Moctezuma’s México: Then and Now

Societies of the World 30/Anthropology E-1050/ HDS 3158
Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00
Harvard University – Fall 2013

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The Departure of Quetzalcoatl, By: José Clemente Orozco
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/José_Clemente_Orozco

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Preliminary Syllabus: 07/29/2013
Course Summary

This course focuses on the profound social and symbolic continuities and changes in the still evolving cultural traditions of Mesoamerica including those practiced in the areas of the US-Mexico “borderlands”. We use the phrase “Moctezuma’s Mexico” in both literal and metaphorical senses to refer to 1) the social history, ritual practices, aesthetics and religious cosmovision of Mesoamerica’s last political kingdom, the Aztec Empire (1327-1521), 2) the religio-political organization of selected major Maya and Toltec urban centers operating under divine kings, warrior cults, and sacred scribes before and after the arrival of Europeans in Mexico in 1517, 3) the gendered, sexual, racial, and religious history of the ‘Encuentro'/Great Encounter between European and Mesoamerican societies and 4) the ways citizens and immigrants from Mexico, parts of Central America, and the US remember and utilize Aztec and Maya myths, rites, and aesthetics in the contemporary political, religious, and legal processes in the US-Mexico “borderlands.” In our views, the borderlines and borderlands linking the US and Mexico are social theatres where the exchanges of diverse values, languages, art forms and political agendas are influenced to varying degrees by Moctezuma’s Mexico, then and now. This is evident in the cultural fashion that swept US last year of interpreting the so-called “Maya Prophecy of 2012” as signaling the END OF TIME as well as the repeated news reports of new archaeological discoveries in Mexico and Central America.

Moctezuma’s Mexico is taught from an interdisciplinary perspective utilizing the methodologies of religious studies and archaeology to enable students to interpret these dynamic changes within the longue durée (long event) of several of the oldest living civilizations in the world. The course is guided by a handful of theoretical essays from anthropology and religious studies on themes of settlement patterns, agricultural mentality, symbolic cities, gift exchange, transculturation and transcendence. We will use lectures and section meetings to focus on Mesoamerican “arts” including the foods, music, dance, and performance traditions of various historical periods. We will utilize the extraordinary ethnographic and archeological collections of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology in a "hands-on" way. This will include participant/observation exercises related to the “Day of the Dead/Día de los Muertos” practices among Latinos today and in the yearly October celebration in the Peabody Museum.
**Required Readings:**

- Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo  
  *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization.*  

- Carrasco, Davíd, ed.  
  *The History of the Conquest of New Spain by Bernal Diaz del Castillo.*  
  **HCNS on syllabus**

- Carrasco, Davíd  
  *Religions of Mesoamerica.*  
  Waveland Press, 2013. *(revised edition)*

- Tedlock, Dennis  
  Touchstone, 1996.

- The SW30 Course Reader  
  **R on syllabus.**

Required course books and Sourcebook are on reserve at Tozzer & Lamont for Societies of the World 30 and at Grossman for Anth E -175.

**Course Requirements:**

Students are required to attend class regularly, participate vocally and in writing in the sections. There will be a take-home mid-term essay exam (7-8 pages), a take-home final exam (9-10 pages) and a short oral/power point presentation in section.* There will be occasional one-page written assignments for section meeting discussions (not graded) and the opportunity to participate in an ‘altar building’ project for Día de Los Muertos at the Peabody Museum.

Grades will be determined by

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Term Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Oral/Power Point</td>
<td>10% <em>(Not for Harvard Extension Students)</em></td>
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Course Syllabus

Part 1
Conquest or The Great Encuentro

Week 1, 9/3 and 9/5: Introduction: Moctezuma’s Mexico – Then and Now

Lecture 1 – Introduction to Course: The Center and Periphery Model
Lecture 2 – Spaniards and a Strange New World

Readings:
- Carrasco, Davíd, Religions of Mesoamerica, pp. 1-10.

Week 2, 9/10 and 9/12: Great Encounters: Spaniards, Aztecs, Mayas, and Us

Lecture 1 – The Problem of Knowing: Strangers in a Strange Land
Lecture 2 – Great Encounters and Great Traditions: Spaniards and the Periphery of the Aztec Empire

Readings:
- Díaz del Castillo, HCNS, pp. 64-147.
- Carrasco, Davíd, Religions of Mesoamerica, pp 11-40
- Boone, Elizabeth, “The House of the Eagle.” Course Webpage
- Wheatley, Paul, “City as Symbol.” R
- Tedlock, Popol Vuh, pp. 71-89.

Week 3, 9/17 and 9/19: Journey to the Center of the Aztec World

Lecture 1 – Cities as Symbols: Tenochtitlan as the Center of Desire and Wealth
Lecture 2 – War of the Worlds: Massacres and the Ruined City

Readings:
- Díaz del Castillo, HCNS, pp. 147-302.
- Carrasco, Davíd, “When Warriors Became Walls,” from City of Sacrifice, pp 211-222. R
- López Austin, Alfredo, “Relationships of the Essences.” R

Preliminary Syllabus: 07/29/2013
Part 2
Religion and Archaeology of the Great Aztec Temple

Week 4, 9/24 and 9/26: The Aztec Revolution and the Rise of Tenochtitlan: Myths of Aztlán and War Gods

Lecture 1 – Aztec Tenochtitlan as a Cosmic Symbol: Stability and Paranoia
Lecture 2 – Aztec Appropriations of Ancient Mesoamerica History, Myths, and Symbols

Readings:
- Carrasco, Davíd, Religions of Mesoamerica, pp. 64-74.
- Carrasco, Davíd, “Tenochtitlán as a Political Capital and World Symbol.” HCNS
- “Legend of the Suns.” R
- Duran, Diego, “The Ball Game.” R

Week 5, 10/1 and 10/3: Human Sacrifice and the Adventure of Archaeology at the Great Aztec Temple

Lecture 1 – Myths and Rites of Human Sacrifice
Lecture 2 – Archaeology of Great Temple

Readings:
- Carrasco, Davíd, Religions of Mesoamerica, pp. 75-112.
- Carrasco, Davíd, “Sacrifice/Human Sacrifice.” R
- Sahagún, Bernardino de, “Tlacaxipehualitzli.” R
- “The Exaggerations of Human Sacrifice,” and “Human Sacrifice/Debt Payments From the Aztec Point of View.” HCNS

Part 3
City and Narrative Before and After the Moctezumas and the Popul Vuh

Week 6, 10/8 and 10/10: Sacred Hills, Cities, and Cosmovisions: Teotihuacan and Copan

Lecture 1 – Teotihuacan: City of the Gods
Lecture 2 – Teotihuacan, the Maya, and Mesoamerican Cities in longue durée

Readings:

Preliminary Syllabus: 07/29/2013
• Carrasco, Davíd, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, pp. 41-63.
• Schele, Linda and Mary Ellen Miller, “Prologue” and “The Modern Invention of The Ancient Maya.”
• Umberger, Emily, “Antiques, Revivals, and References to the Past in Aztec Art.”

**Course Webpage**


**Week 7, 10/15 and 10/17: Popol Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Maya**

Lecture 1 – Knowing the Maya: Creation Mythology and *Popol Vuh*
Lecture 2 – Narratives and Mythology of the Classic Maya

**Readings:**
• Carrasco, Davíd, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, pp.113-146.
• Díaz del Castillo, *HCNS*, pp. 329-353.
• Tedlock, “Popol Vuh.”
• Tokovinine, Alexandre, “It is his image with pulque’: drinks, gifts, and political networking in Classic Maya texts and images.”

**Take Home Mid-Term Examination – Hand out on Oct. 17 and DUE Oct. 24**

**Week 8, 10/22 and 10/24: Caste War, Talking Crosses, and Maya Heritage in Copan**

Lecture 1 – Caste War and the Talking Cross
Lecture 2 – Centering the Maya World today: Heritage and Community in Copan

**Readings:**

Preliminary Syllabus: 07/29/2013
Part 4
Days of the Dead/Días de los Muertos
Then, and Here at Harvard

Week 9, 10/29 and 10/31: *Days of the Dead and Skeletons at the Feasts*

Lecture 1 – The Day of the Dead, *Now*, in Mexico, the Borderlands, and Harvard
Lecture 2 – The Days of the Dead, *Then*, in Mexico-Tenochtitlan

Readings:
- Carmichael & Sayer, *The Skeleton at the Feast: The Day of the Dead in Mexico*, pp. 6-45. [On Course Webpage](#)

**DAY OF THE DEAD CELEBRATIONS AT PEABODY MUSEUM**

Part 5
*México Profundo: Race, Gender and La Virgen de Guadalupe*

Week 10, 11/5 and 11/7: *Race Mixture, Castas, Gender, and Indigenous ‘New Worlds’*

Lecture 1 – Race Mixture and the Castas
Lecture 2 – The Case of the Mulatto Mistress and Mother

Readings:
- Carrasco, Davíd, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, pp pp.147-159,
- Beatriz de la Fuente, “Mulatto Mistress and Mother.” [Course Webpage](#)
- Bonfil, *Mexico Profundo*, chapters 1-5.
- Cope, Douglas, “Mestizaje,” in *OEMC*.

Week 11, 11/12 and 11/14: *The Return of La Malinche*

Lecture 1 – Who is “La Malinche” Now?
Lecture 2 – The Return of Quetzalcoatl and Emiliano Zapata and Zapatistas

Readings:
- Anzaldúa, Gloria E., *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, Chapters 5 & 7. [R](#)

Preliminary Syllabus: 07/29/2013
• Sandra Cypess, “La Malinche as Palimpsest II.”  HCNS

Weeks 12-13, 11/19, 11/21, and 11/26: Mexico Profundo,

_La Virgen de Guadalupe: Then and Now_

Lecture 1 and 2 – The Virgen of Guadalupe: _Then and Now_

**Readings:**

• Bonfil Batalla, Guillermo, *México Profundo: Reclaiming a Civilization*, chs. 6-10.


• Burkhart, Louise M., “The Cult of the Virgin of Guadalupe.”  

• Carrasco, *Religions of Mesoamerica*, pp. 159-164, 174-181

12/3  Course Summary
One student presentation will be elected by students in each section

**Take Home Final Examination**