

ANT 4168
Maya Civilization
Fall 2023



Instructor

Whittaker Schroder
Turlington B129
(352) 294-6396
wschroder@ufl.edu

Description

This course provides an overview of the archaeology of Maya civilization, the ancestors of contemporary Maya people who have historically inhabited the Yucatán peninsula of Mexico and Central America. The Maya are famous for their ancient cities, pyramids, sculpted and painted art, and their ecological setting in the dense tropical rainforests of southern Mesoamerica. This course will contextualize this popular perception of the Maya with archaeological understandings of the origins of Maya civilization by the 2nd millennium BCE through the Classic period (250–900 CE), the Spanish Conquest, and the present day. Of note, the Maya developed a detailed writing system recording their own histories, which can be interpreted alongside the archaeological record. In addition to tracing the history of Maya civilization, this course will cover topics including political organization, economy, religion, agriculture, ecology, daily life, gender, as well as the use of new technologies, including laser scanning, to document and map Maya landscapes.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

- 1) have an understanding of the history of Maya civilization.
- 2) be able to describe the geography of the Yucatán peninsula and identify the locations of major archaeological sites.
- 3) understand Maya social structures and worldviews.
- 4) be able to interpret Maya art and iconography, as well as to read the basic structure of Maya hieroglyphic texts.
- 5) have the tools and critical thinking skills to identify reliable public narratives about the Maya in popular media.

Class Meetings

Tuesday, Period 9, 4:05–4:55 pm

Anderson 0021

Thursday, Period 8–9, 3:00–4:55 pm

Florida Gym 0285

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/95144919808>

Please contact the instructor for the Passcode

Office Hours

Tuesdays 2:00–3:30 pm

Thursdays 1:00–2:30 pm

Turlington B129

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/8991776578>

Required Book

Coe, Michael D. and Stephen Houston

2022 *The Maya*, Tenth Edition. Thames and Hudson, London.

Archaeological understandings of the Maya have changed substantially in recent years; therefore, earlier editions of this book are not recommended. Please purchase only the most recent version of this book.

Additional Required Readings

The required book provides a comprehensive overview of Maya civilization, but we will also be reading case studies that elaborate on important issues. Graduate students will be expected to read additional materials.

Grading

A 93-100%	B+ 87-89.9	C+ 77-79.9	D+ 67-69.9	E <60
A- 90-92.9	B 83-86.9	C 73-76.9	D 63-66.9	
	B- 80-82.9	C- 70-72.9	D- 60-62.9	

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies>

Attendance and Participation	15%
Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Assignment 3	10%
Assignment 4	10%
Final Exam	25%

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is crucial to get the most out of this course. If you must miss a class meeting, please let me know by email or in person as soon as possible. I encourage you to discuss what you missed with another student or attend my office hours. Depending on the activity you missed, you may have an alternate reading or assignment to make up the credit. Participation includes engagement during lectures and contributions to discussions. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies>).

Exams

This course will involve a midterm and a final exam based on lectures, readings, and class discussions and presentations. The format will be a mix of short identification and short essay questions. The final exam will be the same format as the midterm exam and will not be cumulative, although it will build on concepts introduced earlier in the course.

Assignments

Throughout the course, students will complete 4 assignments. Instructions will be posted online, but each assignment will involve a short essay and brief in-class presentation. All assignments will be due before the class meeting on the due date. Late work will not be accepted without prior approval.

Graduate Students

Graduate students enrolled in ANG 6930 will have additional readings not listed on the syllabus, and they will complete an additional assignment (short essay). Graduate students will meet independently with the instructor to develop an assignment based on their interests. This assignment will replace 10% of the Attendance and Participation grade.

Academic Honesty and Integrity

Please be familiar with the University of Florida's Student Honor Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code>

Special Accommodations

The process for requesting special accommodations is described at <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started>, including registering with the Disability Resource Center in Reid Hall and requesting an accommodation letter to be presented to the instructor.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results>.

Anthropology 4168

Maya Civilization

Fall 2023

Course Schedule (Subject to Change)

Week 1 August 24	 Course Introduction
Week 2 August 29	Introduction to the Maya Geography Language History of Maya Studies Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 1
August 31	Maya Origins Archaic period Early Preclassic period Required reading: <i>Webster "Maya Mystique"</i>
Week 3 September 5	The Olmecs and the Maya Middle Preclassic period Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 2

September 7	Pacific and Gulf Coasts Middle Preclassic period Required reading: <i>Inomata “Aguada Fénix”</i>
Week 4 September 12	Origins of the Maya calendar Late Preclassic Maya Lowlands Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 3
September 14	Preclassic period collapse Early Classic period Teotihuacan Kaminaljuyu Assignment 1: The Maya Mystique Required reading: <i>Schele and Freidel “Cerros”</i>
Week 5 September 19	Entrada of 378 CE Tikal and Teotihuacan Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 4

September 21	<p>Tikal hiatus Rise of Calakmul</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Stuart “Arrival of Strangers”</i></p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>September 26</p>	<p>Early Classic period expansion</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Coe and Houston, Ch. 5</p>
September 28	<p>Late Classic period</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p><i>Martin and Grube “Maya Superstates”</i></p>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>October 3</p>	<p>Southeastern periphery</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Fash and Agurcia “Copán”</i></p>
October 5	<p>Usumacinta</p> <p>Assignment 2: Demography</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Scherer and Golden “War in the West”</i></p>

<p>Week 8</p> <p>October 10</p>	<p>Petexbatún</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p><i>Demarest et al. "Collapses in the West"</i></p>
<p>October 12</p>	<p>Northern Lowlands Politics</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Dunning "Long Twilight or New Dawn?"</i></p>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>October 17</p>	<p>Religion</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Coe and Houston, Ch. 6, pp. 176–198 <i>Coe and Van Stone "Supernatural World"</i></p>
<p>October 19</p>	<p>Midterm</p>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>October 24</p>	<p>Economy</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p><i>Baron "Making Money in Mesoamerica"</i> <i>Shaw "Elusive Maya Marketplace"</i></p>

October 26	<p>Social Organization</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Coe and Houston, Ch. 6, pp. 198–218</p>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>October 31</p>	<p>Calendar Writing</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Gillespie “Rethinking Maya Social Organization”</i></p>
November 2	<p>Daily Life</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p><i>Brown and Sheets “Distinguishing Domestic”</i> <i>Robin “Social Diversity”</i></p>
<p>Week 12</p> <p>November 7</p>	<p>Gender</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Joyce “Gender in Classic Maya Monuments”</i></p>
November 9	<p>Collapse</p> <p>Assignment 3: Epigraphy, art, and iconography</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p><i>Aimers “What Maya Collapse?”</i></p>

Week 13 November 14	Chichen Itza Toltecs Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 7
November 16	Mayapan Required reading: <i>Masson et al. "Postclassic Maya Society"</i>
Week 14 November 21	Postclassic migrations Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 8
November 23	Holiday
Week 15 November 28	Postclassic Highlands Aztec influence Required reading: Coe and Houston, Ch. 9

November 30	<p>Colonial period</p> <p>Assignment 4: Lidar</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p><i>Farriss “Maya Society Under Colonial Rule”</i> <i>Astor-Aguilera “Mesoamerican Communicating Objects”</i></p>
<p>Week 16</p> <p>December 5</p>	<p>Pan-Mayanism Social Movements</p> <p>Required readings:</p> <p>Coe and Houston, Ch. 10–11 <i>Fryer “Confronting Violence”</i></p>
December 7	Reading Day
December 12	Final

Course Bibliography

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2007 What Maya Collapse? Terminal Classic Variation in the Maya Lowlands. *Jour. Archaeological Research* 15: 329-377.

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Baron, Joanne

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Baudez, Claude-Francois and Nicolas Latsanopoulos

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Demarest, Arthur A., Claudia Quintanilla, José Samuel Suasnavar

2016 "The Collapses in the West and the Violent Ritual Termination of the Classic Maya Capital Center of Cancuen." In *Ritual, Violence, and the Fall of the Classic Maya Kings*, edited by Gyles Iannone, Brett A. Houk, and Sonja A. Schwake, pp. 159–186. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

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2022 “Confronting Violence in the Layered Landscapes of East-Central Quintana Roo.” In *Coloniality in the Maya Lowlands: Archaeological Perspectives*, edited by Kasey Diserens Morgan and Tiffany C. Fryer. University Press of Colorado, Boulder.

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