Art History 3653 Mesoamerican Art
Syllabus

Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, Ph.D., Associate Professor
University of Florida, Fall Semester, August 21–December 6, 2017 (3 credit hours)
Tuesdays Period 5 (11:45–12:35) and Thursdays Periods 4–5 (10:40–12:35) in FAC 201
Final exam: Friday, Dec. 15, 10:00 am–12:00 pm
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Office: Fine Arts C 117    Office hours: Wednesdays Periods 7 & 8 (1:55–3:50)

Course Description
This course examines the art and architecture of ancient Mesoamerica, a region that corresponds to the modern-day countries of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, and Belize. The time period is from 1500 BCE (before common era, or BC) to about 1550 CE (common era, or AD). The class will also address the histories of discovery of this art and the major theoretical issues related to its interpretation.

Expected Learning Outcomes
• Comprehend the cultural diversity of Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica and recognize its shared features.
• Recognize, interpret, and analyze art and architecture from the major Mesoamerican cultures based on comprehension of Mesoamerican worldviews and visual systems.
• Comprehend the historiography of the region—that is, the history of the discovery, decipherment, and display of Mesoamerican art.
• Compare Mesoamerican worldviews with those of our modern-day culture.
• Learn how U.S. scholarship and tourism have affected Mesoamerican cultural heritage, and recognize how Mesoamerican art has entered U.S. visual culture.
• Improve writing skills by completing a critical reading response and a research paper, receiving instructor feedback on each and rewriting if necessary.
Assigned Reading
 Copies of these books are on reserve in the Fine Arts Library.
• Other required readings are available as pdf’s on the Canvas (E-learning) site for the course, under Files. Visit https://lss.at.ufl.edu/ to log in. Additional class materials, including a copy of this syllabus, terms lists, and images, will also be posted there.

Requirements
All students must:
(1) attend class
(2) complete homework assignments and do assigned readings **before** the classes for which they are assigned
(3) participate in class discussions and activities
(4) write a short reading analysis (500 words)
(5) attend the Harn Eminent Scholar (HESCAH) lecture by Dr. Clara Bargellini on November 3 and write a short summary and reaction to it (300 words)
(5) write a research paper (1200 words) integrating a work of art at the Harn Museum into the wider corpus of Mesoamerican art
(6) take the in-class midterm and final examinations. The exams will consist of essays that you will have prepared in advance, based on study questions and images that have been provided to you. You will need to provide identifying information for the artworks you will discuss.

Grade Breakdown
Class attendance: 10%
Class participation (including small homework assignments): 15%
Reading analysis: 10%
Midterm examination: 15%
HESCAH lecture essay: 10%
Paper: 20%
Final examination: 20%
Attendance, Makeup, and Class Conduct Policies

Because the lectures address the most current scholarship on the field, it is vital that students attend class. In class we will often cover works of art and recent discoveries that are not in the readings, and activities will provide opportunities for active learning.

Absences for exams and late papers will require documentation, i.e. a doctor’s note, in order to be excused. Unexcused absences count against both the attendance and participation grades, and are reflected in the final grade. Students who do not complete requirements 4–6 (see above) will fail the course. Written assignments should be submitted as Word documents on Canvas unless otherwise stated. Assignments are due at 10:00 am on the due dates.

Students should arrive to class on time and ready to speak, and should refrain from eating in class. Laptops and other electronics are to be used ONLY for taking class notes. A 10-minute break will be given halfway through the long class period.

Details of this syllabus are subject to change as needed. Other important information is at the end of this document in the Appendix.

Writing Requirement

This course is designed to fulfill the 2000-word UF Writing Requirement (E2). The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components: to receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Each writing assignment will be graded following a rubric that values the essay’s organizational structure, including its thesis, body, conclusion, and bibliography. Points will be assigned for these elements as well as proper support of the thesis, overall clarity, proper citation of sources, and correct style (punctuation, spelling, grammar, syntax). Written assignments will be returned prior to the last class meeting with instructor feedback, and students receiving a grade of C or below will have the option to rewrite in response to the feedback.

For assistance with writing, students can find help at the Reading and Writing Center: [http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html](http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html)

Since the Chicago Manual of Style is preferred for art history, this style guide is recommended: [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html)

SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Tuesday, August 22

Introductions. An illustrated preview of the course.

Assignment:

• This syllabus. Read it thoroughly and always bring it to class; it is your contract with me. Purchase textbooks.
Thursday, August 24
What is Mesoamerica? An introduction to the region and its cultural features
Assignment:
• Miller, Art of Mesoamerica, Preface and Ch. 1, “Introduction.”
• Stuart & Stuart, Palenque, Preface (pp. 6–10). For discussion.
• Create a meme using a photo of any work from the Miller book and upload on Canvas. Due Tuesday the 29th.

Tuesday, August 29
How has ancient Mesoamerica come to the world’s attention? What are the methods that have been used by explorers, archaeologists, and art historians? The case of Palenque.
Meme assignment due on Canvas.
Assignment:
• Stuart & Stuart, Palenque, Chapters 2–4 (pp. 35–105.) For discussion.

Thursday, August 31
Film: National Geographic’s Dawn of the Maya, 2004
Assignment:
• A worksheet on the film will be handed out in class and should be turned in at the end of class.

Tuesday, Sept. 5 & Thursday, Sept. 7
The Formative Period: The Olmecs
Assignment:
• Miller, Art of Mesoamerica, Ch. 2, “The Olmecs.”
• Carolyn Tate, “The Colossal Fetuses of La Venta and Mesoamerica’s Earliest Creation Story,” in Imagining the Fetus: The Unborn in Myth, Religion, and Culture, pp. 223–258. Canvas. For discussion Thursday.

Tuesday, Sept. 12 & Thursday, Sept. 14
The Late Formative and Classic Period in Oaxaca (Monte Alban) and West Mexico
Assignment:
• Miller, Art of Mesoamerica, Ch. 3, “The Late Formative,” only pp. 48–68, and Ch. 5, “Monte Alban, Veracruz and Cotzumalhuapa”
**Tuesday, Sept. 19 & Thursday, Sept. 21**

**Reading analysis assignment posted on Canvas, due Sept. 26th.**

The Classic Period in Central Mexico: Teotihuacan

**Assignment:**
- Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 4, “Teotihuacan.”

*For discussion Thursday.*

**Tuesday, Sept. 26, Thursday, Sept. 28, & Tuesday, Oct. 3**

**Reading Analysis Due Tuesday the 26th.**

The Foundations of Maya Civilization: The Late Formative Maya (Cerros, San Bartolo)

**Midterm exam study questions handed out Thursday the 28th.**

**Assignment:**

*For discussion Thursday and Tuesday the 3rd.*

**Midterm Exam Thursday, Oct. 5**

**Tuesday, Oct. 10 & Thursday, Oct. 12**

The Early Classic Maya: Tikal and Copan

**Assignment:**
- Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 6, “The Early Classic Maya.”

**Tuesday, Oct. 17 & Thursday, Oct. 19**

The Late Classic Maya: Palenque

**Assignment:**
- Stuart & Stuart, *Palenque*, Chapters 6–8 (pp. 147–219.) *For discussion Thursday.*

**Tuesday, Oct. 24**

CLASS MEETS at Harn Museum to view selected Mesoamerican works for paper assignment, now available.
**Thursday, Oct. 26**
The Late Classic Maya continued: Yaxchilán, Bonampak, pottery

**Assignment:**
- Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 7, “The Late Classic Maya.”
- *Popol Vuh*, “And this is their birth, we shall tell of it here . . . ,” translated by Dennis Tedlock, pp. 104–122. Canvas. **For discussion Thursday.**

**Tuesday, Oct. 31 & Thursday, Nov. 2**
Postclassic Mesoamerica: Puuc Maya, Mitla

**Assignment:**

**ATTEND HESCAH LECTURE AT 6:00 PM FRIDAY IN FAB 105.**

**Tuesday, Nov. 7 & Thursday, Nov. 9**
**SUMMARY AND REACTION TO HESCAH LECTURE DUE TUESDAY THE 7TH**
Postclassic Mesoamerica: Cacaxtla, Tula, Chichén Itzá

**Assignment:**
- Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 8, “Mesoamerica after the Fall of Classic Cities.”

**Tuesday, Nov. 14 & Thursday, Nov. 16**
**PAPER DUE TUESDAY THE 14TH**
The Aztecs: Tenochtitlan and Its Monuments

**Assignment:**
- Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 9, “The Aztecs.”
**Tuesday, Nov. 21**
The Aztecs cont.: The Calendar Stone  
**CLASS MEETS** in front of Dickinson Hall on Museum Rd. to view full-size replica.

Assignment:  

**Tuesday, Nov. 28 & Thursday, Nov. 30**  
Colonial Epilogue and Course Conclusions  
**Final exam study questions handed out Thursday the 30th**  
Assignment:  

**Tuesday, Dec. 5**  
Review for Final; Course Evaluations

**Friday, Dec. 15th**  
FINAL EXAM 10:00 am–12:00 pm in classroom

**Important Dates**  
Aug. 29: Meme due on Canvas  
Sept. 26: Reading analysis due on Canvas  
Oct. 5: MIDTERM EXAM  
Oct. 24: Class meet at Harn Museum  
Nov. 3: HESCAH Lecture at 6:00 pm  
Nov. 7: Summary and reaction to HESCAH Lecture due on Canvas  
Nov. 14: Paper due on Canvas  
Nov. 21: Class meets in front of Dickinson Hall on Museum Rd.  
Dec. 15: FINAL EXAM 10:00 am–12:00 pm in classroom
Appendix

Grading Scale
Grades are tabulated on a 100-point scale and a letter grade is assigned as follows:
94–100 A   90–93 A-    87–89 B+   84–86 B    80–83 B–
77–79 C+   74–76 C    70–73 C–   67–69 D+   64–66 D
60–63 D–   59 and below F
If you have questions about how grade points are assigned by the University, go to: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

Academic Honesty
UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Students with Disabilities
I will make every attempt to accommodate students with disabilities. At the same time, anyone requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide you with the necessary documentation, which you must then provide to me when requesting accommodation. Please make your request at least one week before the needed accommodation.

University Counseling & Wellness Center
3190 Radio Road
P.O. Box 112662, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-4100
Phone: 352-392-1575
Web: http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/