

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
LAST 303 LATIN AMERICAN FIELD RESEARCH
URBAN TROPICAL LANDSCAPES:
CITIES OF THE ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY MAYA

SPRING 2021
within the Maya Archaeology and Ecology program

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Course Description

This course guides students in integrating their own observations and experiences on the urban landscape of the ancient Maya culture. The course examines the development of cities and urban centers in the Yucatan peninsula. It exposes the political, economic, and social institutions that influenced the urban centers and the built environment of Maya cities. Students will be able to understand how the structure and design of Maya cities had an effect in the development of civic institutions, and vice versa.

The course includes a field trip to visit different Maya archaeological sites, contemporary Mayan villages and towns. The course reflects on the past and present urban landscape and its elements of symbolic meaning for Mayan culture.

Students will gain insights into the hierarchical distribution and use of ritual and administrative space in Classic Maya city centers. The course will discuss urban space as an instrument of communication and cultural symbolism in different Maya sites. Students will be able to differentiate from architectural forms, spatial arrangements and monumental decorations within the Maya spatial context.

Students will be able to understand architectural variation related to function and form, and to appreciate the social dimension of the space for the development of urban life. Students will enjoy their own spatial experience to comprehend the Mayan urban space.

The course includes a field trip to different Maya archaeological sites, villages and towns where students will make ordered observations in regards the use of the space and the conditions for the development of urban life.

Objectives of the Course

The student of this course will be able to:

- Think critically about the development of Maya urban centers and their built environment
- Identify and describe the origins and features of ancient Maya cities and their differences to other Mesoamerican cities (Teotihuacan, Tenochtitlan, MonteAlban)
- Recognize the main elements of Maya settlements, architecture and spatial planning

- Identify building materials and construction techniques of the urban landscape in the past and present
- Identify and describe common forms of Maya architecture
- Identify urban features, such as districts and neighborhoods as a result of population growth in Maya centers
- Identify the agro-urban landscape of the Maya: past and present

Textbook and Readings:

Arnauld, Charlotte M., Linda Manzanilla and Michael E. Smith (editors)
 2012 *The Neighborhood as a Social and Spatial Unit in Mesoamerican Cities*. The University of Arizona Press. Tucson. Online resource at the UofC library.

Assignments and Evaluation

1. Trip Journal	40%
2. <i>In situ</i> discussions	10%
3. Reading questions	20%
4. Essay	30%

Students will be required to complete a journal during the field trip. Journal will include systematic observations, reflections, and description of activities carried out in the field. Journal must contain critical notes regarding archaeological site visits.

Readings will be made available during the pre-departure classes. Module 1 will be covered in Calgary and will include lectures and discussion of readings. Discussions and questions regarding Modules 2-5 will be conducted in the field. Lectures will be provided in the field to supplement the reading material. Reading questions will be available through D2L and may be answered at any time before the end of the spring semester.

Students will prepare a final essay paper of one or several aspects discussed in the field and classes. All final research papers will be due the last day of the spring semester.

Grading Scheme

A+	96-100
A	90-95.99
A -	85-89.99
B+	80-84.99
B	75-79.99
B-	70-74.99
C+	65-69.99
C	60-64.99
C-	55-59.99
D+	53-54.99
D	50-52.99
F	0-49

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

Module 1 Defining the Maya built environment

Blanton, Richard

2012 Cities and Urbanism in Prehispanic Mesoamerica. In Deborah Nichols and Christopher Pool (eds). *Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archeology*. Chapter 52. Pp. 708-725

Feinman, Gary M. and Linda M. Nicholas.

2012 Compact versus Dispersed Settlement in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica: the Role of Neighborhood Organization and Collective Action. In Arnould, M. Charlotte, Linda Manzanilla and Michael Smith (eds). *Neighborhood as a Social and Spatial Unit in Mesoamerican Cities*. University of Arizona Press. Tucson. Pp. 132-158.

Smith. Adam T.

2003 *The Political Landscape: Constellations of Authority in Early Complex Polities*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 225-26

Module 2 Spatial orders, politics and ideology in settlement patterns

Ashmore, Wendy.

1989 Construction and Cosmology: Politics and Ideology. In *Lowland Maya Settlement Patterns. In Word and Image in Maya Culture: Explorations in Language, Writing, and Representation*, ed. William F. Hanks and Don S. Rice. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press. 2002. Spatial Orders in Maya Civic Plans. *Latin American Antiquity* 13(2): 201-15.

Brown, Denise

2006 Maya Readings of Settlement Space. In Elizabeth Robertson, Jeffrey D. Seibert, Deepika Fernandez, and Marc U. Zender (eds) *Space and Spatial Analysis in Archaeology*. University of Calgary Press. Calgary. 189-198

Smith Michael E.,

2003 Can We Read Cosmology in Ancient Maya City Plans? Comment on Ashmore and Sabloff, *Latin American Antiquity* 14(2): 221-228

Smith Michael E.,

2005 Did the Maya Build Architectural Cosmograms? *American Antiquity* 16(2): 217-224.

Module 3 Maya City Planning

Aveni, Anthony F. and Horst Hartung

1987 Maya City Planning and the Calendar. *American Philosophical Society*. Transactions, vol. 76, pt. 7. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society.

Smith, Michael E.

2011 Classic Maya Settlement Clusters as Urban Neighborhoods: A Comparative Perspective on Low Density Urbanism. *School of Human Evolution and Social Change*. Arizona State University. 97(1):51-73.

Module 4 Characteristics of ancient Maya cities

Isendahl, Christian

2010 Greening the Ancient City: The Agro Urban Landscapes of the Pre- Hispanic Maya. 553-573. In Sinclair, Paul J.J., Gullog Nordquist, Frands Herschend and Christian Isendhal (eds) *The Urban Mind Cultural and Environmental Dynamics*. Uppsala Universitet.

Hare, Timothy and Marilyn A. Masson

2012 Intermediate Scale Patterns in the Urban Environment of the Postclassic Mayapan. In

Arnauld, M. Charlotte, Linda Manzanilla and Michael Smith (eds). *Neighborhood as a Social and Spatial Unit in Mesoamerican Cities*. University of Arizona Press. Tucson. Pp. 229-259.

Okoshi-Harada, Tsubasa.

2012 Postclassic Maya Barrios in Yucatan: A Historical Approach. In Arnauld, M. Charlotte, Linda Manzanilla and Michael Smith (eds). *Neighborhood as a Social and Spatial Unit in Mesoamerican Cities*. University of Arizona Press. Tucson. Pp. 286-303

Vanniere, Boris, Phillipe Nondedeo, and Eva Lemonnier

2012 Houses, Emulation, and Cooperation Among the Rio Bec Groups. In Arnauld, M. Charlotte, Linda Manzanilla and Michael Smith (eds). *Neighborhood as a Social and Spatial Unit in Mesoamerican Cities*. University of Arizona Press. Tucson. Pp. 202-228.

Module 5 The Maya urban landscape in comparison to other Ethnic regions

Blomster, Jeffrey

2012 Searching for Tollan: Authority and Urbanism in Oaxaca after Monte Alban. *Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Oxford Handbooks. Chapter 24.

Cowgill, George L.

2003 Teotihuacan: Cosmic Glories and Mundane Needs. In *The Social Construction of Ancient Cities*, ed. Monica L. Smith (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003), 37-55, 44.

Goldin, Liliana

2001 Maquila age Maya: changing households and communities of central highlands of Guatemala. *Journal of Latin American Anthropology* 6(1)30-57

Smith, Michael E.

2008 The Archaeology of Aztec City-State Capitals: Four Views of Aztec Urbanism. In *El Urbanismo en Mesoamérica / Urbanism in Mesoamerica*, ed. AG Mastache, RH Cobean, A Garcia Cook, and KG Hirth. University Park and Mexico City: Pennsylvania State University and Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia. Pp. 447-499.