

Anthropology 8

Ancient Civilizations of Mesoamerica

3 unit; 3 hours laboratory

Prerequisite: English 1 or eligibility for English 1A or qualification by appropriate assessment

Degree applicable Transfer CSU, UC

This course traces the development of the indigenous societies of Mesoamerica (the region stretching from northern Mexico to Honduras and Guatemala) from the entry of humans into the Americas at the end of the Upper Paleolithic Period until the arrival and conquest by the Spaniards in the early sixteenth century AD. Special attention will be given to those societies that achieved chiefdom or state-level political complexity. Topics will include languages, writing systems, belief systems, political systems, economies, and the art of these peoples.

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.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
2. Identify the territory of Mesoamerica on a map of North and Central America and describe its climates and topography.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
3. Identify and explain the differences between a language, language family, proto-language, and language isolate with Mesoamerican examples.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
 - No Assessment Selected
4. Contrast the factors behind the successes and failures in the decipherment of the hieroglyphic scripts of the Olmec, Maya, Teotihuacan, and Oaxaca. Identify the components of a hieroglyphic language and the steps taken to create and evaluate decipherments.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
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.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
6. Delineate and assess the evolution of subsistence strategies in Mesoamerica from the Upper Paleolithic Period to the beginning of the Formative Period.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
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.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
8. Describe the Formative Period peoples located along the Gulf Coast, in Guerrero, the Puebla/Morelos Basin, and along the Pacific Coast of Chiapas.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
9. Determine and examine the localities where archaeologists have found remains of the first Mayan chiefdoms and states.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
10. Compare the iconography of the images of the San Bartolo mural with the elements of the Quiche origin myth from the Popol Vuhto reveal the cosmology of the Maya and its evolution over 1000 years.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
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.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam

12. Describe and evaluate the political systems of the Classical Period of Maya society.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
13. Describe the shifting patterns of settlement in the Valley of Oaxaca during the Formative Period and examine the evolution in public architecture.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
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.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
15. Discuss and assess the organization of the city of Teotihuacan and the theories archaeologists have proposed concerning the functions of its ritual buildings.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
16. Outline and assess the history of the empire of Teotihuacan from both Mayan texts and the archaeological record of Teotihuacan.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
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.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
18. Describe the rise to prominence of the Mexica (Aztecs) based on ethnohistoric sources.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam
19. Identify and evaluate the structural weaknesses of the Mexica state that made it vulnerable to conquest by the Spanish under Cortés.
 - Other: Multiple choice quiz and exam

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):

1. Locating Mesoamerica
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.
2. Quiché Maya Myths
In a written exam, students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the Quiché myths contained in the Popol Vuh. Specifically, they will answer questions concerning the identities of deities and the cosmological provenance of deities and animals that appear in the book. They will also answer questions concerning Mesoamerican concepts concerning the body and life cycle, and afterlife.
3. Mesoamerica's Indigenous Languages In a multiple-choice exam, students will display a mastery of the key facts and issues concerning Mesoamerica's indigenous written and spoken languages. Specifically, these questions will cover key concepts of historical linguistics pertaining to spoken languages, and the concepts, analytical approaches, and achievements in the decipherment of pre-Columbian written languages.

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 Resource Center. To make arrangements for academic accommodations, contact the Special Resource Center.

Student Code of Conduct

<https://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/2019-policies/AP%205500%20Student%20Conduct%20.pdf>

Student Rights and Grievances Procedure 5530

<https://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/boarddocs/AP%205530%20STUDENT%20%20RIGHTS%20AND%20GRIEVANCES.pdf>