



Department of Anthropology
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS)
The University of North Texas

MAYA CULTURE

ANTH 3220

Fall 2017

TU-TH 11:00am – 12:20pm WH 116

Dr. Alicia Re Cruz (Alicia.ReCruz@unt.edu)

Anthropology, Chilton #308F

Women's & Gender Studies, GAB #467



Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 10:00am – 11:00am,
or 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 emerging from Spanish colonialist regime, with significant influences in modern and contemporary cultural and political processes among the Maya people. Finally, students will examine the broad diversity of rural, urban and transnational Mayas today. Course activities will include readings, lecture, class discussion, and videos. This course is grounded in anthropological perspectives and the history of Mesoamerica to better understand the cultural processes affecting the lives of the great diversity of contemporary Mayas.

COURSE VISION

This course is conceptualized to be transformative by exposing students to the understanding of CULTURE using THE MAYA as a study case. For this, students will learn about anthropological perspective and how to use it to analyze the past and present complex historical processes among the Maya.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Exercise the anthropological approach in the understanding of the Maya culture
2. Exercise critical thinking in the analysis of past and present ideologies related to the Maya, through general discussion
3. Understanding the broad diversity of past and current Maya cultures
4. Understand the place, impact and resistance of Maya toward global trends

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 week. These comments are due on Monday evening so I have the chance to read them before class on Tuesday. Do not summarize, but rather elaborate your response to the reading. This assignment gives me valuable feedback on how you read and understand the material and where your biggest questions are, it makes sure you are prepared for class discussion. The Reading Comments Reading Responses will always have three segments: 1. Quotes. Selection of quotes from the material that stand out to you, with citation of page number and title or author. Example: (Re Cruz, 1996: 26). 2. Reflection/Commentary. Your synthesis/analysis of what was most important to you in the reading(s). 3. Questions. Several questions that you would like the class to address. Please, post your comments on Blackboard. Bring your comments with you to class.

Two Take-Home Exams (50% of grade, 25% 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). Students are expected to come to each session having read the assigned material. Informed participation by everyone in discussions is expected. Your participation is very important. . I recommend bringing a copy of your own reading comments to class to trigger commentaries that you might like to offer. 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.

COURSE POLICIES

Read the following if you need information about my policies for late work, absences from the class, use of personal technology in the classroom, means of communication and reminders about special accommodations and academic integrity.

Class cancellations and other emergencies

If class is cancelled in an emergency, you will be notified through our Blackboard website and a message will be sent to the email that you have used for Blackboard. Make sure you check it and consult it before class.

Late Work

It is not possible to make up assignments which are designed to foment class discussions. Work will have an automatic deduction of 5% if not given to me hard copy at the beginning of class or submitted prior to class online. This stands unless you have made prior arrangement with me and we have agreed, in writing, on alternative arrangements. Those arrangements must be accompanied with the appropriate documentation that clearly indicates the reason (doctor's note, obituary, etc.) In these cases, the appropriate extension can be negotiated.

Laptops and Cell Phones in Class

I discourage use of a computer for taking notes – your grade depends far more on your active participation in the class than on remembering details and specifics from our discussions and the lectures. Some of you have made arrangements with the Office for Students with Disabilities – so I do not forbid the use of laptops in class. However, **any use of computers for other purposes will lead to a ban on all computers in the classroom.**

Please turn off all electronic devices in class. You may not receive or send text messages during class. The professor reserves the right to alter this syllabus via class announcements or email to students.

Tips for Good Communication

Come to my office hours or set up an appointment with me or your TA to ask questions and share your ideas and concerns. You can also contact us via e-mail.

Our Contact with You

We will post notices for the class on Blackboard. In the event we need to contact you personally, we will use your UNT email account. It is critical that the email account associated with your UNT courses and Blackboard is your UNT email account (not other personal email accounts.) Please be sure that your current phone number is on your UNT record/account. In the event of emergency, the university may contact you by text (using your phone number) and through your UNT email account. For emergency notification, see UNT's InHouse and <http://emergency.unt.edu/>.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however. ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodating website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940-565-4323.

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, & ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT's Dean of Students' website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty of any kind, including plagiarism, cheating, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, and sabotage, will result in, at minimum, a grade of F for the product, and may result in an F for the course and suspension from the university. As defined by UNT policy 06.003, Student Standards of Academic Integrity (https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003_AcademicIntegrity_2009_0.pdf), plagiarism is "Use of another's thoughts or words without proper attribution in any academic exercise, regardless of the student's intent, including but not limited to: 1. the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement or citation. 2. the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in selling term papers or other academic materials." Students are expected to abide by the principles outlined in the University of North Texas "Code of Student Conduct and Discipline: Please refer to the Student Handbook, http://www.unt.edu/csrr/student_conduct/index.html.

DROPPING A COURSE

Students may drop a course before the 12th day of class online at my.unt.edu or in person at the Registrar's office (Eagle Student Services Building). A grade of W (withdrawal) will be recorded if you drop before the 12th day. After the 12th day, students must have a passing grade to receive a grade of W for the dropped course, or the grade will be WF (withdrawal/fail).

SUCCEED AT UNT

At UNT we are committed to helping you to be successful as a student. To succeed at UNT: Show up. Find Support. Get Advised. Be Prepared. Get involved. Stay focused. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can achieve success at UNT, see: <http://success/unt.edu>

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 ONE)

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.

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

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

Manz, Beatriz. 2005. *Paradise in Ashes. A Guatemalan Journey of Courage, Terror and Hope*. University of California 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

Sitting, Ann L. and Martha Florinda Gonzales. 2016. *The Mayans among Us. Migrant Women and Meatpacking on the Great Plains*. University of Nebraska 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

Cook, Garrett and Thomas Offit with Rhonda Taube. 2013. *Indigenous Religion and Cultural Performance in the New Maya World*. University of New Mexico Press.

Cook, Garrett and Thomas Offit, 2009. Pluralism and Transculturation in Indigenous Maya Religion, *Ethnology* vol. 47, no. 1, Winter 2008, pp. 45-59.

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

OUR COURSE PLAN

*The syllabus is the expected course plan. Dr. Re Cruz may make relatively minor changes based on contextual factors.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings & Activities
1	Aug 29	Review Syllabus	General introductions
	Aug 31	Basics in Anthropological approach	
2	Sept 5	Mesoamerica and the Maya	Readings in BB
	Sept 7	Pre-Hispanic cultural processes	Readings in BB
3	Sept 12	Pre-Hispanic Maya Religion	Readings in BB
	Sept 14	Film: <i>The Popol Vuh</i>	Discussion of the film
4	Sept 19	Maya Cosmology	Readings in BB
	Sept 21	Film: <i>Lost Kingdoms of the Maya</i>	Discussion of the Film
5	Sept 26	Intro Spanish Conquest and Colonization	Readings in BB
	Sept 28	Colonial institutions	Readings in BB
6	Oct 3	Mesianic and Nativistic Movements	Readings in BB
	Oct 5	Colonialism and <i>Coloniality</i>	Readings in BB
7	Oct 10	REVIEW	
	Oct 12	Colonial Independence	First Take Home Exam is Due
8	Oct 17	US Political and Economic Intervention	Readings in BB
	Oct 19	Intro to Contemporary Cultural Processes	Readings in BB
9	Oct 24	Maya Peasants	Readings in BB
	Oct 26	Film: <i>The Living Maya</i>	Discussion of the Film
10	Oct 31	Celebration <i>The Day of the Death</i>	
	Nov 2	Environmental Sustainability	Readings in BB
11	Nov 7	Guatemala Civil War	Readings in BB
	Nov 9	Tourism and Urban Migration Film: <i>The Maya Dreams of Chan Kom</i>	Class Discussion
12	Nov 14	Transnational Migration	Readings in BB
	Nov 16	Gender and Globalization	Readings in BB
13	Nov 21	Resistance Movements Film: <i>The Fifth Sun</i>	Class Discussion
	Nov 23	THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY	
14	Nov 28	Film: <i>Smoking Mirror</i>	Class Discussion
	Nov 30	Book Presentations	Class Discussion
15	Dec 5	Book Presentations	Class Discussion
	Dec 7	LAST CLASS DAY	Second Take Home Exam is Due