

HIST350
Aztecs, Incas, & Mayas
Winter Intersession
DRAFT SYLLABUS
DECEMBER 2024-
JANUARY 2025

Instructor: Dr. Michele Stephens

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Office Hours: By appointment on Zoom

Readings:

There are no required texts to purchase. All materials are listed here and are available through the WVU Libraries website.

The sources below can be looked up on the Library website (www.libraries.wvu.edu); all of the other readings are posted as PDFs in the respective modules.

Berdan, Frances F., *The Aztecs: Lost Civilizations*, London: Reaktion Books, 2021. Chapters 2, 9.

Jolley, Dan, *The Hero Twins Against the Lords of Death: A Mayan Myth*, Minneapolis: Graphic Universe, 2008. Entire Book

Course Description: This class will examine the cultures and histories of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas from the ancient past through their respective conquests by the Spanish; we will briefly analyze the colonial era into the modern period. Through an examination of archaeological sources, primary documents, and historical analyses, students will gain an understanding of the complexities of these ancient civilizations, their development, and their eventual impacts on modern Latin American nations.

Course Learning Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) demonstrate an understanding of the development of major indigenous civilizations in Mesoamerica and the Andes.
- 2) analyze precursor civilizations influenced the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas.
- 3) explain the linguistic, cultural, social, and religious differences between major civilizations.
- 4) describe the history of collapse and rejuvenation that was typical to indigenous history in Mesoamerica and the Andes, and how this would eventually influence reactions to Europeans. Students will also examine the differences between the conquest and post-conquest experiences among the Aztecs, Incas, and Mayas.
- 5) examine ethnohistorical sources, primary documents, and art, and be able to critically analyze these sources in articulate ways via online discussion, written assignments, and exams.

COURSE DESIGN AND LAYOUT

This is a compressed class and as such, you should expect to be reading and listening to lectures daily. You can work at your own pace, but each Module will close each week at 5pm Friday (with the exception of Module 3, which closes at 5pm on January 4, the last day of the course). The next Module will open at 5pm.

eCampus will only allow you to work through each required task one at a time, in order. The only exception to this is Slack, as it is an external site.

On eCampus, please begin with the “Start Here” section, which introduces you to me, contains the syllabus, and also has a brief Zoom recording that walks you through the syllabus. Then, commence to the “Course Content WIN23/24” tab and begin with Module 1.

LECTURES: Lectures will be delivered in the following format: 1) either a traditional video lecture recording, usually between 15-30 minutes, and will have a corresponding PowerPoint; or 2) a written “story” that covers the material (which will not have a corresponding PowerPoint). Longer lectures are broken into 2 or more parts. Most weeks there are at least four lectures. They’re listed in order on both the syllabus and in the modules in eCampus.

FILMS: I have selected a number of excellent documentaries and short films to supplement my lectures.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION: Of course, your input will be a valuable contribution to the class. We will use Slack to facilitate discussion; I have chosen this platform because it is much more user-friendly than the discussion function on eCampus. You can find the Slack channel invitation link below.

OFFICE HOURS: Office Hours will be held by appointment only via Zoom. As I am 5 hours ahead of Eastern Standard time, I will be available to meet between 9am and 3pm EST; you will need to email me for an appointment. The only exception to this is Tuesday December 26, when I will be unavailable all day. Office hours is the chance for you to get some face time with me, ask questions about a topic, or whatever else you’d like. This is YOUR time and I encourage you all to meet with me.

Class Assignments/Grade Breakdown: Students will be assessed in this class based on the following assignments and criteria. Please see me as soon as possible if something is unclear.

Total Points: 200 Points

Syllabus Quiz (20 points): Because this class is online and asynchronous, your careful reading and comprehension of the syllabus is essential for you to succeed. To that end, there will be a syllabus quiz that all students must take before 5pm on December 19, 2023. The Syllabus Quiz is located at the start of Module 1.

Slack Discussion (40 points/ 20 points each): Written discussions will occur via Slack, and there are 2 such discussions throughout the Intersession, the first at the end of Module 1 (December 22 and the second at the end of Module 2 (December 29). Discussion is whatever you would like it to be: ask questions about lectures/episodes; comment on readings or documentaries; get clarification on anything you don’t understand. This is your time to pick my brain about whatever interests or confuses you; it is also a time to engage with your classmates, so feel free to ask any questions that you have about their posts (you should respond to *at least two classmates*). The dates for discussion are noted clearly in the syllabus below. The invitation link for our Slack channel is https://join.slack.com/t/mix-bhw1685/shared_invite/zt-29cmgtawg-YWchGShW4pYZk1UoIWhOTO Please go to that link and sign up as soon as possible. Discussion posts on Slack must be made by Fridays at 5pm EST; this will allow your classmates and I sufficient time to respond before Saturdays at 5pm EST.

Content Quizzes (60 points/ 20 points each): For each module, there will be a quiz designed to ensure you are comprehending the readings and lecture materials. For each quiz, there will be 10 multiple-choice questions worth 2 points each, for a total of 20 points per quiz. If you have done the readings and followed the lectures, you will do fine on these quizzes.

Reading Journals (60 Points/ 20 points each): For each module, students will submit a 300-400 word Reading Journal on one of the assigned readings for that module. You get to choose which reading you’d like to analyze. In your journal, you should state the one or two overall main points of the reading. Please also include a paragraph on strengths (what did you like) and weaknesses (what didn’t work for you). While I will not be marking your work on grammar or spelling, you should write in complete sentences (as opposed to bullet points) and have a basic argument at the start of the essay, and use paragraphs. You *must* include a word count. Other than that, there are no formatting requirements; you may cite the material in whatever format you wish (Chicago Manual of Style,

MLA, APA, etc). So long as I know the author and page numbers you're referring to, just cite how you're comfortable. Please see the schedule for due dates.

Final Reflection (20 points): There is no final exam for this class, but in at least 2 double-spaced pages, I would like you to reflect on the most important thing you learned from this class. Your answers should be posted to eCampus in Module 3, where there is a link for your submission. There is no right or wrong answer to this question, but you must explain your thought process: How did you come to the conclusion that you did?; why did you find this particular theme important?; what else would you like to learn about the theme you chose? The Final Reflection is due on January 4 by 5pm.

GRADING POLICY:

- A- (180-200): Work that is outstanding in relation to the level necessary to meet all course requirements
- B- (160-179): Work that is significantly above the level necessary to meet all course requirements
- C- (140-159): Work that is satisfactory in meeting all course requirements
- D- (120-139): Work that is worthy of credit despite not fully meeting all course requirements
- F- (119 and below): Work that fails to meet all course requirements, or was not completed

Please read this section very carefully

COURSE/UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Late/Missed Assignments: If you feel you cannot submit assignments on time, please request an extension, which will only be granted for 48 hours because of the compressed nature of this class. I accommodate most reasonable requests, but late assignments may *only* be submitted with prior authorization and will be assessed a penalty (points dependent upon the assignment in question), regardless of the reason for the late submission. Failure to contact me within 24 hours of the due date is grounds for a 0 grade, except under extreme circumstances (death in the family, incapacitation, imprisonment-hopefully none of these are an issue).

Makeups: There are no makeups, as this is a compressed course. See above if you know you will miss a deadline for any assignments.

Email Policies: Please allow me 24 hours to respond to your emails. I answer emails between 8am and 3pm EST, Monday-Friday. Please be professional in your emails: this is good training for when you graduate and get a job. Be sure your question isn't addressed in the syllabus. Please don't use text lingo in your emails and be sure to let me know who you are and which class you are in.

Illness: If you become ill, please let me know. You need not disclose to me the nature of your illness, but if you will need more time to complete assignments it would be helpful for me to know so that I can help you.

Classroom Etiquette: Since this is an online class, there is no need for a discussion on classroom etiquette. However, do not engage in trollish behavior online. You are all smart enough to think critically about the topics we will discuss in class; there is no need- ever- to be an online troll. We will discuss controversial issues like human sacrifice in this class. Please keep an open mind, though I am certainly not asking you to "agree" with human sacrifice (for example). This does not mean you cannot be critical; I encourage respectful, intelligent critiques, But I do not want Discussion or any other online assignment to become the so-called "comments section" on the internet. So, do not use purposefully offensive language; do not name call; do not make straw-man arguments.

Inclusivity Statement: The following statement on inclusivity is meant as a replacement for the current “Social Justice Statement.” Rather than offering a list of groups, this new statement suggests a positive philosophy of inclusion and diversity, one more in line with the goals of the 2020 Strategic Plan. In clear and straightforward language, the new statement presents a positive, aspirational vision supported by West Virginia University, rather than a policy mandated by Federal Law. This new statement arose in consideration of similar statements from the other Big 12 universities, as well as in consultation with the President’s Office for Diversity and University Legal Services. The statement would be henceforward included in syllabuses.

Statement for Approval:

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

Guidelines for Absences Due to Military Service Requirement

In accordance with the “Veteran Friendly” designation, WVU faculty may allow students who are members of the US Armed Forces (including the National Guard and Active Reserve) to make up tests and assignments that are missed during a semester if the student is officially called up for military service requirements for a limited period; and if the delayed coursework completion will not irreversibly impact the students’ ability to appropriately master the required subject matter . Absence due to required military obligation should not exceed a cumulative amount of three weeks, and the students should follow the appropriate protocol as presented below.

Academic Integrity Statement

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, instructors will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of their courses. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University Academic Standards Policy (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification>). Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see your instructor before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Note: I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus in order to facilitate student learning, as the course progresses.

Course Schedule (Please note- dates correspond to December 2023-January 2024, as I've not updated the calendar yet- this is just to give you an idea)

Date	Themes	Tasks
<p>Module Week 1 Begins December 23</p> <p>Ancient Societies, the Classic-Period Mayas & the Andean Middle Horizon</p> <p>*Module 1 opens at midnight on December 18 and locks at 5pm on December 22</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Introduction to the Course 2) Ancient Societies in Mesoamerica and the Andes 3) The Classic Period in Mesoamerica: Teotihuacan; Maya Culture, Society & Religion 4) The Cultures of the Andean Middle Horizon 	<p>Watch/Read:</p> <p>Lectures on eCampus Video: “Maize: The Engine of American Civilization” Video: “Cracking the Maya Code”</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Mann (eCampus); Grove, Ch. 1 (eCampus); Jolley (Library website); Pringle (eCampus); Fagan (eCampus)</p> <p>Complete:</p> <p>Syllabus Quiz due by 5pm on December 19</p> <p>Slack Discussion 1 by 5pm on December 22</p> <p>Module 1 Quiz by 5pm on December 22</p> <p>Reading Journal due by 5pm on December 22</p>
<p>Module Week 2 Begins December 29</p> <p>The Birth and Rise of Empires in Mesoamerica & the Andes</p> <p>*Module 2 opens at midnight at 5pm on December 22 and locks at 5pm on December 29</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Post-Classic in Mesoamerica 2) The Rise of the Mexica and Formation of Empire 3) Mexica Culture, Society & Religion 4) Lords of the Andes: Inca Technology and Society 	<p>Watch/Read:</p> <p>Lectures on eCampus Video: “Engineering an Empire: The Aztecs”; “The Khipu”</p> <p>Readings:</p> <p>Berdan, Ch. 1, 9 (Library website); “Origins of the Aztecs” (ecampus); “Huarochiri Manuscript” (eCampus) Silverblatt (ecampus)</p> <p>Complete:</p> <p>Slack Discussion 2 by 5pm on December 29</p> <p>Module 2 Quiz by 5pm on December 29</p> <p>Reading Journal by 5pm on December 29</p>

<p>Module Week 3 Begins January 5 Clash of Civilizations & Forging of New Societies *Module 3 opens at 5pm on December 29 and locks at 5pm on January 4</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Conquest of Empires 2) Colonialism 3) Indigenous Peoples Today 	<p>Listen/watch: Lectures on eCampus Video: “Conquest of the Incas”; “Zapatista”</p> <p>Readings: Leon-Portillo (eCampus); Townsend (ecampus); Mangan (eCampus); Thompson (eCampus)</p> <p>Complete:</p> <p>Reading Journal by 5pm on January 3</p> <p>Module 3 Quiz by 5pm on January 4</p> <p>Final Reflection by 5pm on January 4</p>
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