

ARCHAEOLOGY 551

**The Early Maya: Studies in Mesoamerican Archaeology**

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Welcome to San Bartolo! This course invites you to experience first-hand what Maya civilization was like by teaching you how archaeologists use traces of the past to reconstruct ancient societies. You will be reading about the Maya and learning about their environment, their daily activities and their extraordinary craft, their small villages and their large cities. At the same time you will observe around you and practice the archaeologists' theories and methods highlighted in the required readings for this course. You will experience the jungle environment through camp life, survey and mapping, excavate humble ceramic pots and utilitarian tools, masonry architecture, and unique painted stucco walls, and you will travel to visit sites that together represent some of the highest achievements of Maya culture.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Your final grade in this course will be determined by your performance on your weekly attendance at and active participation in discussions (25%), 3 short papers (10% each) and a final exam (45%). We will meet on Saturdays from 8:00am-12:00pm to discuss the week's theme and their impacts of, and potential problems with, the assigned readings.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

There is one textbook required for this course and several readings that will be made available for you. All assigned readings should be completed before coming to the seminar, as they will form the basis for both discussions and exam.

Martin, Simon, and Nikolai Grube. *Chronicle of Maya Kings and Queens*. [CMKQ]

## LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

### **Introduction to Copan, Quirigua, Tikal, and Calakmul**

Week 1

Read: **CMKQ** the Copan, Quirigua, Chapter, Tikal, and Calakmul Chapters

### **The Middle to Late Preclassic in the Maya Lowlands**

Week 2

Read: **Andrews V and Hammond. 1990.** Redefinition of the Swasey Phase at Cuello, Belize. *American Antiquity* 55(3): 570-584.

**Hammond. 1999.** The Genesis of Hierarchy. In *Social Patterns in Preclassic Mesoamerica*. Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks.

**Estada-Belli et al.** Lightning Gods and Corn Fetishes. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 17: 57-78.

**Assignment 1: 2 page response to 1 of these 3 articles**

### **The Late Preclassic**

Week 3

Read: **Hansen, 1998.** Continuity and Disjunction, Hansen, The First Cities, In *Function and Meaning in Ancient Maya Architecture* pp. 51-65.

**Dunning et al. 2002.** Arising from the *Bajos*: The Evolution of a Neotropical Landscape and the Rise of Maya Civilization

**Wahl, David, Thomas Schreiner and Roger Byrne.** The Paleoenvironmental Sequence of the Mirador Basin in Peten.

## **The Early Classic and Teotihuacan**

Week 4

Read: **Cowgill. 2008.** An Update on Teotihuacan. *Antiquity* 82: 962-975.

**Stuart, David. 2000.** The Arrival of the 'Strangers.' In *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage*.

**Estrada-Belli et al. 2009.** A Maya Palace at Holmul, Peten, Guatemala and the Teotihuacan "Entrada": Evidence from Murals 7 and 9. *Latin American Antiquity*.

**Assignment 2: 2 page discussion on Teotihuacan and Maya**

## **Political Structure of the Classic Period Maya**

Week 5

Read: **Martin and Grube, 1995.** Maya Superstates,

**Inomata, 2006.** Plazas, Performers, and Spectators

**Lucero. 1999.** Classic Maya Political Organization. *Journal of World Prehistory* 13(2).

## **Piedras Negras/Yaxchilan/Palenque/Tonina**

Week 6

Read: **CMKQ PN, Yaxchilan, Palenque and Tonina Chapters**

**Golden et al. 2008.** Piedras Negras and Yaxchilan: Divergent Political Trajectories in Adjacent Maya Polities. *Latin American Antiquity* 19(3): 249-274.

## **Calakmul/Caracol/Naranjo**

Week 7

Read: **CMKQ Caracol and Naranjo Chapters**

**Houston.** Literacy among the Maya.

**Vargas et al. 2009.** Daily life of the ancient Maya recorded on murals at Calakmul, Mexico. *PNAS* 106 (46).

**Assignment 3: 2 page discussion on the readings.**

## **Petexbatun**

Week 8

Read: **Demarest, 1997**, Classic Maya Defensive Systems and Warfare in the Petexbatun Region.

*CMKQ* Dos Pilas Chapter

## **Classic Maya civilization collapses**

Week 9

Read: **Webster 2002**, Ch.7, *Explaining the Collapse*, pp. 217–259.

**Gill et al. 2007.** Drought and the Maya Collapse. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 18: 283-302

**Tainter, Joseph. 2006.** The Archaeology of Overshoot and Collapse. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35: 59-74.

*CMKQ*, pp. 226–230.