



**Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas  
(AANT 233/ALCS 233)  
Spring 2019**



**Meeting Time/Place: Mon., Weds. 4:15-5:35 PM, LC 6**

**Professor: Dr. Rebecca Mendelsohn**

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Office Hours: Mon. 2:30-4:00pm,  
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Office Hours: Weds. 1-3pm or by  
appointment

**Course Description**

This course presents an introductory survey to the archaeology and ethnohistory of three of the best-known civilizations of the New World: the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas. Each society is presented in terms of human-environmental interaction, social organization, politics and economics, religion, and art. Key questions we will address over the course of the semester include: How did the Aztecs, Incas and Mayas adapt to their environments? What innovations did they make to allow large populations to inhabit terrain in the jungle, on mountaintops, and arid highlands? What were the major belief systems of the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas? What were the similarities and differences between them? What was the social organization of these societies? How was life different for commoners and elites? How were their economies structured? What is the data that archaeologists, art historians, ethnohistorians, and linguists use to model events of the past? How is our understanding of these civilizations changing with new research? And how have these traditions continued into the present day? This course fulfills the ***General Education Requirement*** for an “***International Perspectives***” class.

**By the end of the course, students should be able to:**

- List accomplishments of the Aztec, Inca, and Maya civilizations
- Explain the geographic and environmental differences between the Aztec, Inca, and Maya territories
- Compare and contrast the worldview, art, and social organization of the three civilizations
- Describe how the different economic systems functioned
- Explain how historical reconstructions are developed through scientific research
- Provide examples of how Aztec, Inca, and Maya cultural traditions have persisted into the present day

## Texts

There are no required textbooks for this class. Readings for each class session will be assigned on Blackboard, organized by class session. Please complete the assigned readings for each class period before arriving in class.

## Grade Breakdown

In-Class Participation 10% (Calculated through Top Hat)

Assignments 30% (Three assignments at 10% each)

Exams 60% (Three exams at 20% each)

Final scores will be calculated as follows: A (92-100%), A- (90-91%), B+, (88-89%), B (82-87%), B- (80-81%), C+ (78-79%), C (72-77%), C- (70-71%), D, (60-69%), E (</=59%).

### **In-Class Participation with Top Hat (10%)**

We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. Your classroom participation grade (10%) will be assigned directly through TopHat based on your answers to questions assigned in class. You must, therefore, come to class in order receive these participation points.

You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: <https://app.tophat.com/e/467176>

Note: our Course Join Code is: **467176**

Top Hat may require a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: [www.tophat.com/pricing](http://www.tophat.com/pricing). We will be using TopHat Classroom.

Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

### **Assignments (30%: 3 assignments at 10 % each)**

Assignments will be one-page responses to key concepts for each unit: Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas. Questions will include responses to a reading, a video, or an online resource. Assignment prompts and grading rubrics will be assigned on the date indicated and accepted anytime until the end of the unit. The last time they will be accepted is at the exam for the corresponding unit. Responses should be one-page single-spaced with 12-point, Times New Roman font and 1-inch margins.

### **Exams (60%: 3 exams at 20% each)**

Three exams will be given over the course of the semester on the dates indicated on the schedule below. These exams will NOT be cumulative; each exam corresponds to one course section: Maya, Aztec, or Inca. Exams will be focused on key concepts, rather than specific sites and rulers. The “final exam” scheduled during our final exam period will be on the content for Section 3 (The Inca). ***Please note that our final exam is scheduled for a Saturday, on May 11 from 3:30-5:30pm.*** Unfortunately, I cannot control this, so please plan accordingly. It is my policy not to provide makeups for missed exams. In the case of a serious emergency, let me know in advance, and provide documentation (physician’s note or equivalent). Accommodations will also be made for students with disabilities (see below).

### **Academic Honesty Policy**

Students are expected to adhere to the University’s Standards for Academic Integrity ([https://www.albany.edu/studentconduct/standards\\_of\\_academic\\_integrity.php](https://www.albany.edu/studentconduct/standards_of_academic_integrity.php)) and submit their own work. Plagiarism (copying) of another student’s work, internet sources, or another written source will not be tolerated. Speak to the instructor or teaching assistant if you have questions about how to adequately cite sources.

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

I am happy to provide accommodations for students with disabilities with advance notice. Please speak to the instructor at the beginning of the class about any additional accommodations that may need to be made, especially for exams. Resources are available at the University’s Disability Resource Center: <https://www.albany.edu/disability/>

### **Important Dates**

Assignment 1 Available: Monday, February 11<sup>th</sup>

**Exam 1, Assignment 1 Due:** Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>

Assignment 2 Available: Monday, March 27<sup>th</sup>

**Exam 2, Assignment 2 Due:** Monday, April 8<sup>th</sup>

Assignment 3 Available: Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup>

**Exam 3, Assignment 3 Due:** Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>: 3:30-5:30pm

## Class Topics and Assigned Readings

<u><b>Section 1: Mayas</b></u>		
<b>Week 1- Introduction</b>		
Weds. 1/23	Introduction to the Class, Americas at 1491	
<b>Week 2</b>		
Mon. 1/28	Intro. to the Maya: Environment, Worldview, and Creation Myth	Coe & Houston 2015- Ch. 1 of The Maya
Weds. 1/30	The First Kings, Maya Calendrics, Writing	Sharer & Traxler 2006- Excerpts from Ch. 3 of The Ancient Maya
<b>Week 3</b>		
Mon. 2/4	The Rise of Maya States	Hansen 2006- Section in Maya: Divine Kings of the Rainforest
Weds. 2/6	The First Maya Collapse	Doyle 2017- Ch. 6 of Architecture and the Origins of Preclassic Politics
<b>Week 4</b>		
Mon. 2/11	<b>**Assignment 1 Available**</b> Classic Maya Political Organization	Evans 2008-Ch. 12 of Ancient Mexico & Central America
Weds. 2/13	Maya Social Life, Ordinary Life	Houston and Inomata 2009- Ch. 8 of The Classic Maya
<b>Week 5</b>		
Mon. 2/18	Courtly Life, Maya Economy	Demarest 2004- Ch. 7 of Ancient Maya
Weds. 2/20	Ballgame, Religion, Warfare	McKillop 2004- Ch. 8 of The Ancient Maya: New Perspectives
<b>Week 6</b>		
Mon. 2/25	Maya Collapse and Transformations	Webster 2012-Ch. 23 of The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology
Weds. 2/27	European Contact: Resistance and Conquest + Exam Review	Restall 1998- Ch. 1 of Maya Conquistador
<b>Week 7</b>		
Mon. 3/4	<b>**Exam 1**</b>	

<u><b>Section 2: Aztecs</b></u>		
<b>Week 7 contd.</b>		
Weds. 3/6	Aztec Environment and Population	Carballo 2016- Ch. 2 in Urbanism and Religion in Ancient Central Mexico (pp. 21-40)
<b>Week 8</b>		
Mon. 3/11	Rise and Organization of the Aztec Empire	Smith 2003- Ch. 2 of The Aztecs
Weds. 3/13	Aztec Art, Myths, Religion	Carrasco and Sessions 1998- Ch. 2 of Daily Life of the Aztecs
<b>Mon. 3/18 and Weds. 3/20: Spring Break- No Class</b>		
<b>Week 9</b>		
Mon. 3/25	Aztec Daily Life and Social Organization	de Rojas 2012- Ch. 5 of Tenochtitlan
Weds. 3/27	<b>**Assignment 2 Available**</b> Aztec Economy	Hirth 2016- Ch. 1 of the Aztec Economic World
<b>Week 10</b>		
Mon. 4/1	The Aztec at Spanish Conquest+ Exam review	-Historic excerpts from The Mexico Reader (Joseph and Henderson 2002) - Coe and Koontz 2013- Epilogue of Mexico: from the Olmecs to the Aztecs
Weds. 4/3	No Class	Assigned Film (Watch independently)
<b>Week 11</b>		
Mon. 4/8	<b>**Exam 2**</b>	
<u><b>Section 3: Incas</b></u>		
<b>Week 11 Contd.</b>		
Weds. 4/10	The Intermediate Area	Hoopes 2013- Chapter in Revealing Ancestral Central America
<b>Week 12</b>		
Mon. 4/15	Inca Environment, Predecessors	Malpass 1996- Ch. 1 of Daily Life in the Inca Empire
Weds. 4/17	Rise of the Incan Empire	Mann 2006-Ch. 3 of 1491 (pp. 68-82)
<b>Week 13</b>		
Mon. 4/22	Inca Militarism, Politics, and Territory	Urton 2017- Ch. 2 of Inka History in Knots
Weds. 4/24	Inca Sacred Landscape: Religion, Mythology	D'Altroy 2003- Ch. 7 of The Incas

<b>Week 14</b>		
Mon. 4/29	**Assignment 3 Available** Inca Economy and Social Organization	McEwan 2006- Ch. 6 of The Incas: New Perspectives
Weds. 5/1	Courtly Life, Arts, and Crafts	Salazar and Burger 1998- Chapter in Palaces of the Ancient New World
<b>Week 15</b>		
Mon. 5/6	Inca Collapse/Conquest	Mann 2006-Ch. 3 of 1491 (pp. 83-106)
Weds. 5/8	Conclusions: Comparing Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas + Exam Review	
<b>Final Exam Period</b>		
Sat. 5/11 3:30-5:30pm	**Exam 3**	

### Reading Citations

#### Section 1: Mayas

##### **Week 2**

Coe, Michael D. and Stephen Houston

2015 Introduction. In *The Maya* (Ninth edition), by Michael D. Coe and Stephen Houston, pp. 11-32. Thames & Hudson, New York.

Sharer, Robert J. and Loa P. Traxler

2006 History and Maya Civilization. In *The Ancient Maya* (Sixth Edition), by Robert J. Sharer and Loa P. Traxler, pp. 99-152. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

##### **Week 3**

Hansen, Richard

2006 The First Cities- The Beginnings of Urbanization and State Formation in the Maya Lowlands. In *Maya: Divine Kings of the Rainforest*, edited by Nikolai Grube, pp. 51-65. H.F. Ullmann, Oxford.

Doyle, James

2017 Migration and Abandonment. In *Architecture and the Origins of Preclassic Maya Politics*, by James Doyle pp. 109-139. Cambridge University Press, New York.

##### **Week 4**

Evans, Susan Toby

2008 Lowland Maya: Apogee and Collapse (AD 600-900). In *Ancient Mexico & Central America: Archaeology and Culture History*, by Susan Toby Evans, pp. 315-348. Thames & Hudson, New York.

Houston, Stephen D. and Takeshi Inomata  
2009 Farmers. In *The Classic Maya*, by Stephen D. Houston and Takeshi Inomata, pp. 218-249. Cambridge University Press, New York.

### **Week 5**

Demarest, Arthur  
2004 Classic Maya Economics. In *Ancient Maya: The Rise and Fall of a Rainforest Civilization*, by Arthur Demarest, pp. 148-174. Cambridge University Press, New York.

McKillop, Heather  
2004 Religion and Ideology. In *The Ancient Maya: New Perspectives*, by Heather McKillop, pp. 204-228. ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara.

### **Week 6**

Webster, David  
2012 The Classic Maya Collapse. In *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*, edited by Deborah L. Nichols and Christopher A. Pool, pp. 324-334. Oxford University Press, New York.

Restall, Matthew  
1998 Conquests. In *Maya Conquistador*, by Matthew Restall, pp. 3-28. Beacon Press, Boston.

### **Section 2: Aztecs**

#### **Week 7**

Carballo, David M.  
2016 The Central Mexican Highlands and its People. *Urbanization and Religion in Ancient Central Mexico*, by David M. Carballo, pp. 21-58. Oxford University Press, New York.

#### **Week 8**

Smith, Michael E.  
2003 The Rise of Aztec Civilization. In *The Aztecs* (second edition), by Michael E. Smith, pp. 28-55. Blackwell Publishing, Malden.

Carrasco, Davíd with Scott Sessions  
1998 The World View of Balance: The Cosmic Tree and the Four Quarters. In *Daily Life of the Aztecs: People of the Sun and Earth*, by Davíd Carrasco and Scott Sessions, pp. 35-63. The Greenwood Press, Westport.

#### **Week 9**

de Rojas, José Luis  
2012 A Visit to Tenochtitlan. In *Tenochtitlan: Capital of the Aztec Empire*, by José Luis de Rojas, pp. 55-84. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

Hirth, Kenneth G.

2016 Introduction to the Aztec Economic World. In *The Aztec Economic World: Merchants and Markets in Ancient Mesoamerica*, by Kenneth Hirth, pp. 1-18. Cambridge University Press, New York.

### **Week 10**

Díaz del Castillo, Bernal and Hernán Cortés

2002 The Spaniards' Entry into Tenochtitlán. In *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, and Politics*, edited by Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson, pp. 97-104. Duke University Press, Durham.

Coe, Michael D. and Rex Koontz

2013 Epilogue. In *Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs* (seventh edition), by Michael D. Coe and Rex Koontz, pp. 233-239. Thames & Hudson, New York.

### **Section 3: The Incas**

#### **Week 11**

Hoopes, John W.

2013 Authority in Ancestral Central America. In *Revealing Ancestral Central America*, edited by Rosemary A. Joyce, pp. 45-57. Smithsonian Latino Center and the National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C.

#### **Week 12**

Malpass, Michael A.

1996 Historical Overview. In *Daily Life in the Inca Empire*, by Michael A. Malpass, pp. 1-30. Greenwood Press, Westport.

Mann, Charles C.

2006 In the Land of Four Quarters. In *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus*, by Charles C. Mann, pp. 68-106. Vintage Books, New York.

#### **Week 13**

Urton, Gary

2017 A Brief Introduction to Tawantinsuyu- the Inka Empire. In *Inka History in Knots: Reading Khipus as Primary Sources*, by Gary Urton, pp. 33-49. University of Texas Press, Austin.

D'Altroy, Terence N.

2003 Inca Ideology: Powers of the Sky and Earth, Past and Present. In *The Incas*, by Terence D'Altroy, pp. 141-176. Blackwell Publishing, Malden.

#### **Week 14**

McEwan, Gordan F.

2006 Social Organization and Social Structure. In *The Incas: New Perspectives*, by Gordan F. McEwan, pp. 93-111. ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara.

Salazar, Lucy C. and Richard L. Burger

1998 Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous: Luxury and Daily Life in the Households of Machu Picchu's Elite. In *Palaces of the Ancient New World*, edited by Susan Toby Evans and Joanne Pillsbury, pp. 325-358. Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, D.C.