COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course focused on the cultural processes that have characterized a very particular region on the American continent. Even today, we do not have a clear definition of the term *Mesoamerica*. We will refer to it as ‘Middle America’ the geographical region from which a great diversity of cultures and civilizations emerged prior to the coming of the Spaniards. We will study the origins, complex transformations, and the historical development of these cultures through three major historical periods: Pre-Hispanic, Colonial and Contemporary. The Pre-Hispanic period is focused on the ways of life, including the crucial role of ideology, cosmology and astronomy in the emergence and development of Mesoamerican cultures and civilizations. The Colonial era is anthropologically examined to identify the political, economic and ideological factors still present in contemporary Mesoamerica. Finally, students will examine the effects of
the broad diversity of rural, urban, transnational and global processes in the lives of the people living in the region tied to the ancient Mesoamerican cultures. Course activities will include readings, lectures, class discussions, and ethnographic documentaries.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
- Exercise the anthropological approach in the understanding of the Mesoamerica
- Exercise critical thinking in the analysis of past and present ideologies related to the diversity of Mesoamerican cultures, through general discussion
- Understand the broad diversity of past and current Mesoamerican cultures
- Articulate the political, economic, social, and cultural forces that have shaped Mesoamerica today.

STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS
The course is a combination of lectures and seminar. Lectures provide the introduction to major debates surrounding the readings; students are expected to engage in class discussions. Everyone must come to class prepared; discussion will often take the form of a formal debate of the issues read for that class session. All readings that are listed on the syllabus should be done prior to the class.

Reading Comments (10% of grade)
Reading comments consist of a paragraph or two describing your thoughts-reflection to the reading(s) for each session. Do not summarize, but rather elaborate your response to the reading. In addition, prepare 2-3 questions that you might ask your classmates or discuss yourself. You need to post your comments on Blackboard before class meeting. Bring your comments and questions with you to class.

Two Take-Home Exams (60% of grade, 30% each)
Each student will write two take-home exams based on several integrative questions, which will be distributed one week in advance. Questions on the exam will be drawn from the readings, lectures, and discussions. Your response must include the references you used.

Presentations (20%)
Starting in the second half of the semester, students will be divided up in groups that will work on particular topics to be distributed in class. Students will use the material from the ethnography they select to work collectively on the presentations. Instructions for these presentation and the list of topics to present will be provided in class.

Course Participation and Attendance (10% of grade)
You are expected to come to each session having read the assigned material. Informed participation by everyone in discussions is expected. Those who fail to attend often disrupt class. Your regular attendance will be noticed by the performance in your presentations and discussions. Notify the instructor of any planned absences. More than
3 absences will result in the subtraction of 10% of your grade. Please note that 10% is one letter grade.

**Extra Credit**

Occasionally, additional assignments will be given to monitor how well you are absorbing the material. These assignments are likely to become more frequent if students are missing the class or failing to participate. These assignments will receive a checkmark (for an average response) or a plus (for an excellent response). These marks become important at the end of the term. If your final grade is on the margin between two marks, the accumulated points earned on these assignments are used to adjust your grade up or down.

Please turn off all electronic devices in class (cell phones, Blackberries, ipods, etc.). You may not receive or send text messages during class. Personal computers are allowed only for taking notes. Any use of computers for other purposes will lead to a ban on all computers in the classroom. The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus via class announcements or email to students.

**PLAGIARISM POLICY**

The Department of Anthropology does not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own. It may be inadvertent or intentional. Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge, should be cited. Students suspected of any of these will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; if found guilty they can receive an automatic “F” in the course. In addition, I reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT legal system, which may result in your dismissal from the university. For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm. For information on the University’s policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, http://www.unt.edu/csrr/.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Anthropology Department does not discriminate on the basis of an individual’s disability as required by the Americans With Disabilities Act. Our program provides academic adjustments to individuals with disabilities in its programs and activities. Attempts will be made to meet all certified requirements.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Treat class time as an opportunity to learn.
2. Arrive on class on time.
3. Complete assignments on time. There will be no exceptions.
4. Cite all research, text and image sources.
5. Participate in all class discussions and critiques.
6. Confront difficulties in your work in the spirit of learning, creative exploration, and personal growth.
7. Ask for help from your instructor when needed.
8. Avail yourself of all available support services including advising, tutorials, and workshops.
9. Respect your fellow students at all times.
10. Disruptive behavior, including inappropriate language and talking in class, is not tolerated. Students whose behavior is disturbing the class will be asked to leave and will be marked absent.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

**Textbook:**
Identified in the schedule as (LM)

**Ethnographies:** (students must choose ONE)


**RECOMMENDED READINGS**


**ACCESSING COURSE MATERIALS:** You can access course readings and material on Blackboard (Bb). Please let me know if you are having any difficulties accessing any materials.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week No.</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>August 25-27</td>
<td>Introduction&lt;br&gt;Readings: (LM) chapt. 1&lt;br&gt;Documentary: <em>Culture and Math</em></td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 1-3</td>
<td>Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sept. 8-10</td>
<td>The Mesoamerican World at Spanish Contact</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sept. 15-17</td>
<td>The European Encounter</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Oct. 6-8</td>
<td>Native Mesoamericans in the Modern Era</td>
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<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAM</td>
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9 Oct. 20-22 Transnationalism and the Political Economy of Mesoamerica
Readings: (LM) chapt. 9
Documentaries:
The Mayan Dreams of Chan Kom
When the Mountains Tremble

10 Oct. 27-29 The Mayan Zapatista Movement
Readings: (LM) chapt. 10

Documentary: The Sixth Sun

Oct. 27 FALL FORUM
Coliseum – UNT

11 Nov. 3-5 Women and Gender
Readings: (LM) chapt. 12

12 Nov. 10-12 The Indian Voice
Readings: (LM) chapt. 13


13 Nov. 17-19 U.S/Mexico Border
Immigrants and Asylum Seekers in the 21st Century
Documentaries:
Maquilapolis
La Bestia
Which Way Home

American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting

14 Nov.24-26 THANKSGIVING

15 Dec. 2-4 FINAL PRESENTATIONS and GENERAL REVIEW

Dec. 4 SECOND TAKE-HOME EXAM

NOTE ABOUT SYLLABUS AND READINGS
The syllabus may change and professor will announce the changes in advance. In addition, the professor will announce in class additional readings required to cover the material presented in class. These additional readings will be posted in Blackboard (Bb)