

Syllabus: Painted Books of Ancient Mexico

Fall 2011 ANG6224 and ANT 4930 Honors, Tuesday 4-6th periods

Instructor: Dr. **Susan Milbrath**, University of Florida Affiliate Professor of Anthropology and Curator of Latin American Art and Archaeology at the Florida Museum of Natural History.
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Office hours: after class or Thursdays 11:00 -12:00 110 Dickinson Hall (sign in first at front)

Texts: READ TEXT ASSIGNMENTS FOR CLASS LISTED BEFORE CLASS MEETS

Elizabeth Boone, *Cycles of Time and Meaning in the Mexican Divinatory Codices*.

University of Texas Press, 2007. ISBN-292712634

Facsimile: *The Codex Borgia*, introduction and commentary by Bruce Byland, Dover, 1993.
ISBN-486275698

Facsimile: *The Codex Nuttall*, introduction by Arthur Miller, Dover 1975. ISBN-486231682

Course requirements: Students will research a selected topic in an individual codex or group of codices. Beginning in the second week of class, graduate students will be assigned articles to read on themes related to their research topic and make informal presentations based on their assigned readings. The course grade for graduate students is based on class presentations (30%), formal lecture at the end of the term (30%), and written paper of 10-20 pages with social science citations and bibliography (40%). This paper will be submitted in initially in draft form and revised for final submission. Honors students will be expected to produce a similar draft paper and revise the paper under the direction of Dr. Milbrath. Grades for honors students is based 50% on a final paper and 50% on classroom participation.

Class 1 August 23 – Overview of Ancient Mexican Codices and cultural context. Hands on experience with three codices

Class 2 August 30 – Mesoamerican Cultures, Calendars, and Codices (Boone text pp. 1-32, Byland text xi-xvi). Handouts and first articles distributed. Discussion of research interest and potential research topics

Class 3 September 6 – Symbolic Vocabularies of Almanacs and Structures of Prophetic Knowledge (Boone text pp. 33-81, Byland text for plates 1-26) **FIRST STUDENT PRESENTATIONS ON ASSIGNED ARTICLES**

Class 4 September 13 – Divination Almanacs and Almanacs with year dates (Boone text pp. 82-133; Byland text on plates 27-28, 47-52, 71)

Class 5 September 20 – Marriage, Travel, Venus Almanacs in the Borgia Group (Boone text pp.134-169, Byland text for plates 53-60)

Class 6 September 27 – Codex Borgia 29-46 and the Annual Festival cycle (Boone text 171-210; Byland text on plates 29-46; Milbrath 2007 PDF) General discussion of Borgia narrative.

NO STUDENT PRESENTATIONS THIS CLASS

Class 7 October 4 – Annual cycle of Festivals in the Codices: Borbonicus, Vaticanus A, and Codex Nuttall

Class 8 October 11 – Parallel Almanacs in Codices and Links between Central Mexican and Mayan Codices (Boone text pp. 231-252)

Class 9 October 18 – Plants and Animals in the Codices

Class 10 October 25 – World Ages, World Renewal Ceremonies, Foundation and Creation Events

Class 12 November 8 – Dynastic Accounts in Mixtec Codices, Lienzos and Tiras (Miller 1975 introduction)

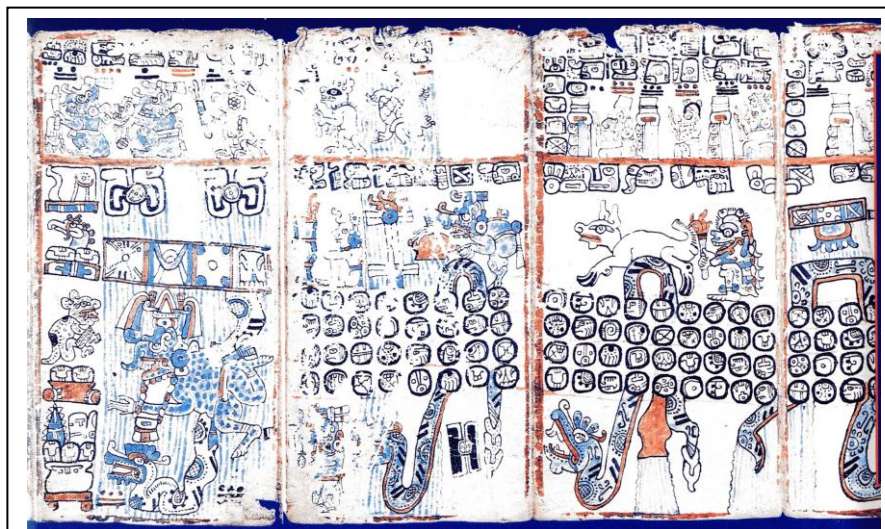
Class 13 November 15 –Aztec Historical Annals and Maps of the Central Valley, **draft papers due**

Class 14 November 22 –Historical Events in the Codices, **draft papers returned**

Class 15 November 29 – Student presentations **final papers due**

Class 16 December 6 – Student presentations (**last class** classes end Dec. 7)

Course objectives: This course explores Precolumbian and early Colonial period codices from Mexico, including painted books created by the Maya in Yucatan, the Mixtecs in Oaxaca, and the Aztecs and Tlaxcalans in Central Mexico. The course focuses on imagery and calendar periods in the codices related to the natural world. We will explore rituals involving the unique Mesoamerican 260-day calendar, especially rituals performed to ensure a bountiful food supply involving hunting and planting. Other natural history themes in the course include calendar ceremonies designed to ensure that the natural cycles will repeat in sequence, such as the New Year festivals, the New Fire Ceremony, and the annual festival calendar. Also of interest in this course are cataclysmic natural events represented in the codices include floods, droughts, and earthquakes.



Maya Codex Madrid
12-18