MESOAMERICAN CIVILIZATION BEFORE THE EUROPEANS
23,000 B.C. – A.D. 1517

COURSE OUTLINE

Anthropology 440: Spring 2012
Tuesday & Thursday: 2:00 – 3:15
Schedule number: 20100
PSFA (Professional Studies & Fine Arts) Rm 310
Instructors: Dr. Joe Ball
Dr. Jennie Taschek
Office: Arts & Letters: Room 486
Arts & Letters: Room 482
Phone: 594-5658
594-6294
e-mail: jwball@mail.sdsu.edu
jtaschek@mail.sdsu.edu
Office hours: Tu & Th 8:45 – 10:15
Tu & Th 9:00 – 9:30
3:30-4:30 by appointment
3:30-4:30, by appointment
Informally, after class on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Anthropology Department Office: Arts & Letters Building, Room 448: Take elevator
to 4th floor. Exit elevator. Turn right: there it is.

Recommended/Required Texts: Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs, 6th edition by M.D.
Coe & Rex Koontz; The Art of Mesoamerica- From Olmec to Aztec, 4th edition by Mary Ellen
Miller; Victors & Vanquished-Spanish & Nahua Views of the Conquest of México, edited by
Stuart Schwartz. The 5th edition of Coe & Koontz and 3rd edition of Miller also are useable.

IMPORTANT!: Regular reading assignments to supplement class lectures will consist of
Blackboard-posted PowerPoints; approximately 25 pages per week in the texts; occasional
additional materials posted on Blackboard under Course Documents; or rarely, circulating
handouts. Reading assignments are designed to complement the lectures; thus, they are not
congruent with the arrangement of chapters in the texts. For this reason, you should become
sufficiently familiar with the textbooks to recognize and read the materials pertaining to the
topics being covered in the lecture. Consult the syllabus to be sure you have done the assigned
reading for each exam. Because the PowerPoints are intended to provide basic, essential
complementary background and enrichment for the lectures--not secondary but convenient
sources to be searched and “mined” for ignored and unlearned information during each exam–
they will be posted and removed on a regular schedule paralleling the lectures and class
progress. They are provided as learning resources; not as quick cheat-sheets for the exams.
Explorations
Courses that fulfill the 9-unit requirement for Explorations in General Education take the goals and skills of GE Foundations courses to a more advanced level. Your three upper division courses in Explorations will provide greater interdisciplinary exposure and understanding, more complex and in-depth theory, deeper investigation of local problems, and wider awareness of global challenges. More extensive reading, written analysis involving complex comparisons, well-developed arguments, considerable bibliography, and use of technology are appropriate in many Explorations courses.

This is an Explorations course in Social and Behavioral Sciences. Completing this course will help you learn to do the following with greater depth: 1) explore and recognize basic terms, concepts, and domains of the social and behavioral sciences; 2) comprehend diverse theories and methods of the social and behavioral sciences; 3) Identify human behavioral patterns across space and time and discuss their interrelatedness and distinctiveness; 4) enhance your understanding of the social world through the application of conceptual frameworks from the social and behavioral sciences to first-hand engagement with contemporary issues.

The course is divided into three parts:

i. Early Hunters & the Archaic; Paquimé; the Olmec; Oaxaca to the founding of Monte Albán; West México.
ii. Teotihuacán & the Mesoamerican Classic Era; Early Classic Maya History.
iii. Epiclassic Mesoamerica; Tula & Chichén Itzá; Postclassic Mesoamerica.

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CLASS SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

UNIT 1: Early Hunters, the Archaic, Paquimé, the Olmec, Oaxaca to the founding of Monte Albán, & West Mexico

Week 1: 19. January
Class Orientation & Introduction to Anth 440.

Remember to look at the illustrations & to read their captions.

*Mesoamerica, Living and Ancient—The sources of our knowledge.*

The Peopling of the Americas (ca. 22,000 ~ 18,000 BC). *Mesoamerica* definition & basic geography. The origins of horticulture, early development of village life, & social ranking.

*Paquimé (Casas Grandes).* Cultures and societies of the far northwest. *Las Trincheras & Paquimé* into Arizona and beyond.


**Posted PowerPoints.**


*Paquimé (Casas Grandes) & some basic concepts—shamanism, social ranking, chiefdoms; reading archaeological site & the archaeological record.*

*Gulf Coast Olmec civilization*—the origins of Olmec civilization & its predecessors (2000 BC – 400 BC).


Week 4: 07 – 09. February


*The Olmec & their Neighbors.* Middle Preclassic Mesoamerica beyond the Olmec heartland. Olmec neighbors, competitors & successors.

**Required reading:** Coe & Koontz: *The Olmecs beyond the heartland*, pp.79–91. *Early Zapotec Civilization*, pp. 91 – 100. **Posted PowerPoints.**

Week 6: 21 – 23. February

*Early complex society on the Mesa del Sur*—Oaxaca & the Zapotecs to the founding of Monte Albán, Mesoamerica’s first administrative capital. Early West México.

We know about Week 7: 28 Feb – 01. March
West México to the Teotihuacan era. The Valley of México before Teotihuacan.
**Required Reading:** Coe & Koontz: The Classic Period, pp. 101–121. **Posted PowerPoints.**

**UNIT 2. Teotihuacán & the Mesoamerican Classic Era; Early Classic Maya History.**

Week 8: 06 – 08. March
The rise of Teotihuacan, an imperial Mesoamerican city-state. The city, state, and culture of Teotihuacan. *Teotihuacan—(more basic concepts) urbanism; institutional religion & gods; states and state-rulers.*
**Required Reading:** Coe & Koontz: The Classic Period, pp. 101–121. Miller: Teotihuacan, pp. 70-87. **Posted PowerPoints.**

**MIDTERM EXAM**
**09. Mar (FRIDAY):** THE MIDTERM EXAM WILL BE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD SOME TIME BETWEEN 8:00 am & 11:00 am.

Week 9: 13 – 15. March
**MIDTERM EXAM IS DUE AT 02:00 pm (14:00), TUESDAY, 13 MARCH.**
The city, state, and culture of Teotihuacan *(continued).* Teotihuacan history, known and conjectured. Teotihuacan, obsidian, and salt; Teotihuacan and the Maya..
**Required Reading:** Coe & Koontz: The Classic Period, pp. 121–131. Miller: Teotihuacan, pp. 70-87. **Posted PowerPoints.**

Week 10: 20 – 22. March
Teotihuacan and the Maya. The Maya Lowlands in the 4th Century A.D. and the *Teotihuacan Entrada* of AD 387–*The Year that Changed the Maya World.*
Teotihuacan at Tikal; Teotihuacano-Tikal military adventuring-impact & aftermath. *Rise of the Late Classic Maya states.*

24 March – 01 April  Spring Break

**UNIT 3. Epiclassic Mesoamerica; Tula & Chichén Itza; Postclassic Mesoamerica.**

Week 11: 03 – 05. April
The decline and collapse of Teotihuacan. *Epiclassic Mesoamerica*-Xochicalco, Cholula, Cantona, Cacaxtla, La Quemada, & others.
**Required Reading:** Coe & Koontz: The Epiclassic Period, pp. 132–150. **Posted PowerPoints.**
Week 12: 10 – 12. April
Epiclassic Mesoamerica-Monte Albán, Oaxaca, and the Zapotec to the coming of the Mixtec; Veracruz-El Tajín, the Totonac, and the Huastec.


Week 13: 17 – 19. April

APRIL 17: LAST DAY TO SUBMIT REVIEWS, REPORTS, & RECEIPTS AND EARN CREDIT FOR FILMS, READINGS, & MUSEUM/SITE VISITS.

Epiclassic Mesoamerica-Alta Vista; La Quemada; Tula and the “Toltecs.”
Tula and Chichén Itzá—archaeology, history, Mexican Nationalism, and the myth of Quetzalcoatl and the central Mexican Tolteca.


Week 14: 24 – 26. April
Chichén Itzá and the Itzá—a Maya imperial capital and its culture. The end of the Epiclassic and the fall of Tula and Chichén Itza—the mists of history, legend, and mythology. Northern Maya civilization from the fall of CI to the coming of the Europeans.


Week 15: 01 – 03. May
Postclassic México to European Contact. The Mixteca-Puebla florescence; Michoacán, the Purépecha, and their Neighbors; the Tarascan state and its culture; central México and its city-states.


Week 16: 08. May
The mercantile city-states of the Postclassic period. The Aztec and their Neighbors.


FINAL EXAM
THE FINAL EXAM will be posted at 08:00 am on Thursday, 10 May.
IT IS DUE BACK NO LATER THAN 2:00 pm (14:00) ON TUESDAY, 15 MAY at the MAIN OFFICE OF THE ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT, ARTS & LETTERS, ROOM AL-448.
NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE ACCEPTED, OR IF ACCEPTED, GRADED UNTIL THE FALL SEMESTER!

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CLASS:

For detailed information about this class & its requirements & grading procedures, go to the SDSU Blackboard Site for Anth 440 and review/download the file posted in Course Documents as “ANTH 440 COURSE INFORMATION”.

All BLACKBOARD MATERIALS FOR THIS CLASS WILL BE POSTED IN “COURSE DOCUMENTS”