

Department of Anthropology College of Public Affairs and Community Service  
The University of North Texas

## **MAYA CULTURE**

**ANTH 3220**

**Fall 2014**

**TU-TH 11:00-12:20 PM –Gateway #131**

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Office Hours: T 12:30 – 2:00 PM  
and by appointment.  
Office Hours: T-Th 9:00 – 10:00 AM  
and by appointment

“Here is the story of the beginning,  
when there was not one bird,  
not one fish,  
not one mountain.  
Here is the sky, all alone.  
Here is the sea, all alone.  
There is nothing more  
–no sound, no movement.  
Only the sky and the sea.  
Only Heart-of-Sky, alone.  
And these are his names:  
Maker and Modeler,  
Kukulkan,  
and Hurricane.  
But there is no one to speak his names.  
There is no one to praise his glory.  
There is no one to nurture his greatness.”  
(The Creation, *Popol Vuh*)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

We will study the origins of Maya culture and the historical development of the Maya 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 Maya civilization. The Colonial era is anthropologically examined to identify the political, economic and ideological factors still present in contemporary Maya cultures. Finally, students will examine the broad diversity of rural, urban and transnational Mayas today. Course activities will include readings, lecture, class discussion, and videos.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Exercise the anthropological approach in the understanding of the Maya culture
- Exercise critical thinking in the analysis of past and present ideologies related to the Maya, through general discussion
- Understanding the broad diversity of past and current Maya cultures

## **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 (30% 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.

### **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 (students must choose TWO)**

Adler, Rachel. 2003. Yucatecans in Dallas. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Castellanos, Bianet. 2010. *A Return to Servitude. Maya Migration and the Tourist Trade in Cancún*. University of Minnesota Press.

Hagan, J. Maria. 1994. *Deciding to be Legal. A Maya Community in Houston*. Temple University Press.

Menchú, Rigoberta. 1983. *I, Rigoberta Menchú, An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Verso Books.

Re Cruz, Alicia. 1996. *The Two Milpas of Chan Kom*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press:

### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

Burns, Allan. 1995. *Maya in Exile*. Temple University Press.

Coe, Michael D. 1992. *Breaking the Maya Code*. New York: Thames and Hudson

Coe, Michael D. 1999. *The Maya. Ancient Peoples and Places*. London: Thames & Hudson

Coe, Michael D., and Mark Van Stone. 2001. *Reading the Maya Glyphs*. London: Thames & Hudson

Ebers, Christine. 1995. *Women and Alcohol in a Highland Maya Town: Water of Hope, Water of Sorrow*. University of Texas Press, Austin.

Farris, N.M. 1985. *Maya Society under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival*. Princeton University Press.

Kinz, Ellen. 1990. *Life under the Tropical Canopy: Tradition and Change among the Yucatec Maya*. New York: Wadsworth Publishers.

Lucero, Lisa J. 2006. *Water and Ritual: The Rise and Fall of Classic Maya Rulers*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Martin, Simon and Nikolai Grube. 2000. *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya*. London: Thames & Hudson,

Miller, Mary Ellen. 1999. *Maya Art and Architecture*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Reed, Nelson 1996. *The Cast War of Yucatan*. Stanford University Press; Revised edition 2002

Rosenbaum, Brenda. 1993. *With our Heads Bowed: The Dynamics of Gender in a Maya Community*. Albany: Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, State University of New York.

Sharer, Robert J. *The Ancient Maya*, Sixth Edition. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. (Called Sharer in

Simon, Martin, and Nikolai Grube. 2000. *Chronicle of the Maya Kings and Queens: Deciphering the Dynasties of the Ancient Maya*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Tedlock, Dennis (Translator). 1996. *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life*. Touchstone Books.

Wolf, Eric. 1959. *Sons of the Shaking Earth*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

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

### COURSE SCHEDULE

Week No.	Dates	Topics
1	August 26-28	Introduction.
2	Sept. 2-4	Mesoamerica and the Maya Guest Speakers from the University of Quintana Roo
3	Sept. 9-11	The Maya in the Pre-Hispanic World Video: <i>The Maya</i>
4	Sept. 16-18	Maya Cosmology and the Popol Vuh Video; <i>Popol Vuh</i>
5	Sept. 23-25	Post-Classic and Chichen Itza Video: <i>Lost Kingdoms of the Maya</i>
	Sept. 30	European Colonization <i>Maya Society under Colonial Rule</i>
	Oct. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	PACS FALL FORUM Students are required to attend
6	Oct. 7-9	The Colonial Regime Messianic and Nativistic Movements Readings: <i>Maya Society under Colonial Rule</i>
7	Oct. 14-16	REVIEW - FIRST TAKE-HOME EXAM
8	Oct. 21-23	Messianic and Nativistic Movements - The Cast War
9	Oct. 28-30 Oct. 30 <sup>th</sup>	The Contemporary Maya I THE DAY OF THE DEAD building of the altar and Ritual Celebration (at the Anthropology Department)
10	Nov. 4-6	The Contemporary Maya II Video: <i>The Living Maya</i>
11	Nov. 11-13	Peasant and Urban Maya Video: <i>Maya Dreams of Chan Kom</i>
12	Nov. 18-20	Transnational Maya Video: <i>Maya in Exile</i>
13	Nov. 25-27	Globalization and the Maya Video: <i>The Fifth Sun</i>
	Nov. 27	THANKSGIVING
14	Dec. 2-4	FINAL REVIEW
15	Dec. 4	SECOND TAKE-HOME EXAM