SEMINAR IN ART HISTORY AND AESTHETICS:
PRE-COLUMBIAN ART OF MESOAMERICA

Course Description:

This course will provide a survey of pre-contact art of Mexico and Guatemala, beginning with the Olmec civilization and culminating with the Aztec civilization at the time of the Spanish conquest.

Required Texts:


Recommended Texts:


Student Learning Outcomes:

The goals of the course are to provide students with a deep understanding of the history of art during the Pre-Columbian period in Mesoamerica. The outcomes of the course will include the development of critical thinking skills through the examination of the numerous social and political forces that have impacted on the development of art in the Pre-Columbian period in Mesoamerica. Students will become deeply aware of a Non-Western culture, thereby, fostering a more global understanding of art and its many uses and manifestations.
1. Students will gain an in depth understanding of the history of art in the Pre-Columbian period in Mesoamerica through readings, class participation and attendance in lectures. This knowledge will be measured by quality of reaction papers and classroom discussions. As a seminar class, the graduate students are expected to engage in the classroom by providing commentary based on reading and points of discussion presented by the professor.

2. Students will gain an in depth understanding of select areas of the history of art from the Pre-Columbian period of Mesoamerica by writing two papers on selected topics.

**Grading:**

Your grade will be based upon:

1. Class attendance and participation (30%)
2. Two term papers (70%)

1. The class attendance and participation grade will be based upon attendance in class, your contributions to class discussion, and the completion of assigned in class reaction papers. The reaction papers will consist of one to two page responses to movies shown in class and other assignments. In addition, some assignments may be made that relate to the text.

2. The two papers of 1250-1750 words each must be typewritten using a double-spaced format with footnotes or endnotes. The two papers must also contain a short bibliography of 7-10 sources each (book or periodical sources, no websites allowed, with exceptions as will be provided in class). Bell Library Online resources are allowed. We will spend time in class discussing these resources. In addition, there are a few research sites on the internet in the area of Pre-Columbian Mesoamerican art which are peer-reviewed. Students will be provided with a list of these resources. They may be sited in your papers. The papers will be graded according to the attached guidelines.

   Each paper will consist of an analysis of the work of art or works of art based on style, iconography and cultural context. Each paper should include at least one illustration of the works of art that you are discussing, as well as title page, footnotes and bibliography.

   **The first paper topic must be pre-approved by me no later than February 7th.**
   **The second paper topic must be pre-approved by me no later than March 21st.**

Topics for the research papers will be selected under the close supervision of Dr. Rote. Students are expected to have a minimum of 7-10 sources for each of their research papers and are encouraged to have more. Dr. Rote will also be happy to assist you individually with your bibliographies.
Grading Scale:

Your final grade for the course will be generated utilizing the four components listed under “Grading” in the percentages indicated.

1. 100-90 point average=A
2. 89-80 point average=B
3. 79-70 point average=C
4. 69-60 point average=D
5. 59-0 point average=F

Academic Honesty:

In accordance with university policy, “University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work).”

(Undergraduate Catalogue)

“Disciplinary action for academic misconduct is the responsibility of the faculty member assigned to the course. The faculty member is charged with assessing the gravity of any case of academic dishonesty, and with giving sanction to any student involved.”

(Undergraduate Catalogue)

As outlined in the undergraduate catalogue, the punishment for academic dishonesty can range from a written reprimand to the assigning of an F for the work in question or the class in its entirety. In addition, severe punishment can result in the dismissal of the student from the program or the University.

My recommendation about cheating, is DON’T do it. It is not worth it! In my opinion, academic honesty is of the utmost importance. My personal policy is to give you a failing grade in the course if you are caught cheating on an examination or plagiarizing in a paper. My advice to you is to do the best you can on your own. When in doubt about how to reference information from outside sources, please ask my advice. I am more than happy to help you.

Attendance Policy:

Attendance in class is VERY IMPORTANT since a great deal of visual material is shown in class that is not in the textbook. You will be tested over this material on examinations. More than TWO excused absences will result in the lowering of your grade by one letter grade. Additional absences will result in the lowering of your grade by
another letter grade. Five tardies, leaving during class or leaving early will also result in the lowering of your grade by another letter grade in the course.

**ACADEMIC ADVISING**: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities*: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

*** Grade Appeal Process.*** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

No cell phones or laptops—you all know why!
NOTE: A great deal of material is covered in this class. It is recommended that the students begin studying the first week of class. This course cannot be passed through last minute studying alone. It is recommended that you do the readings as scheduled and that you begin reviewing the images on your own as soon as possible.

Schedule:

The following is a tentative schedule. It may vary somewhat during the course of the semester, but the readings should be done on time to keep the student up with the course requirements.

All reading assignments are from the two Miller books, herein identified as Meso (for the Art of Mesoamerica book) and as Maya (for the Maya Art and Architecture book).

1/28 Chapter 1 (Meso)
2/4 Chapter 2 (Meso)
2/11 Chapter 3 (Meso)

2/18 First paper topic due.

2/25 Chapter 4 (Meso)
3/4 Chapter 5 (Meso)

3/11 Spring Break (No class)
3/18 Chapter 6 (Meso)

3/25 First paper due.

4/1 Second paper topic due.
4/8 Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (Maya)
4/15 Chapter 4 (Maya)
4/22 Chapter 7 (Meso), Chapters 5, 6 and 7 (Maya)
4/29 Chapters 8, 9 and 10 (Maya)

5/6 Chapters 8 and 9 (Meso)

5/2 Chapter 9 (Meso, continued)

MONDAY, MAY 13TH Second Paper Due by 7 p.m.

Please retain this syllabus, refer to it regularly throughout the semester and follow all deadlines as listed unless otherwise notified during class. You are expected to turn in all work on time and be prepared for all examinations without reminders from me.

In addition, please note that I do not have a grader for any of my classes. Please be patient about receiving your grades.
Form to turn in first paper topic
Due: February 18, 2013

Course: ARTS 5393

Name of Student:

Paper Topic:

___________Approved  ____________Not Approved

Comments on paper topics not approved:

If not approved, please resubmit by March 4, 2013.
Form to turn in second paper topic
Due: April 1, 2013

Course: ARTS 5393

Name of Student:

Paper Topic:

__________Approved   ___________Not Approved

Comments on paper topics not approved:

If not approved, please resubmit by April 15, 2013.
GRADING GUIDELINES
FOR ART HISTORY PAPERS

Topic turned in after the deadline specified on the syllabus-10 points per day late will be deducted from the paper grade.

Paper turned in after the deadline specified on the syllabus-10 points per day late will be deducted from the paper grade.

Topic selection is a crucial component of a successful paper. The thesis statements must be well developed when turned in on the date topics are due. If you want guidance in the development of your thesis topic, please make an appointment to visit with me. I will be happy to visit with you as often as necessary during the preparation of your paper.

Biographical data in lieu of discussion of stylistic/iconographic concerns-failing grade.

Papers
Correct length (1250-1750 words) 10 points

Footnotes-MLA style
(or any style listed on the latest version of Microsoft Word) 5 points

Bibliography-minimum of 7-10 books and periodical references 5 points
(no websites accepted)—Bell Library online resources accepted

Thesis (main idea development) 20 points

Body (proof of thesis)/Quality of Presentation 50 points

Conclusion 10 points

Please include photocopies of works of art that you are referring to in your paper, particularly of lesser known works of art.
## RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF PAPERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Overall Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>very few or no mechanical errors, with complexity</td>
<td>-carefully but subtly organized from beginning to end w/ smooth transitions -strong intro and conclusion framing the topic of discussion -paragraphs address one subject with interest</td>
<td>-thesis is specific, focused, purposeful, analytic, and insightful</td>
<td>-supporting details are rich, interesting and full -details are relevant and appropriate -many quotes used smoothly and explained fully with close detail and interpretation</td>
<td>-rich, effective vocabulary -uses a variety of sentence structures, types, and lengths -offers a consistent voice and tone -no structural errors</td>
<td>-fluent -original and insightful -thoughts are critically analytical of the text -ideas show clear understanding of the text</td>
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<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>few or no mechanical errors, relative to the length or complexity</td>
<td>-organized from beginning to end w/ smooth transitions -clear focus -logical order -strong intro and conclusion -paragraphs address one subject clearly and intelligently</td>
<td>-thesis is specific, focused, purposeful, and analytic</td>
<td>-details are strong, but lack richness and specificity -details are relevant -quotes are smoothly introduced and explained fully, but not excessively used</td>
<td>-effective vocabulary -moderately successful in using a variety of sentence patterns -reasonably consistent voice and tone -few errors in structure or usage</td>
<td>-fluent, fully developed -solid -evidence of creative thought -complex ideas, showing you have thought critically about the text</td>
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<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>-some mechanical errors that do not interfere with communication -limited text,</td>
<td>-transitions are present -organized, but with lapses in order or structure</td>
<td>-thesis is specific, focused, and purposeful</td>
<td>-details are adequate -details are generally relevant -many examples</td>
<td>-acceptable vocabulary -attempts sophisticated sentence structure</td>
<td>-voice and</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-Range</td>
<td>-some mechanical errors that interfere with communication -errors are disproportionate to the length of complexity of the piece -focus is unclear or limited -intro and conclusion are insufficient -poor transitions -lacks closure -thesis is specific and focused -details lack elaboration -some details do not support the focus -lacks important details -quotes lack explanation or are not introduced -simplest vocabulary -little sentence variety -barely recognizable voice and tone -errors in structure and usage -thinly developed -some independent thought -repetitive or too general</td>
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<td>D-Range</td>
<td>-noticeable mechanical errors that interfere with communication -errors cause major problems for readers -unfocused thought patterns are difficult to follow -paragraphs are poorly structured -thesis is present, but vague and difficult to identify -details are merely listed -repetitious details -too few details -few examples, poorly used -no sentence variety -serious errors in structure and usage -lacks voice or tone -simplistic vocabulary with incorrect usage -poorly developed -lacks clarity -very little independent thinking -plot summary</td>
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<td>F-Range</td>
<td>mechanical errors that seriously interfere with -so short or muddled that it lacks organization or focus -no thesis -virtually no examples or quotations -irrelevant details -unclear statements -not developed -does not show thought or original ideas -shows a lack of understanding of the text</td>
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Suggestions for Questions to Contemplate While Preparing Your Two Papers

You don’t need to answer all of these questions in relation to your work of art. These questions are placed here as a starting point, to help give you ideas on how to approach your image. Here are some of the things that you will want to think about when writing your analysis:

1. Give basic facts about the work:
   What is the title?
   When was the work done?
   Where was the work done?
   What medium was used?
   What is the work’s size?

2. What is the subject of the work?

3. What is the purpose of the work?

4. What is the content of the work (what is the artist’s message)?

5. What period or movement does the work belong to?

6. What choices did the artist make concerning the formal elements and principles of design?

7. What does the work of art tell us about the cultural group who made it?

8. What is your response to the piece? How did the artist’s formal choice affect your response?

9. Where and how does the work fit into the history of art?

10. Did the artist use sources—either religious, historical or visual?

11. What do important scholars say about this work?

12. What is the work’s relationship to the worldview at the time it was created: religion, politics, economics, science, mathematics, psychology, sociology and so?

13. How does the work compare to earlier works or to works being done at the time?

14. What was the process of the piece?

15. What is the significance of the piece?

16. Is the work symbolic?