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 make students aware 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.

1. Students will gain an 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 test performance and quality of in class reaction papers.
2. Students will gain a deeper understanding of select areas of the history of art from the Pre-Columbian period of Mesoamerica by writing a paper on one particular work of art.

Grading:

Your grade will be based upon:

1. Class attendance and assignments (10%)
2. Two exams (40%)
3. Final examination (20%)
4. One term paper (30%)

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. These assignments are designed to assist you with your test performance so they should be completed by you.

In addition, I will be providing opportunities for extra credit assignments through out the semester, which will include movies, gallery talks and presentations outside of class. These opportunities will be optional, but they can provide a real boost to your grade if you are in a borderline situation.

2. & 3. This includes the two examinations held during the semester and the one examination held during the final examination period.

Examinations will consist of slide identifications with a discussion of the significance of the slides identified. You are expected to be able to broadly discuss different Pre-Columbian cultures, art styles and issues relating to the study of Pre-Columbian art in the essays that you write in conjunction with the slide identifications. You will not need blue books for this particular class. Examinations consist of 10 identifications with short answer essays and one extra credit slide identification with short answer essay.

Slide reviews in power point format will be made available through download on the classroom desktop computer and via Blackboard. Whereas it is not required that you study these images, it is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you do so, as they will help narrow the focus to a representative number of the images covered in class. In addition, review of the images will help to reinforce the visual learning that needs to take place in this class in order to prepare you to be a practicing artist in the future.

The first examination will cover the Formative Period (Chapters 1-3, Meso). The second examination will cover the Classic Period (Chapters 4-7, Meso, and the entire Maya book). (These two examinations together comprise 40 % of your grade under number 2.) The final examination will cover the Postclassic Period (Chapters 8 and 9, Meso). (This examination comprises 20 % of your grade under number 3.)
Helpful hints for doing well on tests in this course: I recommend that you review your class notes on a weekly basis, as this will help you to commit the information to memory. This means you need to be taking notes! Over the years I have found that grades are higher for students who are actively engaged in note taking during class. As students take notes, they are more engaged mentally in the class, participate more fully in class discussion, and are better prepared for the examinations. Reading the textbook before classes further bolsters your learning and is also highly recommended as reinforcement of in class learning. In addition, an attitude of interest will help you overall. Texting during class or looking at social media or e-mail on your laptop during class detracts from your ability to absorb the information. If you are too tired to stay alert, grab a cup of coffee beforehand. Do not come to class and put your head on the desk. Active engagement in the classroom helps with your grade.

4. The papers of 1000-1500 words each must be typewritten using a double-spaced format. The paper must also contain footnotes and a bibliography that follow the attached guidelines. Paper topics must be pre-approved by me no later than February 23rd. Term papers will be submitted via Blackboard. In addition, a student may also submit a hard copy of the paper, but they must submit a copy via Blackboard as well for a plagiarism check and word count.

Topics for the research papers will be selected under the close supervision of Dr. Rote. Students are expected to have a minimum of 4-6 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.

Example of information needed on the topic forms:

The Stone of Tizoc, Aztec Culture
From Evans, Susan Toby. Ancient Mexico & Central America

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 the material on examinations. More than THREE 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.

Cell phones and laptops:

Cell phones and laptops are NOT permitted in my class. Be sure that you turn off your cell phone prior to coming to class. You are not permitted to text during class or leave class to talk on your cell phone. I will confiscate the cell phone of any student caught using their cell phone during class and will return it at my discretion. You need to concentrate on the images on the screen, so please do not bring your laptop. I have noticed that students on laptops do not ever look up at the slide images, rendering learning almost impossible. This lack of engagement will have a negative impact on your learning in this class.
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.

Disabilities Accommodations***
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeals
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Dropping a Class
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

Classroom/professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

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).

Week 1  Chapter 1 (Meso)
Week 2  Chapter 2 (Meso)
Week 3  Chapter 3 (Meso)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Chapter 4 (Meso)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 5</strong></td>
<td><strong>Exam # 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Chapter 5 (Meso)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td><strong>Paper topic due.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (Meso)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Chapter 6 (Meso), continued</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (Maya)</td>
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**SPRING BREAK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Chapter 4 (Maya)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td><strong>Exam # 2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Chapter 7 (Meso)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Chapters 5, 6 and 7 (Maya)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Chapters 8, 9 and 10 (Maya)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Term papers due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 14</td>
<td>Chapters 8 and 9 (Meso)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Chapters 8 and 9 (Meso)-continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Day of Class</td>
<td>Chapters 8 and 9 (Meso)-continued</td>
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**5/6** **FINAL EXAMINATION 1:45-4:45 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. A copy of this syllabus will also be placed on Blackboard.
Form to turn in first paper topic
Due:

Course: ARTS 4350

Name of Student:

Paper Topic:
Comments on paper topics not approved:

If not approved, please resubmit by March 9, 2015.

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 dates papers 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. You may also visit the Writing Center on campus for assistance with your paper.
Biographical data in lieu of discussion of stylistic/iconographic concerns-failing grade (don’t think we have to worry about this problem in this class!).

**Papers**

Correct length (1000-1500 words)  
10 points

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

Bibliography-minimum of 4-6 books and periodical references  
(no websites accepted)—Bell Library online resources accepted  
5 points

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.

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**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>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</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</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</td>
<td>-rich, effective vocabulary -uses a variety of sentence structures, types, and lengths -offers a consistent voice and tone</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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<tr>
<td>Range</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>B</td>
<td>-transitions are present -organized, but with lapses in order or structure -focused -clear intro and conclusion -paragraphs are clear</td>
<td>-thesis is specific, focused, and purposeful</td>
<td>-details are adequate -details are generally relevant -many examples used meaningfully and clearly -quotes are introduced, but not smoothly</td>
<td>-acceptable vocabulary -attempts sophisticated sentence structure -voice and tone are somewhat inconsistent -some errors in structure and usage</td>
<td>-moderately fluent -ideas are developed, but limited in depth -shows independent and analytical thought -ideas are clearly stated</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>-focus is unclear or limited -intro and conclusion are insufficient -poor transitions</td>
<td>-thesis is specific and focused</td>
<td>-details lack elaboration -some details do not support the focus -lacks important details</td>
<td>-simplistic vocabulary -little sentence variety -barely recognizable voice and tone</td>
<td>-thinly developed -some independent thought -repetitive or too general</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>-some mechanical errors that interfere with communication -errors are disproportionate to the length of complexity of discussion -paragraphs address one subject with interest</td>
<td>fully with close detail and interpretation</td>
<td>-no structural errors</td>
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- Discussion paragraphs address one subject with interest fully with close detail and interpretation.
- Few or no mechanical errors, relative to the length or complexity.
- Organized from beginning to end with smooth transitions, clear focus, logical order, strong intro and conclusion, paragraphs address one subject clearly and intelligently.
- Thesis is specific, focused, purposeful, and analytic.
- Details are strong, but lack richness and specificity. Details are relevant; quotes are smoothly introduced and explained fully, but not excessively used. Effective vocabulary; moderately successful in using a variety of sentence patterns, reasonably consistent voice and tone, few errors in structure or usage.
- Fluent, fully developed; solid; evidence of creative thought; complex ideas, showing you have thought critically about the text.

- Transitions are present; organized, but with lapses in order or structure; focused; clear intro and conclusion; paragraphs are clear.
- Thesis is specific, focused, and purposeful.
- Details are adequate; details are generally relevant; many examples used meaningfully and clearly; quotes are introduced, but not smoothly.
- Acceptable vocabulary; attempts sophisticated sentence structure; voice and tone are somewhat inconsistent; some errors in structure and usage.
- Moderately fluent; ideas are developed, but limited in depth; shows independent and analytical thought; ideas are clearly stated.

- Focus is unclear or limited; intro and conclusion are insufficient; poor transitions.
- Thesis is specific and focused.
- Details lack elaboration; some details do not support the focus; lacks important details.
- Simplistic vocabulary; little sentence variety; barely recognizable voice and tone.
- Thinly developed; some independent thought; repetitive or too general.
Suggestions for Questions to Contemplate While Preparing Your 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?

Form to turn in first paper topic
Due: February 23, 2015

Course: ARTS 4350

Name of Student:

Paper Topic:
Approved  Not Approved

Comments on paper topics not approved:

If not approved, please resubmit by March 9, 2015.