cultural accomplishments, such as the calendar and literacy.
- The challenges of the current socio-political context where Maya and other indigenous Mesoamerican cultures live.

Learning Outcomes

This course fulfills the General Education XC requirement. To fulfill the XC requirements, students in ANTH 360 will:

- a) Devote a majority of reading and class time to the study of Mesoamerican and Maya cultures

- b) Attend to the interconnections of several significant aspects of Mesoamerican and Maya cultures, such as the historical background, political and economic institutions, and major cultural and artistic achievements of the Mesoamerican cultures studied.
- c) Compare and contrast Maya cultures with other Mesoamerican Cultures, for example Olmec, Teotihuacan, and Mexica, and with European (Spanish) culture.
- d) Study the interaction of the Maya with other cultures: In outlining the history of Mesoamerica through the development and demise of its indigenous civilizations, in ANTH 360 we study the interactions of all these Mesoamerican societies. We also discuss how the European colonization affected the indigenous cultures of Mesoamerica.
- e) Confront the problems raised by tensions between nationalism and globalism. We will discuss human rights in the context of indigenous populations of Central America, and the tensions between "universal rights" as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the right to self-determination of indigenous communities that is outlined in the Mexican Constitution.

Requirements and Policies

Required Texts (Available for purchase at the Student Book Store)

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*. Eleventh Edition. Thames and Hudson. New York: 2005.

Burgos-Debray, Elisabeth. *I, Rigoberta Menchú. An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Verso Editions. London: 1984.

Additional readings as assigned

Grade Breakdown	Grading Scale			
Research and presentation: 20%	93-100	4.0	77-79	2.3
Midterm exams (2): 25%	90-92	3.7	73-76	2.0
Final exam: 25%	87-89	3.3	70-72	1.7
Pop up quizzes: 5%	83-86	3.0	67-69	1.3
	80-82	2.7	60-66	1.0
			below 60	0.0

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. I will be taking attendance everyday in class. Every unexcused absence will result in the loss of 1% off your final grade, which is calculated on a 100 scale. If you cannot come to class because of a real problem, let me know *beforehand*. Being repeatedly late to class or leaving early may count as an absence. Please talk to me *in advance* if you have a justified reason to leave early. Absences for illness or university-related activities must be properly documented by written notice on official letterhead.

Midterms, Final Exam, and Pop-up quizzes

There will be two midterms and a final exam, each is worth 25% of the final grade. The final exam will be comprehensive, and will take place on December 8th, in class. If you can't take the Final exam on that date because of a real problem (you must be able to properly document your request), please let me know as soon as possible so I can arrange for you to take the test on Wednesday, Dec. 14, 8:00 -10:00 am.

To encourage you to keep up with the readings, occasionally pop-up quizzes about the assigned readings will be given in class, which will be graded on a pass/fail basis. As a whole, all the quizzes are worth 5% of your grade. The quizzes will be given at the beginning of class, so be sure not to miss them! No quiz make ups will be given if you are late or have an unexcused absence.

Research and presentation

You will be assigned to a small group of 2-3 students, to present a research topic of your choice based on the material we cover in class. Here are some examples of possible topics you may choose:

- 1) A Mesoamerican culture not covered in class
- 2) A "classic style" ethnographic description of a Maya group (Please choose one which has not been covered in class).
- 3) A particular topic relevant to Mesoamerican ethnography or ethno-history (Cross-group comparisons welcome here. For instance: "differences and similarities in divination with crystals in the Lowlands and in the Highlands").
- 4) An historical episode, an archaeological site, or the life of a leader or historical character important in history of Mesoamerica and/or the Maya area. (For example: "Copan"; "The Yucatecan War of Castes.")

As the final deliverable to present in class and turn in for me to evaluate, you may choose to do:

- 1) A poster presentation
- 2) A power point presentation

Academic Honesty

You are expected to comply with the SUNY Potsdam standards of academic integrity. For further information about what this means and for plagiarism guidelines, please check the SUNY Potsdam Academic Honor Code website:

<http://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode/>

Accommodations

If you need any special accommodations based on a documented disability or other special learning needs, please make an appointment with me early in the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations that may be helpful in successfully completing this course. Students with documented disabilities or special learning needs are also encouraged to contact Sharon House, Coordinator of Accommodative Services (267-3267) to discuss additional support services.

Tentative Schedule of Weekly Topics and Assigned Readings
Please continue to check this page during the semester: updates will be provided periodically.

PART I
INTRODUCTION TO MESOAMERICA: HISTORY AND CULTURAL AREAS

Tuesday August 30. Introduction

Introduction, presentations, and review of the syllabus

Thursday September 1. Introduction to Ancient Mesoamerica. Overview of Indigenous Cultures: The Olmecs, Teotihuacan, The Maya

Webster, David and Susan Toby Evans. *Mesoamerican Civilization*. Pages 595-604.

Carmack, Robert and Janine Gasco. *The Legacy of Mesoamerica*. "The Olmecs": 50-52

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*.

Ch. 1: "Introduction" 10-14; "Areas" 23; "Peoples and languages" 26-31.

Ch. 4: "Teotihuacan: military giant": 99-102.

Tuesday September 6. Introduction to Ancient Mesoamerica. Overview of Indigenous Cultures continued: The Toltec, The Aztec

Meyer, Michael and William Sherman. *The Course of Mexican history*.

The Toltecs: 37-41

The Aztec rise to power: 56-59

Aztec Society and Culture: 67-82

Film: The Rise and Fall of City States

Thursday, September 8. Workshop on Ancient Mesoamerican Mathematical Systems

Guest lecturers: Dr. Madore and Dr. Miller (Mathematics Department). Topics covered:

Base 20 arithmetic

Aztec Tribute Numbers

Mayan numerals

Tuesday, September 13. Workshop on the Ancient Maya Writing System

Coe, Michael and Mark Van Stone. *Reading the Maya Glyphs*:

Ch. 1: 1.3 "The language of the inscriptions" 15-16

Ch. 2: 2.1 "Principles", 2.2 "Syllabograms" 17-21

Brown, Cecil H. 1991. Hieroglyphic Literacy in Ancient Mayaland: Inferences from Linguistic Data: 489-496.

Houston, Stephen and David Stuart 1992. *On Maya Hieroglyphic Literacy*. 589-92.

Thursday, September 15. Introduction to Mesoamerican Calendars

Schele, Linda and David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings*. Chapter 2. The Shape of Time: 77-84.

Tedlock, Barbara. *Time and the Highland Maya*. Chapter 5. "The Day Lords": 107-127.

Tuesday, September 20. Workshop on Ancient Mesoamerican Calendars

Guest lecturers: Dr. Madore and Dr. Miller (Mathematics Department). Topics covered:
The Aztec Tonalpohualli
The Mayan Calendar Round and the Long Count.

Thursday September 22. History of the Maya region: Pre-classic to Classic

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*.

The Rise of Maya Civilization: 61-63.

From Pre-classic to classic in the Maya Lowlands: 90-91.

Defining the Early Classic: 98-99.

Classic Splendor: The Late Period: 124-132 (stop at the end of the first paragraph)

Schele, Linda & David Freidel. *A Forest of Kings*. The Children of the First Mother: Family and Dynasty at Palenque: 216-228; 234 (bottom)-245.

Tuesday September 27. History of the Maya region: The Classic, the Collapse

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*.

The Terminal Classic. The Great Collapse. Pages: 174-177.

Film: Ancient Apocalypse: The Maya collapse/ The Fall of the Maya

Thursday September 29. History of the Maya region: The Postclassic

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*.

Ch. 6 Puuc Sites in the Northern Area 179-184

Ch 7. The Toltec Invasion and Chichen Itza. Pages: 199-215.

Tuesday, October 4. Midterm review

Thursday, October 6. **MIDTERM 1**

Tuesday, October 11. Fall recess, no class

PART II
ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVES ON MAYA CULTURES

Thursday October 13. The colonization of Mesoamerica. Postcolonial Literature

Robert M. Carmack, Janine L. Gasco, Gary H. Gossen. *The Legacy of Mesoamerica*. "The Conquest". Pages: 151-164.

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*. Chapter 3. The Hero Twins and the Creation of the World. Pages: 65-66

Edmonson, Munro S. *Popol Vuh*. Introduction. Pages: vii-xvii.

Film: Popol Vuh

Tuesday October 18. Life cycle, Family life, Gender relations. Kinship, Compadrazgo

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*. Ch. 10. The enduring Maya. Read only 245-252.

Rosebaum, Brenda. 1993. *With our heads bowed*. "From Birth to Maturity. Women and Men Through the Life Cycle" Ch. 3: 39-64

Vogt, Evon. *Zinacantan*. "Compadrazgo" Pages: 230-237.

Thursday, October 20. Economy and Subsistence Activities. The Cargo System. Attitudes towards wealth and prestige

Vogt, Evon. *Zinacantan*. Chapter 3: Subsistence Activities. Pages: 35-36, 44-65.

Cancian, Frank. *Economics and Prestige in a Maya Community*. Chapter 8: The Functions of the Cargo System. Pages: 133- 138.

Foster, George. 1965. "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good". 293-315.

Tuesday October 25. Syncretism. The hot-cold system

Watanabe, John. From Saints to Shibboleths: Image, Structure, and Identity in Maya Religious Syncretism. 131-150.

Redfield, Robert and Alfonso Villa Rojas. *Chan Kom*. Chapter 10. "Cold" and "Hot": 160-164.

Tedlock, Barbara. *An Interpretive Solution to the Problem of Humoral Medicine in Latin America*. 1069-83.

Thursday October 27. Witchcraft, shamanism, healing practices

Redfield, Robert and Alfonso Villa Rojas. *Chan Kom*
Chapter 5: The H-mens. Pages: 74-77.

Chapter 10. The Evil Winds. Ojo. Nocturnal Birds. 164-170. Therapeutic ceremonies: read only 173-174.

Vogt, Evon. *Zinacantan. Witchcraft*. Chapter 19: 406-415. Chapter 20: 416-422.

Tedlock, Barbara. *Time and the Highland Maya*. Chapter 6: The blood speaks: 133-147.

Tuesday, November 1. Nagualism. Mesoamerican Philosophies of Personhood

Salser, Benson. *Nagual, Witch, and Sorcerer in a Quiché village*. 305-328.

Pitarch, Pedro. *The Jaguar and the Priest*. Chapter 2: 22-50.

Thursday, November 3. Midterm 2 review

Tuesday November 8. **MIDTERM 2**

PART III CONTEMPORARY DEBATES

Thursday November 10. Human rights in Mexico and the Maya region.

Stavenhagen, Rodolfo. Cultural Rights and Human Rights. A Social Science Perspective: 2008.27-50

Pitarch, Pedro, Shannon Speed and Xochitl Leyva-Solano. Human Rights and the Mayan Region. Read the sections on. "The Maya Region" & "Human and Indigenous Rights in Chiapas and Guatemala" Pages: 2-8.

Tuesday November 15. The Zapatista Movement

Collier, George. *Basta! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas*. Introduction 1-10. Chapter 8: The New Indigenous Movement: 159-182.

Film: A place called Chiapas/ Zapatistas: Chronicle of a Rebellion

Thursday November 17. Language endangerment and death in Mesoamerica

Krauss, Michael E. *The World's Languages in Crisis*. 4-10.

Ladefoged, Peter. *Another View of Endangered Languages*. 809-811.

Hofling, Charles. *Indigenous Linguistic Revitalization and Indigenous Interaction: The Itzaj Maya Revitalization Case*. 108-116.

Suslak, Daniel. *Who can save Ayapaneco?* http://stories.schwa-fire.com/who_save_ayapaneco

Tuesday November 22. Student presentations

No readings assigned

Thursday 24: Thanksgiving Recess (No class)

Tuesday November 29. The Maya Genocide in Guatemala

Burgos-Debray, Elisabeth. *I, Rigoberta Menchú. An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Verso Editions. London: 1984.

Film: When the Mountains Tremble

Thursday December 1. The Menchú-Stoll controversy. The Mayan diaspora

Stoll, David. *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans*. Boulder. Preface: 8-15.

Burns, Allan F. *Maya in Exile*. Guatemalans in Florida.

Chapter 1: Maya refugees and applied anthropology. Read only pp: 7-19

Chapter 4: The Maya in Community and Ethnic Context. 67-102

Tuesday December 6. Final Exam review

Thursday December 8. FINAL EXAM

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF REQUIRED READINGS

Brown, Cecil H. 1991. *Hieroglyphic Literacy in Ancient Mayaland: Inferences from Linguistic Data*. In Current Anthropology 32 (4): 489-496.

Burgos-Debray, Elisabeth. *I, Rigoberta Menchú. An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. London: Verso Editions.

Burns, Allan F. 1993. *Maya in Exile*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Cancian, Frank. 1965. *Economics and Prestige in a Maya Community*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Carmack, Robert and Janine Gasco. 1996. *The Legacy of Mesoamerica*. History and Culture of a Native American Civilization. New Jersey: Upper Saddle River

Coe, Michael. *The Maya*. Eleventh Edition. Thames and Hudson. New York: 2005.

Coe, Michael and Mark Van Stone. *Reading the Maya Glyphs*. Thames and Hudson. London: 2005

Collier, George. 2005. *Basta! Land and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas*. Oakland, Calif.: Food First Books.

Edmonson, Munro S. 1971. *The Book of Counsel: The Popol Vuh of the Quiche Maya of Guatemala*. Middle American Research Institute Publication 35. New Orleans: Tulane University.

Foster, George. 1965. "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good". In American Anthropologist, 67: 293-315.

- Garzón, Susan, R. McKeena Brown, Julia Becker Richards, and Wuqu' Ajpub'. 1998. *The Life of our Language: Kaqchikel Maya Maintenance, Shift, and Revitalization*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Hofling, Charles. *Indigenous Linguistic Revitalization and Indigenous Interaction: The Itzaj Maya Revitalization Case*. In Human Organization, 108-116. Vol 55. N° 1, 1996.
- Houston, Stephen and David Stuart 1992. *On Maya Hieroglyphic Literacy*. In Current Anthropology 33(5):589-92.
- Krauss, Michael E. *The World's Languages in Crisis*. Language. 1992: 68(1). 4-10.
- Ladefoged, Peter. *Another View of Endangered Languages*. Language. 1992: 68. 809-811.
- Meyer, Michael and William Sherman. 1995. *The Course of Mexican history*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Pitarch, Pedro, Shannon Speed and Xochitl Leyva-Solano. 2008. *Human Rights and the Maya Region. Global Politics, Cultural Contentions and Moral Engagements*. Duke University Press.
- Pitarch, Pedro. *The Jaguar and the Priest. An Ethnography of Tzeltal Souls*. University of Texas Press. 2010.
- Redfield, Robert and Alfonso Villa Rojas. 1934. *Chan Kom*. Carnegie institution of Washington.
- Rosebaum, Brenda. 1993. *With Our Heads Bowed. The Dynamics of Gender in a Maya Community*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Saler, Benson. *Nagual, Witch, and Sorcerer in a Quiché village*. In Ethnology, Vol. 3, No. 3 (Jul., 1964). Pages: 305-328.
- Schele, Linda and David Freidel. 1990. *A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya*. New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.
- Suslak, Daniel. Who can save Ayapaneco? http://stories.schwa-fire.com/who_save_ayapaneco
- Tedlock, Barbara. *An Interpretive Solution to the Problem of Humoral Medicine in Latin America*. In Soc Sci Med. 1987; 24(12):1069-83.
- Tedlock, Barbara. *Time and the Highland Maya*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Van den Berghe, Pierre. 1995. Marketing Mayas. Ethnic Tourism Promotion in Mexico. In *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol 22. No.3, pp: 568-588.
- Vogt, Evon. 1969. *Zinacantan: a Maya Community in the Highlands of Chiapas*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Watanabe, John. From Saints to Shibboleths: Image, Structure, and Identity in Maya Religious Syncretism. American Ethnologist, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Feb., 1990). Pages: 131-150.
- Watanabe, John M. 1995. Unimagining the Maya: Anthropologists, Others, and the Inescapable Hubris of Authorship. In *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Vol 14, No 1. Blackwell Publishing.
- Webster, David and Susan Toby Evans. Mesoamerican Civilization. In *The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human Societies*, Chris Scarre (ed). London: Thames and Hudson. Pages 595-604.