Art History 3653 Mesoamerican Art

Syllabus

Maya Stanfield-Mazzi, Ph.D., Assistant Professor
University of Florida, Fall Semester, August 21–December 4, 2013 (3 credit hours)
Tuesdays Periods 8–9 (3:00–4:55) and Thursdays Period 8 (3:00–3:50) in Fine Arts C 201
Final exam: Thursday, December 12, 7:30–9:30 am
Email address: mstanfield@ufl.edu Office telephone: 352-273-3070
Office: Fine Arts C 123 Office hours: Wednesdays Periods 8 & 9 (3:00–4:55 pm)

Course Description
This course will explore the art and architecture of Pre-Columbian 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 cover the histories of discovery of this art and the major theoretical and ethical issues related to its study.

Learning Objectives
• 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.

Required Materials
These required books may be purchased at the UF Bookstore:

Additional required readings are on electronic reserve (Ares). To access these materials, begin at https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ Log in, then find the course number and the corresponding selections as listed on the syllabus. (If you have not used the system before you will need to create an account.) Print out or download the selection you will need before the corresponding class meeting, and bring it to class with your notes.
• Other selected readings will be on hard copy reserve in the Fine Arts Library. The texts listed above will also be on reserve.

Additional class materials, including a copy of this syllabus, terms lists, and study images, will be posted on the E-learning site for the course. Visit https://lss.at.ufl.edu/ to log in.
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, including a class meeting at the Harn Museum on September 12th (4) write a short reading analysis (600 words), (5) write a research paper (1500 words) integrating a work of art on display at the Harn Museum into the wider corpus of Mesoamerican Art, and (6) take the in-class midterm and final examinations.

The midterm will be given in class on October 8th. It will consist of two essays, which 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, and will have 40 minutes to write each essay. The final will have the same format, except you will have an hour for each essay, and will be held on Thursday, December 12, 7:30–9:30 am.

Because the lectures and discussions 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. Papers must be turned in during class on the due dates, not sent through email. Late papers without a doctor’s note will not be accepted at all.

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://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/

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

Communication

The principal form of communication for this course is email, using students’ @ufl.edu addresses. Students should be sure to check their UF email often and use it to communicate with the instructor, mstanfield@ufl.edu The instructor will return emails within 24 hours. Any important announcements posted on Elearning will also come to students as emails, but students should not use Elearning to send messages to the instructor (use email instead).

Grade Breakdown

Class attendance: 10%
Class participation: 15%
Reading analysis: 10%
Midterm examination: 10%
Paper: 20%
Final examination: 25%
Grading Scale
Grades are tabulated on a 100-point scale and a letter grade is assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93–100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90–92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87–89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83–86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80–82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>77–79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>73–76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>70–72</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<td>67–69</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<td>63–66</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>60–62</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
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</tbody>
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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](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx)

Academic Honesty
The university's policies regarding academic honesty, the honor code, and student conduct related to the honor code will be strictly enforced. Full information regarding these policies is available at the following links:

- [Academic Honesty](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx)
- [Student Conduct and Honor Codes](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/)

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/](http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/)

Schedule and assignments are subject to change if needed.

**SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Thursday, August 22nd**
Introductions. What is this class about? What is its structure? What are the requirements? 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 and coursepack.

  * Due in class Tuesday the 27th: On the index card that you are given, briefly describe or sketch a representation of Mesoamerican art or culture from current popular culture. Then write your name, class year, major, and anything else you would like the professor to know.
**Art History 3653: Mesoamerican Art**

**Tuesday, August 27th**
How do we define Mesoamerica? An introduction to the region and its cultural features. Discussion of Mesoamerica in popular culture.

Assignment:

**Thursday, August 29th**
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 Copan.

Assignment:
- Fash, *Copan Sculpture Museum*, Chapters 1–2 (pp. 3–33, for discussion).

**Tuesday, Sept. 3rd, Thursday, Sept. 5th, and Tuesday, Sept. 10th**
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. 223–58 (Ares; for discussion Tuesday the 3rd)

**DUE IN CLASS THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH:** Write an analysis (approx. 600 words, typed) of the argument set forth by Carolyn Tate or Karl Taube in the readings above. What is the main point the author is trying to make? Is his or her logic consistent? Is the argument plausible based on what you have learned and the artworks you have seen? Be sure to summarize the argument and respond to it.

**Thursday, Sept. 12th**
West Mexico

CLASS MEETS AT HARN MUSEUM OF ART

Assignment:
- Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 3, “The Late Formative,” only pp. 58–61

**Tuesday, Sept. 17th**
The Late Formative and Classic Period in Oaxaca: Monte Alban

Assignment:
Thursday, September 19th, Tuesday, Sept. 24th, and Thursday, Sept. 26th
The Classic Period in Central Mexico: Teotihuacan
Assignment:
• Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 4, “Teotihuacan”
• Annabeth Headrick, Ch. 1, “Approaching the City,” in *The Teotihuacan Trinity: The Sociopolitical Structure of an Ancient Mesoamerican City*, pp. 1–22 (Ares; for discussion Thursday the 19th)

READING ANALYSES RETURNED WITH FEEDBACK ON SEPT. 26th

Tuesday, Oct. 1st, Thursday, Oct. 3rd
The Foundations of Maya Civilization: The Late Formative Maya (Cerros, San Bartolo)
Midterm exam study questions handed out Thursday the 3rd
Assignment:
• Richard Hansen, “The First Cities—The Beginnings of Urbanization and State Formation in the Maya Lowlands,” in *Maya: Divine Kings of the Rain Forest*, pp. 50-65. (Ares and on reserve in Fine Arts Library, for discussion Tuesday the 1st)

MIDTERM EXAM Tuesday, Oct. 8th

Thursday, Oct. 10th and Tuesday, Oct. 15th
The Early Classic Maya: Tikal and Copan
Paper assignment handed out Thursday the 10th
Assignment:
• Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 6, “The Early Classic Maya.”
• Fash, *Copan Sculpture Museum*, Chapters 3–5 (pp. 35–81, for discussion Tuesday)

Thursday, Oct. 17th and Tuesday, Oct. 22nd
The Late Classic Maya: Copan continued, Palenque
Assignment:
• Fash, *Copan Sculpture Museum*, Chapters 6–11 (pp. 83–171, for discussion Tuesday)

Thursday, Oct. 24th and Tuesday, Oct. 29th
The Late Classic Maya continued: Yaxchilán, Bonampak, pottery
Assignment:
• *Popol Vuh*, “And this is their birth, we shall tell of it here . . .,” translated by Dennis Tedlock, pp. 104–122 (Ares; for discussion Tuesday)

Thursday, October 31st
Postclassic Mesoamerica: Puuc Maya, Mitla
Assignment:
• Miller, *Art of Mesoamerica*, Ch. 7, “The Late Classic Maya,” only pp. 151–54.
Tuesday, November 5th, Thursday, Nov. 7th, and Tuesday, November 12th
PAPER DUE IN CLASS TUESDAY THE 5th
Postclassic Mesoamerica: Cacaxtla, Tula, Chichen Itzá
Film on Tuesday the 5th: Incidents of Travel in Chichén Itzá (2004, Documentary Educational Resources)
Assignment:
• Miller, Art of Mesoamerica, Ch. 8, “Mesoamerica after the Fall of Classic Cities.”
• Fash, Copan Sculpture Museum, Chapter 12 (pp. 173–181, for discussion Thursday the 7th).
• Cynthia Kristan-Graham and Jeff Karl Kowalski, “What’s ‘Toltec’ at Uxmal and Chichén Itzá? Merging Maya and Mesoamerican Worldviews and World Systems in Terminal Classic to Early Postclassic Yucatan,” in Twin Tollans: Chichén Itzá, Tula, and the Epiclassic to Early Postclassic Mesoamerican World, pp. 251–313 (Ares, for discussion Tuesday the 12th)

Thursday, Nov. 14th, Tuesday, Nov. 19th, and Thursday, November 21st
Graduate student book presentations Tuesday the 19th
Final exam study questions handed out Thursday the 21st
The Aztecs: Tenochtitlan and Its Monuments
Assignment:
• Miller, Art of Mesoamerica, Ch. 9, “The Aztecs.”
• Eduardo Matos Mocketzuma, "The Aztec Main Pyramid: Ritual Architecture at Tenochtitlan," in The Ancient Americas: Art from Sacred Landscapes, pp. 187–95 (Ares, for discussion Tuesday the 19th)

PAPERS RETURNED WITH FEEDBACK ON NOVEMBER 19th

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 26 & 28—HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

Tuesday, December 3rd
Colonial Epilogue, Course Conclusions, and Review for Final
Assignment:

Thursday, December 12th
FINAL EXAM 7:30–9:30 am

Important Dates
Sept. 12: Class meets at Harn Museum of Art; Reading analysis due in class
Oct. 8: MIDTERM EXAM
Oct. 10: Paper assignment handed out
Nov. 5: Paper due in class
Nov. 21: Final exam study questions handed out
Nov. 26 & 28: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
Dec. 12: FINAL EXAM 7:30–9:30 am