

Anth 4000/5000 Archaeology of New World States
Course syllabus - Fall, 2001

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Class Location: King Center 103

Class Time: MW 11:30am-12:45pm

Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:00pm

INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course introduces anthropological perspectives on complex state societies in selected parts of the Precolumbian New World. These are indigenous political systems that developed independent of the Old World, and took forms that may be unfamiliar to those steeped in the Western definition of the state. Politics is a topic that is constantly in the news, and most Americans have participated in or experienced political debates thanks to our freedom of speech, and the political science classes that we all had to take in high school. But the popular view of Hobbes, Rousseau, and our Classical Greek democratic heritage is a very narrow view of politics and of the costs and benefits of complex society. Some political behavior we assume is universal, while we often hear that other aspects of politics are specifically “Western” in origin. Without a comparative perspective, this is hard to evaluate.

Therefore, the objectives of this course are to **1)** expose students to how “the state” developed and functioned in a social environment radically removed from the Mesopotamian, Greek, Roman, and European Enlightenment thought that provide the basis for most of our political discussions in the United States today; **2)** present to students a range of anthropological models on complex social and political systems. Graduate students in particular are expected to develop a familiarity with the strengths and weaknesses of these models as they are applied to Mesoamerica; **3)** give students another culture’s view on age old questions such as why states exist, what they do, why they expand, whether they’re worth it, and how they justify their own existence. In the process, you will gain an appreciation for how an anthropological approach forces you to restrain your judgment about cultural practices other than your own.

We will accomplish these goals by examining data from Mesoamerica, the area of Mexico and Central America that we will use as a laboratory for this course. Although it will help if you have taken prior anthropology or archaeology courses, there is no such prerequisite for this course. However, there will inevitably be points that need to be clarified for those without much background in the discipline, and below I suggest some sources to plug the holes in your archaeological knowledge.

The first two weeks of the course will deal with establishing a definition of a state, and will sketch out a general history of Mesoamerica. This, and an associated map assignment, will give you a familiarity with the region and time periods under consideration. But this course focuses on a selective range of theory and culture, and there are many aspects of Mesoamerica that will not be covered in this course¹. Instead, we will look at the issue of states, and how the Mesoamerican data can help us understand the broader topic of the state and its problems.

¹ My *Archaeology of Mexico and Central America* course in Spring, 2002 will be more broad in scope.

The central portion of the course will examine local political dynamics, using archaeological, biological, and ethnohistoric evidence. We will look at individual motivations among political actors, at how local alliances are formed, at the way in which some classes of people are excluded from power, and at how access to power is closely tied to kinship. We will examine what role the state actually played, and especially at how religion and ideology are used to explain, justify, and protect the state. In Mesoamerica, human sacrifice was incorporated into this equation, and we will see how this act fit with indigenous concepts of politics and ideology. We have certain notions of what a ruler is supposed to do, but how did ancient Mesoamericans envision the king's job description?

The last part of the course will look at bigger questions. We will ask whether political complexity was a good idea or not - what are the benefits and consequences of the state? We will also expand the scale of our inquiry, by looking at how different Mesoamerican states interacted with one another, and at the development of interregional expansion and systems of trade. We will devote the final class meetings to the really big questions. Why do these states collapse? How do they become reorganized into other forms? Are the new political systems that emerge starting from scratch, or do they make use of many of the same basic conceptual principles that their predecessors used? Finally, what changes occurred when the Spaniards conquered Mesoamerica in the 16th century? Did Old World concepts of politics take over, or did Mesoamerican models survive?

EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE

General policies and expectations – As with any course at UCD, there are certain basic policies that students must comply with. Do not bring pets, children, noisy laptops, or active cellphones/beepers to class. Students are responsible for making sure that they are actually enrolled in the course, and for completing coursework on time. This course involves considerable reading and writing – usually 1 hour of class time will necessitate 3 hours of work outside the class. In order to earn the credit that this course (or any other) is worth, you must be willing and able to invest the time that is required – everyone has outside commitments, jobs, and family life, so do not expect that academic standards will be relaxed just because you are overcommitted. Assignments turned in late will be docked one letter grade for each day they are late, i.e. a paper due Monday that is turned in Wednesday cannot get better than a “C”. Incompletes are granted at the end of the term only for unfinished work, and only when a legitimate and proven excuse exists. Academic dishonesty is never tolerated, and students should familiarize themselves with the regulations on pages 36-37 of the current catalog. Students with special needs should contact the AHEC Disability Service Office immediately to make arrangements, and I should also be informed as soon as possible.

This small course is intended for senior undergraduates and graduate students, and assumes a certain level of self-motivation and maturity, and hence performance will be evaluated somewhat differently than in a lecture course.

Class Participation – The course pack readings for this class are substantial, and keeping on top of the readings and participating in class discussion is a more significant part of your grade than it would be in a standard lecture class. The course is dependent upon active student participation and discussion of readings, and therefore this will be worth **15 points**, which will be 15% of your final grade. In other words, be brave, speak up, and join the discussion in a useful way. Do not monopolize class time with personal or tangential issues, but contribute to class in a

manner in which all can benefit. No attendance will be taken, but students who do not show up for class will not only hurt their participation grade, they will also miss out on the discussion that will form a central part of the course. I will give you feedback on how well you are participating as we move through the course.

Map Assignment – Due to the topical nature of the course, students will probably appreciate this assignment. You will be given a list of locations (countries, provinces, modern ethnic groups, archaeological sites) and you will be asked to mark them on the map provided. This will help to orient you for the articles that we will discuss over the course of the term. This will be worth **10 points**, or 10% of your final grade.

Papers – Students will complete two papers for this course, and present the highlights of one of them in class. These should be in a bibliographical format consistent with the journal *American Antiquity* or *Latin American Antiquity* (both in our library). It is possible to do some research on the web, but your best strategy will be to use the web primarily for tracking down actual paper references. Those who would like to use web sites as actual sources should evaluate those pages using the guidelines at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/okuref/research/webeval.html>. I certainly will.

The first paper should be around 8-10 pages (those registered in **Anth 5000** should definitely make it around 10). In this paper you are to address the difference between *etic* and *emic* views of the Mesoamerican state. Do you feel it is more productive to adopt an outside perspective that is more easily comparable to other regions of the world, or is it critical to take into consideration the specifically Mesoamerican concepts that are part of rulership here? This paper should draw upon the course readings (certainly those up through Oct. 1st), but can be supplemented by outside research. This paper will be worth **20 points**, or 20% of your final grade. You will need to turn in an abstract and a preliminary set of references partway through the term.

The second paper should be around 15-20 pages (those registered in **Anth 5000** should definitely make it around 20). In class, we will be discussing the various commonalities across Mesoamerican states, paying less attention to change over time. In this paper you are to address a topic or topics, such as ideology or political control over economics, and evaluate how it *does* change over time. Your task is to examine whether the different states of Precolumbian Mesoamerica show a marked “evolution” (perhaps towards greater centralization or differentiation) or instead “cycles” of behavior (repeating the same patterns with only cosmetic differences). You will not be able to do this entirely from the course readings, and will need to do outside research. This paper will be worth **35 points**, or 35% of your final grade. You will need to turn in an abstract and a preliminary set of references partway through the term.

One of these papers will be presented before the class. The undergraduate students will give presentations based on their first paper, on October 8th and 10th. The graduate students will give presentations based on the second paper, on November 26th and 28th. These will form the nucleus for our final discussion about grand patterns in our data. Both undergraduate and graduate presentations should last from 15-30 minutes and will be worth **20 points**, or 20% of your grade.

Graduate students (Take note!) – Those registered for this course under **Anth 5000** will be graded somewhat differently. Their papers will be held to a higher standard, and so will their presentations.

At the end of the term, you can tally your points against the following scale:

93-100 points	A	73-76.5 points	C
90-92.5 points	A-	70-72.5 points	C-
87-89.5 points	B+	67-69.5 points	D+
83-86.5 points	B	63-66.5 points	D
80-82.5 points	B-	60-62.5 points	D-
77-79.5 points	C+	0-59.5 points	F

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND READINGS

Week	Date	Topic	Readings/ Assignments	Readings in Berdan
1	August 20 (M)	Parameters of the course		
	August 22 (W)	Definitions of a state		
2	August 27 (M)	Mesoamerica's history and its states		Ch. 1
	August 29 (W)	The ecological and agricultural base		
3	September 3 (M)	Labor Day Holiday - no class		
	September 5 (W)	Developing power: Origins of complex political systems Map assignment due	Santley, Clark and Blake, Joyce.	
4	September 10 (M)	Controlling access to power: gender and ethnicity	Bruhns and Stothert, Brumfiel	
	September 12 (W)	Controlling access to power: kin relations	Spores, Christensen, Robertson, et al.	Ch. 3
5	September 17 (M)	All politics is local	Pohl and Byland	
	September 19 (W)	Expanding upon local networks: Conflict and collusion	Hodge, Smith	Ch. 5
6	September 24 (M)	Ideology	Demarest, Houston and Stuart, Headrick, Sugiyama	Ch. 6
	September 26 (W)	Propaganda through writing and sculpture	Johnston, Marcus	
7	October 1 (M)	Terror as a Tool of Political	Marcus, Nelson, et	

		Power	al., Sugiyama	
	October 3 (W)	How terrible was this Terror?		
8	October 8 (M)	UNDERGRADUATE PRESENTATIONS		
	October 10 (W)	UNDERGRADUATE PRESENTATIONS		
9	October 15 (M)	Courtly life and beautiful things	Inomata	Ch. 7
	October 17 (W)	Field Trip – Denver Art Museum Paper 1 due		
10	October 22 (M)	The downside of the state: Urban blight, tribute burdens...	Sanders and Webster, Storey, Brumfiel	
	October 24 (W)	...and toiling in the fields	Parsons	Chs. 2, 4
11	October 29 (M)	The dynamics of expansion: Massive invasions or personal ties?	Stuart	
	October 31 (W)		Beekman	
12	November 5 (M)	Interregional interaction: The predecessors of diplomacy and multinational corporations?	Spence	
	November 7 (W)		Blanton and Feinman, Pollard and Cahue	
13	November 12 (M)	Collapse and disintegration	Abrams and Rue	
	November 14 (W)	Collapse and reorganization	Beekman and Christensen	
14	November 19 (M)	The Great Encounter: Conquest and culture death?	Newson	Ch. 8
	November 21 (W)		Spores	Continue Ch. 8
15	November 26	GRADUATE		

	(M)	PRESENTATIONS
	November 28 (W)	GRADUATE PRESENTATIONS
16	December 3	Paper 2 due

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

A single text:

Berdan, Frances. 1982. *The Aztecs of Central Mexico. An Imperial Society*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, New York.

And a collection of articles. These can be purchased as a course pack or consulted in the library on reserve, where they will be by August 27:

Santley, Robert. 1984. Obsidian Exchange, Economic Stratification, and the Evolution of Complex Society in the Basin of Mexico. In *Trade and Exchange in Early Mesoamerica*, edited by Kenneth Hirth, pp. 43-86. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Clark, John E. and Michael Blake. 1994. The Power of Prestige: Competitive Generosity and the Emergence of Rank Societies in Lowland Mesoamerica. In *Factional Competition and Political Development in the New World*, edited by Elizabeth M. Brumfiel and John W. Fox, pp. 15-30. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Joyce, Arthur. 2000. The founding of Monte Albán. Sacred Propositions and Social Practices. In *Agency in Archaeology*, edited by Marcia-Anne Dobres and John E. Robb, pp. 71-91. Routledge Press, London.

Bruhns, Karen and Karen Stothert. 1999. *Women in Ancient America*, Chapter 8, pp. 214-245. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

Brumfiel, Elizabeth. 1994. Ethnic groups and political development in ancient Mexico. In *Factional Competition in the New World*, edited by Elizabeth Brumfiel and John Fox, pp. 89-102. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Spoes, Ronald. 1974. Marital Alliance in the Political Integration of Mixtec Kingdoms. *American Anthropologist* 76: 297-311.

Christensen, Alexander F. 1998. Ethnohistorical Evidence for Inbreeding among the Pre-Hispanic Mixtec Royal Caste. *Human Biology* 70: 563-577.

Robertson, Merle Greene, Marjorie S. Rosenblum Scandizzo, John R. Scandizzo. 1976. Physical Deformities in the Ruling Lineage of Palenque, and the Dynastic Implications. In *2nd Palenque Round Table (1974)*, edited by Merle Greene Robertson, pp. 59-86. Palenque Round Table Series III. Robert Louis Stevenson School, Pebble Beach.

Pohl, John M.D. and Bruce E. Byland. 1990. Mixtec Landscape Perception and Archaeological

Settlement Patterns. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 1: 113-131.

Hodge, Mary G. 1994. Politics Comprising the Aztec Empire's Core. In *Economies and Politics in the Aztec Realm*, edited by Mary G. Hodge and Michael E. Smith, pp. 43-71. Institute for Mesoamerican Studies, Albany.

Smith, Michael E.

1986 The Role of Social Stratification in the Aztec Empire: A View from the Provinces. *American Anthropologist* 88(1): 70-91.

Demarest, Arthur. 1992. Ideology in Ancient Maya Cultural Evolution: The Dynamics of Galactic Politics. In *Ideology and Pre-Columbian Civilizations*, edited by Arthur Demarest and Geoffrey W. Conrad, pp. 135-157. School of American Research Press, Santa Fe.

Houston, Stephen, and David Stuart. 1996. Of Gods, Glyphs and Kings: Divinity and Rulership among the Classic Maya. *Antiquity* 70: 289-312.

Headrick, Annabeth. 1999. The Street of the Dead ... It Really Was: Mortuary Bundles at Teotihuacan. *Ancient Mesoamerica* 10: 69-86.

Sugiyama, Saburo. 1993. Worldview materialized at Teotihuacan, Mexico. *Latin American Antiquity* 4(2): 103-129.

Johnston, Kevin. 2001. Broken Fingers: Classic Maya scribe capture and polity consolidation. *Antiquity* 75: 371-381.

Marcus, Joyce. 1992. *Mesoamerican Writing Systems. Propaganda, Myth, and History in Four Ancient Civilizations*, Chapter 1, pp. 3-16. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Marcus, Joyce. 1983. Topic 29. The Conquest Slabs of Building J, Monte Albán. In *The Cloud People. Divergent Evolution of the Zapotec and Mixtec Civilizations*, edited by Kent V. Flannery and Joyce Marcus, pp. 106-108. Academic Press, New York.

Nelson, Ben A., J. Andrew Darling, and David A. Kice. 1992. Mortuary practices and the social order at La Quemada, Zacatecas, Mexico. *Latin American Antiquity* 3:298-315.

Sugiyama, Saburo. 1992. Rulership, Warfare, and Human Sacrifice at the Ciudadela, Teotihuacan: An Iconographic Study of Feathered Serpent Representations. In *Art, Ideology, and the City of Teotihuacan*, edited by J. C. Berlo, pp. 205-230. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

Inomata, Takeshi. 2001. The Power and Ideology of Artistic Creation: Elite Craft Specialists in Classic Maya Society. *Current Anthropology* 42: 321-350.

Sanders, William T. and David Webster. 1988. The Mesoamerican Urban Tradition. *American Anthropologist* 90: 521-546.

Storey, Rebecca. 1985. An Estimate of Mortality in a Pre-Columbian Urban Population. *American Anthropologist* 87: 519-535.

Brumfiel, Elizabeth. 1991. Weaving and Cooking: Women's Production in Aztec Mexico. In *Engendering Archaeology: Women in Prehistory*, edited by Joan M. Gero and Margaret W. Conkey, pp. 224-251. Basil Blackwell, London.

Parsons, Jeffrey R. 1991. Political Implications of Prehispanic Chinampa Agriculture in the Valley of Mexico. In *Land and Politics in the Valley of Mexico: A Two Thousand Year Perspective*, edited by H.R. Harvey, pp. 17-42. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque.

Stuart, David. 2000. "The Arrival of Strangers": Teotihuacan and Tollan in Classic Maya History. In *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage*, edited by David Carrasco, Lindsay Jones, and Scott Sessions, pp. 465-513. University Press of Colorado, Boulder.

Beekman, Christopher S. 2000. The Correspondence of Regional Patterns and Local Strategies in Formative to Classic Period West Mexico. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 19(4): 385-412.

Spence, Michael W. 1992. Tlailotlacan, a Zapotec Enclave in Teotihuacan. In *Art, Ideology, and the City of Teotihuacan*, edited by J. C. Berlo, pp. 59-88. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C.

Blanton, Richard and Gary Feinman. 1984. The Mesoamerican World System. *American Anthropologist* 86:673-682.

Pollard, Helen P. and Laura Cahue. 1999. Mortuary Patterns of regional elites in the Lake Patzcuaro Basin of Western Mexico. *Latin American Antiquity* 10: 259-280.

Abrams, E. and D. Rue. 1988. The Causes and Consequences of Deforestation among the Prehistoric Maya. *Human Ecology* 16: 377-395.

Beekman, Christopher S. and Alexander F. Christensen. Ms. A Synthetic Analysis of the Nahua Migrations.

Newson, Linda A. 1985. Indian Population Patterns in Colonial Spanish America. *Latin American Research Review* 20: 41-74.

Spores, Ronald. 1997. Mixteca *Caciccas*: Status, Wealth, and the Political Accommodations of Native Elite Women in Early Colonial Oaxaca. In *Indian Women of Early Mexico*, edited by Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood, and Robert Haskett, pp. 185-197. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.