

Syllabus: Aztecs, Mayas and Inkas (Anth. 008) Fall 2009
10 Sparks Building, TR 8:00—9:15 AM.
Prof. David Webster: Office 323 Carpenter Bldg.
Office Hours: Wed. 10:00-12:00 AM and by appointment.
Teaching Assistant: Kirk Straight (kds204@psu.edu)
Office hours of TA: To be announced.

Anthropology 008 is a general survey of three great New World civilizations -- the Aztecs and the Maya of Mesoamerica (southern Mexico and northern Central America), and the Inkas of the Central Andes of South America. Both the Aztec and the Inka empires were thriving in the 16th century when Europeans arrived, but Maya civilization matured much earlier, between AD 250-900. If there is time at the end of the semester I will also discuss issues such as the peopling of the Americas, the origins of agriculture, and some of the spectacular pre-Aztec cultures of Mesoamerica. Specific examples of how archaeologists design and carry out research will be discussed, including several in which members of the Anthropology Department have been involved. In addition to lectures much visual material will be presented. This course provides an overview of basic cultures, issues and themes, and serves as an introduction to more focused courses that some students may wish to take later. Some concepts and methods used by archaeologists and anthropologists will be introduced where appropriate, and differences and similarities between the modern world and that inhabited by Aztecs, Mayas, and Inkas will be explored. No previous experience with archaeology or anthropology is required, nor is there a course prerequisite.

Texts: We will use two texts: **Ancient Mexico and Central America, by Susan Toby Evans, edition 2 (2008) and Inca Myths by Gary Urton (1999).** Be advised that a great deal of material in lectures is not covered in the texts, as partly reflected by the lack of reading assignments for some weeks in the following schedule.

ANGEL will be used for most communications with students – transmission of grades, study guides, etc. Much background material from lectures will also be posted on ANGEL. You may contact your teaching assistant through ANGEL, but do not use ANGEL (or email) to communicate with Webster about this course.

The course will proceed roughly as follows, although lectures will inevitably depart somewhat from the weekly format below.

Week 1 (Aug. 27, 27)	General Introduction The Concept of Civilization. Read Evans pp. 17-44.
Week 2 (Sept. 1, 3)	Environmental Setting and Culture History of Mesoamerica. Read Evans, pp. 45-61.
Week 3 (Sept. 8, 10)	First Encounters: The 16th Century Maya.
Week 4 (Sept. 15, 17)	The Aztecs. Read Evans, pp. 418-424, 437-448, 448-468.
Week 5 (Sept. 22, 24*)	The Aztecs. Read Evans pp. 469-496.
Week 6 (Sept. 29, Oct. 1)	The Aztecs. Read Evans: pp. 497-549.
Week 7 (Oct. 7, 9)	Andean Civilizations: Environment and Precursors of the Inkas. Read Urton: pp. 1-24.
Week 8 (Oct. 13, 15)	The Inkas: History and Society. Read Urton: pp. 25-58.
Week 9 (Oct. 21, 22)	The Inkas: Politics, Empire, and the Spanish Conquest
Week 10 (Oct. 27, 29*)	Introduction to Classic Maya Civilization: the Rise of the Maya. Read Evans: p. 223, pp. 228-238, 291-344.
Week 11 (Nov. 3, 5)	Intellectual Accomplishments: Writing, Art, Calendars, Architecture.
Week 12 (Nov. 10, 12)	Classic Maya Civilization: Politics and Society. Read Evans: 315-342.

Week 13 (Nov. 17, 19**)

Week 14 (Nov. 24, 26)

Week 15 (Dec. 1, 3)

Week 16 (Dec. 8, 9)

Maya Archaeology: case study from Copan.

Thanksgiving Break

The Collapse of Classic Maya Civilization. Read Evans: 342-348.

Left open.

* **Mid-term exams.** ** **Extra credit paper due.**

READ THE FOLLOWING CAREFULLY. IF YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH THE PROVISIONS SET LISTED BELOW PLEASE TO NOT TAKE THIS COURSE.

Conduct of the Course

Although this is a large lecture course, feel free at any time to raise your hand if you have a comment, a question, or would like to initiate a discussion about some particular point.

Tests and grading: There will be three tests: mid-terms on Sept. 25 and Oct. 30, and a final during the regularly scheduled final exam period. Each mid-term will be worth approximately 30% of your grade and the final will be worth about 40% because it is slightly longer. Each exam will generally cover only material presented since the previous one, although you are expected to remember basic concepts and important information from all the preceding parts of the course, so there is a slight cumulative dimension, especially on the final. Exams consist of mixtures of objective questions (e.g. multiple choice, matching, fill-in-the-blanks) and subjective questions (define or discuss issues or concepts in short sentences or paragraphs) and are manually rather than machine graded. About a week before each exam a *study guide* will be posted on ANGEL that will list many of the main concepts, definitions, and subjects included on the test. Much of this material is summarized on the course web page listings as well as in your textbook. Under no circumstances will the standard exam be given at any other time than formally scheduled. If you miss an exam without a good, documented reason (illness, death in the family, etc.) you will receive a 0 grade for that exam, with no opportunity to make it up. If you miss an exam for an acceptable, documented reason, you will be required to take an alternative essay exam, scheduled at a time convenient for me after the real exam. This rule applies to all students who miss a regular exam, no matter what the reason (including exam conflicts, disabilities, etc.). The alternative exam must be taken within three weeks of the missed exam, unless special arrangements have been made with Webster. Never ask me to let you take an exam (of either form) early because the scheduled exam date is inconvenient for you. Such requests are particularly common for finals; don't bother making them. Exams are not machine-graded. They are returned to students, and scores are posted on ANGEL.

Your final grade is determined by the percentage of total points possible scored on the combined exams: 90% and above = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, below 60% = F. There is, in other words, no curve – instead any proportion of students might get an A (or an F), and your grade is entirely dependent upon your cumulative performance in all three exams. I do not give plus or minus grades, and if you are uncomfortable with this policy you should not take this course.

All grading systems are unfair in the sense that some students might narrowly miss a higher grade by a point or two. *No grades will be changed from those calculated by the above method no matter how close you are to are to a higher grade unless a mistake in grading has been made.* Mistakes do occur, and students should promptly pick up their exams and carefully go over them to catch errors in our addition of points, or evaluation of answers. You are responsible for catching such grading errors. Anyone who thinks they deserve more credit than assigned is free to discuss exam results with Prof. Webster, and adjustments to scores will be made if appropriate (but please talk with the teaching assistant first, because he corrected the exams). Do not, however, bring in an exam copy that has been erased or otherwise altered. If an answer has clearly been changed on the exam copy, no additional credit will be given. It is important to act promptly to negotiate changes in test scores, **because no changes in mid-term grades will be made after the final exam is given.** To ensure that you do not narrowly miss a higher grade, consider doing the extra credit project described below.

How to study: Regular attendance is the key to success. Doing the weekly readings is no substitute for coming to class, taking good notes and paying attention to the many ANGEL postings and the study guides. This course was developed independently of the texts, which are therefore mainly useful for background information and to check details. Nothing will be included on the exams that has not been presented in some form in class, and/or posted via ANGEL. Much such material is not in the readings, and the book contains material that we will not go over in class. Readings function as general backup for the lectures; **you cannot perform well on the tests unless you know what is presented in class.** Basically, you are responsible for understanding the content of lectures (including material posted on ANGEL), which is often different from that of the readings (and includes material not in the readings). When lecture material is different from that in readings, the lecture content provides the correct information for exams. Students frequently ask whether lecture notes or powerpoint programs I use are on line; the answer is **no**.

Extra Credit Writing Project: One way to hedge against the possibility of narrowly missing a higher grade is to do the voluntary extra credit writing project, which is due on Nov. 19. The description of this project is found at the end of this syllabus.

Note: Do not email me for any reason having to do with this course. Come to my office during office hours (or other convenient times) or call me at any time at my home or office.

Academic Integrity: Penn State defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed. Not tolerated are cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, unauthorized possession of exams, or submitting another person's work as your own. Anyone caught engaging in these or other forms of academic dishonesty will be given an F grade for the course and will possibly face other academic sanctions. The College of Liberal Arts maintains a web page that defines plagiarism and other forms of cheating, and students are expected to know this information and conform to it.

The Pennsylvania State University encourages qualified persons with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please tell the instructor as soon as possible. Penn State also makes an effort to accommodate observation of religious holidays.

Voluntary Extra-Credit Project for Anth. 008

Write a book report of not less than 10 double-spaced pages (12-point type size, 1 inch margins). This means 10 pages of text, not counting title page, bibliography, illustrations, etc. Reports that do not conform to this format are immediately discarded and no credit is given. The due date is noted above. Only two grades are given for this report: 15 points (for a good job), and 0 points (for a bad one). Points will be added to your regular test total and, if a higher grade is indicated, this grade will be recorded.

Your report must do the following:

- 1) Convince me that you read the book (some people write reports on books they don't read);**
- 2) Tell what you liked or disliked about it (i.e. critically evaluate the book);**
- 3) Relate what you read in some fashion to what we discussed in class.**

Books chosen **must** be relevant to the course. **No fiction allowed.** A list of examples of acceptable books is included below. There are many other suitable books available (in the library, bookstores, etc.), but permission must be given for those not on the list. If you choose your own book it is best to choose something recent, say in the last 20 years, because many books are out of date. I will be glad to suggest particular books for students with special interests.

I expect these reports to be well-written. If on any single page of your report I discover more than five errors in spelling or grammar, I will stop reading and give you zero points for the whole effort.

Reports are due on Nov. 19, but may be turned in any time previous to that date. Reports turned in after Nov. 19 will not be graded.

There are two circumstances under which doing the extra credit project will not help you. First, if you already have an A going, there will obviously be no elevation of grade. On the other hand you might be so low in a grade category (for example a very low C) that even adding 15 points will not make a difference. This is a risk that all students take who do the project. My experience, however, is that for most students not already performing at A level an elevation of grade does occur.

Examples of appropriate books are listed below. These are only examples, and many more non-fiction books of similar kind are available in the library or bookstores. If you do not choose one of the listed books, bring your choice to me for approval. It is best to try to select books written in the last 10-20 years, although some of the listed ones are older.

Breaking the Maya Code, M. Coe, 1992.
Forest of Kings, Linda Schele and David Freidel, 1990.
Blood of Kings, Linda Schele and Mary Miller, 1986.
The Art of Mesoamerica, Mary Miller, 1989.
Archaeology and the Maya, Jeremy Sabloff, 1990.
Scribes, Warriors and Kings, William Fash, 1991.
Teotihuacan: Art from the City of the Gods, Berrin and Pasztory, 1993.
Mesoamerican Writing Systems, Joyce Marcus, 1992.
The Incas and Their Ancestors, Michael Moseley 1990.
Maya Glyphs, Stephen Houston, 1990.
Maya Society Under Colonial Rule, Nancy Farriss, 1984.
Aztec Warfare, Ross Hassig, 1988.
War and Society in Mesoamerica, Ross Hassig 1992.
Monte Verde: A Late Pleistocene Settlement in Chile, Tom Dillehay, 1984.
Tula: The Toltec Capital of Ancient Mesoamerica, R. Diehl, 1983.
Empires of Time, Anthony Aveni, 1989.
The Aztecs, Fray Diego Duran (many editions)
Aztec Art, Ester Pasztory
The Aztecs, Brian Fagan, 1984.
Maya History and Religion, J.E.S. Thompson, 1970.
Incidents of Travel in Yucatan, J. Stephens (many editions).
The Mixtec Kings and their Peoples, R. Spores, 1967.
Daily Life of the Aztecs on the Eve of the Spanish Conquest, J. Soustelle, 1964.
Mesoamerica: the Evolution of a Civilization, W.T. Sanders and B. Price, 1968.
The Caste War of Yucatan, N. Reed, 1964.
The Folk Culture of Yucatan, R. Redfield, 1959.
Chan Kom: A Maya Village, R. Redfield and A. Villa Rojas
The Hummingbird and the Hawk, R. Padden, 1967.
The Conquest of New Spain, Bernal Diaz (many editions)
America's First Civilization, M. Coe, 1968.
Maya Cities and Placemaking, G. Andrews, 1975.
The Aztecs: an Imperial Society, F. Berdan.
Lost Tribes and Sunken Continents, R. Wauchope, 1962
Lost Kingdoms of the Maya, G. Stuart, 1993.
Gods and Symbols of Ancient Mexico, M. Miller and K. Taube, 1993.
Mexico and the Spanish Conquest, Ross Hassig 1994.
Letters from Mexico, Hernan Cortes (many editions).

The Aztecs, Nigel Davies, 1980.
Aztec Thought and Culture, Miguel Leon-Portilla, 1963.
The Inka Empire, Craig Morris and A, Van Hagen, 1993.
The Aztecs. Michael Smith, 1997.
Teotihuacan: An Experiment in Living. Esther Pasztory.
Exploring Mesoamerica. John Pohl, 1999.
Maya Explorer. Victor von Hagen. 1990 (and earlier editions).
Maya Art and Architecture. Mary Ellen Miller, 1999.
The Settlement of the Americas, Thomas Dillehay, 2000.
The Sport of Life and Death. E. Michael Whittington, 2001.
Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest. Matthew Restall, 2003.
Collapse, by Jared Diamond, 2005.