

Art of the Aztec Empire

Description: The Aztec, or Aztlaneca Mexica, took to capturing and collecting the art and culture of all those domains that they conquered and subjugated. As a result, Aztec art, thought and culture reflect an eclectic mixture of the many peoples and cultures of the empire. This course will explore the origins, art, language, and culture of a Mesoamerican civilization that was unique for its emphasis on human heart excision, but exclusively Mesoamerican in its art, architecture, and ideology.

Course Information: Spring 2001: SBSB 225, Section 1, Course Number 20951, SBSB 325: Section 1, Course Number 20952. Title: The Art of the Aztec Empire, 4.0 credits, MW 8:00am – 9:50am, Building 18-156, Mendoza, 01-29-01 to 5-24-01.

Required Texts

Townsend, Richard F. 2000. The Aztecs. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd. ISBN: 0-500-28132-7.

Pasztor, Esther. 1983. Aztec Art. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. ISBN: 0-8061-2536-5.

Supplementary Readings: As Assigned/TBA.

Optional Text

Smith, Michael E. 1998. The Aztecs. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers. ISBN: 0-631-20958-1.

Project Text Options

Carrasco, David. 1999. City of Sacrifice: The Aztec Empire and the Role of Violence in Civilization. Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press. ISBN: 0-8070-4643-4.

Jennings, Gary. 1997. Aztec. Atheneum. ISBN: 0-8125-2146-3.

Miller, Mary Ellen. 1986. The Art of Mesoamerica from Olmec to Aztec. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd. ISBN: 0-500-20303-6.

Learning Outcomes

This ULR has not yet been formally approved. As such, we will address this requirement in anticipation of approval by terms end. Of course, in order to fully address the

Creative/Artistic Expression ULR, the following guidelines will need to be met by way of your final project.

Creative/Artistic Expression

Requirements: Each student must produce a work of art that communicates to a diverse audience.

What does this mean? The emphasis here is on *moving the student to produce art* through written, visual, or performance that communicates to a diverse audience. In order to fulfill this outcome, the student will need, through their own work, to demonstrate:

- That he or she -- through written, visual, or performance -- comprehends the significance and expression of culture in a variety of ways,
- That he or she successfully communicates through the Arts by: Identifying the nature of the **audience**, knows that he or she has something to say that links to the **interests and needs** of that audience, understands the **forms of communication** specific to that audience.

SBSC Major Learning Outcomes

This course addresses the **MLO 1 (Theory)** and **3 (Applied)** areas of the SBSC Major Learning Outcomes. If you are taking this course in order to satisfy the second semester requirement for the SBSC core course, your reading list will be supplemented for that purpose, and you will be required to submit an annotated bibliography of those readings completed in this section for the purposes of preparing for the development of the final annotated bibliography due for your capstone project. If you are not an SBSC major, or do not wish to have this course count toward your capstone requirements, please notify your professor.

Assessment/Grades

It should be noted that the basis of grading and assessment may be subject to slight variation from what is noted below in the event that the class shifts its emphasis for the purposes of study options and projects undertaken. Any changes will be subject to class discussion and consensus where appropriate.

Participation: Because this course will require your in-class participation in discussion, lab exercises such as that of the codex translation, and use of the online journal, **15 %** of your final grade will be assessed by way of your attendance and participation. Participation will in part be assessed by way of the timely and thorough completion of online journal entries completed on a weekly basis. Because many of these journal entries will be completed during class time, and will address class participation and lab exercises, it is critical that your participation be reflected in the online journal.

Reader Response Papers: Approximately **ten one-page reader response papers** will be completed by you and either entered into the online journal or submitted in hardcopy as double-spaced narratives that provide sufficient detail so that the instructor can assess your thorough completion and understanding of the readings. The reader response papers will account for approximately **30 %** of your total grade. The reader response papers will be graded at three percentage points per one-page essay if they demonstrate your thorough understanding and reflection of the readings. Two points will be given if a partial understanding of the readings are reflected, and one percentage point will be offered if the essay was completed but did not reflect a clear understanding of the readings assigned.

Midterm and End Term Reviews: A brief take-home midterm review will be assigned on the basis of questions drawn from lecture, discussion, readings and in-class labs completed to that point in the semester. An End term review paper will cover that material completed in that period extending from the Midterm review to the end of the semester. The Midterm review is worth **15% points**, and the final is worth an additional **20% points**.

Final Project and Oral Narrative: So that we can address the requirements of the Creative/Artistic Expression ULR, your final project may take any number of different forms. You may submit a final project paper (of no less than 10 typewritten double-spaced pages) or you may create and post an Aztec website with content based on your own research from reliable sources. In addition, for those that wish to draw on Aztec poetry, art forms, or dance for their final projects, the presentation of these final projects may be negotiated with your professor. The final project is worth **20%** of your grade. Please note that you each have a possible total score of 100% or points possible.

Challenge Projects:

By taking on either of these projects you will be allowed the option of foregoing, or not being required to complete, the Midterm and Endterm Reading Reviews or Examinations. No Incomplete grades or assignments will be permitted in this instance. So, please consider your options carefully.

Option 1: The Case of Human Sacrifice and Institutionalized Violence

Because of the controversial nature surrounding the question of Aztec human sacrifice I have decided to opt for a final project offering that would pit you against the world of Aztec scholarship. If you would like to address either the question of (a) Aztec human sacrifice, or (b) Aztec militarism and empire building, you may do so with a thoroughly researched paper challenging the notion of either Aztec human sacrifice or warfare and empire. In order to begin this effort you would need to draw from works such as that of David Carrasco's "City of Sacrifice" and other reputable sources. If your effort is to challenge the existence of human sacrifice, you may draw on both traditional and non-traditional scholarly and non-scholarly resources. You are cautioned however to provide sufficient evidence so as to weigh the evidence both for and against your position.

Option 2: Jennings' Aztec Day Journal

In this project lab you will read the Gary Jennings' book Aztec from cover to cover and prepare a weekly journal in which you recount your experiences and reactions to Gary Jennings' recounting of the life of an Aztec nobleman. Your journal may take an electronic or typewritten paper (typewritten or very legible handwritten) format. Your objective in this option is to recount your feelings, reactions, and understanding of Aztec civilization on the basis of this fictional – albeit very detailed reconstruction – account of the greatness and decline of the Aztec empire as recounted by the protagonist, Mixli. Please be sure to prepare journal entries that serve to convince me that you have thoroughly read and considered, pondered and reacted to, the Jennings book. If you prepare a handwritten journal, you should be sure that the journal is sufficiently legible so that your professor can interpret your thoughts on the readings in question.

Classroom Expectations

Please note that I will not accommodate any Incomplete grades, except by written medical excuse, and you are expected to submit your work on time. Because I will take attendance from time to time, and your participation in labs is required, please note that your attendance will not be counted if you are more than 10 minutes late to class. Where your professor's attendance is concerned, I will notify the class in advance of any days that might require my absence; except in the case of an unforeseen illness. In those instances where I may be late to class, I will notify one student by telephone on the morning in which the late showing might be necessitated. Otherwise, please do not hesitate to contact me by email at ruben_mendoza@monterey.edu or by phone at 831-582-3760.

Office Hours: My office hours for the Spring 2001 term will occur immediately after this class at Building 17, Room 117, from 10:00 am to 11:00 am. If you need other hours or options for meeting with the instructor, these will be by prior arrangement.