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Course Outline for ANTR 14

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF MESOAMERICA

Effective: Fall 2019

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ANTR 14 — INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF MESOAMERICA — 3.00 units

This course is an introduction to the Archaeological History of the Olmec, Maya, and Aztec. The course will explore how humans in the various ecologies of Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras shaped the cultural identity and material culture. From buildings to pottery the cultural phases of Mesoamerica will be explored. The course will include methods of Archaeological dating and Archaeological Theory to examine cultural changes and growing complexity from the pre-historic to Spanish contact in Mesoamerica.

3.00 Units Lecture

Strongly Recommended

- Eligibility for ENG 1A -

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

- Anthropology

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Expected Outside of Class Hours:	108.00
Total Hours:	162.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

- A. -Eligibility for ENG 1A
 1. Employ strategies that enable a critical evaluation of a text
 2. Respond critically to a text through class discussions and writing
 3. Organize coherent essays around a central idea or a position
 4. Provide appropriate and accurate evidence to support positions and conclusions

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Identify the cultural phases of development from hunting and gathering to cultivation and urbanism in each of the geographical zones of Mesoamerica.
- B. Explain the differences and similarities between Mesoamerican material cultures.
- C. Explain how material culture is interpreted to show the ecological and political changes that occurred in ancient Mesoamerica.
- D. Employ established archaeological theories to explain cultural developments in the formative, classic and post-classic periods of Mesoamerica.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Overview of archeological field methods and terminology
- B. Material culture of the Paleolithic period and cultural development
 1. Changing strategies of subsistence
- C. Material culture of the early, middle and late Formative Period and cultural development
 1. Social institutions
- D. Olmec material culture and cultural development
 1. Early stages of sedentary/urban settlements
 2. Cultivation
- E. Mayan material culture
 1. Cities of classic period Peten and post-classic Yucatan
- F. Classic period cultural development of the Mayan city-state

1. History of kings, construction, and collapse of Mayan states, as well as general implications for archaeology
- G. Post-classic states of the Yucatan
 1. The Post-classic Maya
- H. Oaxacan city states and cultural development in the Oaxacan river valley
 - I. Rise of the Aztec Empire
 - J. Aztec material culture
- K. Spanish contact and the decline of Aztec culture
- L. Decline of post-classic Maya
- M. Modern cultures of Mesoamerica

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. **Discussion** -
- C. **Written exercises and case studies** -
- D. **Audio-visual Activity** -
- E. **Projects** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Lectures
 1. Discussion of the ecological and cultural zones of Mesoamerica.
 2. Explanation of the major cultural shifts that make Olmec, Aztec and Mayan culture unique/similar.
 3. Presentation of the material culture of formative to post-classic periods of Mesoamerica.
- B. Reading assignments
 1. Read the textbook chapter on acquiring the archaeological record.
 2. Read a journal article addressing a phase of cultural change in Mesoamerica during the formative, classical and/or Post-classic period.
- C. Homework
 1. Read the textbook chapter on Mesoamerican civilizations and answer the following questions:
 - a. When and where did Classic Maya civilization flourish? Describe the factors that led to its collapse.
 - b. Describe the city of Teotihuacán. Where was it located? When did it flourish? When and why did it collapse?
 - c. What circumstances led to the rise of the Aztec empire? How did they ensure their prominence in history? What happened to the Aztec empire?
- D. Class and group discussions
 1. Class discussion topic: A debate on the pros and cons of analogy in interpreting the Ballgame of Mesoamerica.
 2. Group discussion topic: Describe the differences between Olmec, Mayan and Aztec social organization.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

1. Exams/Tests
2. Quizzes
3. Research Projects
4. Papers
5. Oral Presentation
6. Home Work

B. **Frequency**

1. Up to 4 non-comprehensive exams/quizzes and a comprehensive final exam.
2. A final research project may be assigned.
3. A final research paper and/or a series of brief papers may be assigned.
4. Students may be asked to orally present the results of their research to the class.
5. Homework reading and occasional written response to questions.

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Gonlin, N., & French, K.D. (2015). *Human Adaptation In Ancient Mesoamerica: Empirical Approaches to Mesoamerican Archaeology* (1st ed.). Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado.
2. Nehammer Knub, J., Helmke, C., & Nielsen, J. (2015). *Palaces and Courtly Culture in Ancient Mesoamerica (Archaeopress Pre-Columbian Archaeology)* (1st ed.). Oxford, England: Archaeopress Archaeology.
3. Hoopes, J.W. (2017). *The Archaeology Of Central America (Cambridge World Archaeology)* (1st ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
4. Hirth, K.G. (2016). *The Aztec Economic World: Merchants and Markets in Ancient Mesoamerica* (1st ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
5. Nichols, D.L., & Pool, C.A. (2016). *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology (Oxford Handbooks)* (reprint ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
6. Hutson, S.R. (2016). *The Ancient Urban Maya: Neighborhoods, Inequality, and Built Form (Ancient Cities of the New World)* (1st ed.). Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.
7. Doyle, J. (2017). *Architecture and the Origins of Preclassic Maya Politics* (1st ed.). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: