Anthropology 8
*Ancient Civilizations of the Americas*

3 units; 3 hours lecture

**Recommended Preparation:** eligibility for English 1A

**Credit, degree applicable transfer CSU, UC**

This course constitutes a survey of the indigenous cultures of Mesoamerica (the region stretching from northern Mexico to Honduras and Guatemala), from the Formative Period up to the Spanish conquest.

**Course Objectives:**

1. Compare and contrast the varying traces that societies of differing levels of social complexity have left in the archaeological record of Mesoamerica.
2. Identify the territory of Mesoamerica on a map of North and Central America and describe its climates and topography.
3. Identify and explain the differences between a language, language family, proto-language, and language isolate with Mesoamerican examples.
4. List the major Mesoamerican hieroglyphic scripts, and discuss the major characteristics of Mesoamerican hieroglyphic languages.
5. Assess the geological, linguistic and archaeological evidence supporting the positions taken by different groups of scientists for the timing of the first movement of humans into the New World.
6. Delineate and assess the evolution of subsistence strategies in Mesoamerica from the Upper Paleolithic Period to the beginning of the Formative Period.
7. Outline the development of the complex societies along the Gulf of Mexico and analyze the principal features of the religion of the Olmecs that have survived in the archaeological record.
8. Describe the Formative Period peoples located along the Gulf Coast, in Guerrero, the Puebla/Morelos Basin, and along the Pacific Coast of Chiapas.
9. Determine and examine the localities where archaeologists have found remains of the first Mayan chiefdoms and states.
10. Outline and evaluate early Mayan cosmology.
11. Analyze the relationship between the natural resources of the Petén demography and the stability of the states of the Classical Period of the Maya.
12. Describe and evaluate the type of organization during the Classical Period of Mayan society.
13. Describe the shifting patterns of settlement in the Valley of Oaxaca during the Formative Period and examine the evolution in public architecture.
14. Evaluate the ecological parameters for human settlement in the Valley of Mexico and the role played by ecology and volcanism in the trajectory of development of the larger communities in the basin during the Formative Period.
15. Discuss and assess the organization of the city of Teotihuacan and the theories archaeologists have proposed concerning the functions of its ritual buildings.
16. Outline and assess the history of the empire of Teotihuacan from both Mayan texts and the archaeological record of Teotihuacan.
17. Analyze the culture of the Chichimec peoples of Northern Mexico from the remains of their centers at Alta Vista, La Quemada, Tollan, and Tenochtitlan.
18. Describe the rise to prominence of the Mexica (Aztecs) based on ethnohistoric sources.
19. Identify and evaluate the structural weaknesses of the Mexica state that made it vulnerable to conquest by the Spanish under Cortés.

**Student Learning Outcomes:** After completing this class the student will know that Mesoamerica is an ancient cultural region that encompasses Northern, central and southern Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, and El Salvador.

**ADA Statement:** El Camino College is committed to providing educational accommodations for students with disabilities upon the timely request by the student to the instructor. A student with a disability, who would like to request an academic accommodation, is responsible for identifying herself/himself to the instructor and to the Special Resources Center. To make arrangements for academic accommodations, contact the Special Resources Center.