

## ***ANAR 153: The Mysterious Maya***

Winter Quarter 2019 Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:20 PM, Solis 111  
Professor Geoffrey E. Braswell, Assistant Luke R. Stroth

**Description:** In the jungles and mountains of Central America and southeastern Mexico arose one of the great civilizations of the ancient world: the Maya. This lecture course explores the roots of Maya civilization in the Preclassic period, and discusses the origins of state-level organization, hieroglyphic writing, and the Classic Maya art style. We also will consider the mysterious “collapse” of Classic Maya civilization about A.D. 800, and examine the dynamic Postclassic revival that occurred in Mexico’s Yucatán peninsula and in the Guatemalan highlands.

**Reader:** The reader for this course is Luke Stroth. His email address is [lstroth@ucsd.edu](mailto:lstroth@ucsd.edu). His office location is Social Science Research Building (SSRB) Room 315B. His office hours are Monday 2-3 PM and Wednesday 2-3 PM. If you have a question—especially concerning a grade—you should contact Luke Stroth before contacting the professor.

**Instructor:** My office is SSRB Room 348, next door to Solis. Drop in office hours are Thursday 1:00-3:00 PM. You also may schedule an appointment if this is inconvenient for you. My e-mail address is [gbraswell@ucsd.edu](mailto:gbraswell@ucsd.edu). If you are having troubles with the class, please contact me as soon as possible. It is easier to find ways to help you if I know early on that there is a problem. *Do not wait until the last few weeks of quarter to contact the professor.*

**Evaluation:** Students will be graded on the basis of a midterm exam (35%), a final exam (50%), and a map assignment (15%). The final is scheduled for Thursday, 21 March at 11:30 AM – 2:30 PM and will not be rescheduled. Please make sure your travel plans take this into account.

The *midterm exam* will consist of: word identifications, short answer essay questions, and a longer synthetic essay. The *final exam* will have the same structure and also will include a slide quiz. The slide quiz portion of the final will include images that I have shown throughout the quarter. The rest of the final will only include material that was not covered in the midterm. There is a *study guide* to both exams attached to this syllabus. The *map assignment* is described here on the last page.

**Attendance:** This is a medium-sized class and your absence will be conspicuous. All students are expected to attend all classes, particularly since I often will present material that is not in your textbook. If you are sick and cannot attend class, please send the t.a. an e-mail message ahead of time.

**Textbooks:** All readings are due the day of class. One textbook is required for the class. It is:

Sharer, Robert J., with Loa P. Traxler  
2006 *The Ancient Maya*. Sixth edition. Stanford University Press.

You can get the textbook online, at the library, or at your favorite bookstore. Please make sure you get the correct edition, it is very different from earlier versions!

*Course and Reading Schedule:*

January 8-10:	Introduction & Chapter 1
January 15-17:	Epilogue, Chapters 12 & 13
January 22-24:	Chapter 4 ***Thursday: Map Assignment Due***
January 29-31:	Chapter 5
February 5-7:	Chapter 6
February 12-14:	Chapter 7 (begin) *** Thursday: Midterm Exam***
February 19-21:	Chapter 7 (finish)
February 26-28:	Chapter 8 (begin)
March 5-7:	Chapter 8 (finish)
March 12-14:	Chapter 9
March 21:	***Final Exam, 8:00-11:00 AM***

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***This is a DETAILED STUDY GUIDE that tells you how to do DO WELL ON EXAMS!***

The exams in this course—indeed all my undergraduate courses—follow a very basic and old-fashioned pattern. The midterm is structured in three sections: (1) identifications; (2) short answers; and (3) synthetic essay. The final exam has these and another part: (4) slide ids. Let's begin with some general ideas about "how to do well" and then move on to each part.

**Caveat**

I will not post notes, presentations, or slides on the web. You really need to hear the lectures to understand the ideas and details. I won't put presentations on the web because many photos are the property of other archaeologists. These show excavations in process, or may be maps, figures, or photos that carry a copyright. I don't own them, so I cannot give them away. For the same reason, I ask that you please do *not* take photos of the slides shown in class.

**General Ideas on How to Do Well**

*(1) Come to class and do your readings.* I cannot express how important it is to do both of these things. The authors of your book concentrate on some things, and I will stress other ideas and interpretations. The most important things to learn are ideas/sites/time periods that are given emphasis by both of us. If we differ in opinions, try to concentrate on what I say in class.

*(2) Read over your notes each day and start lists.* In my presentations, I try to use a contrasting color to give emphasis to items (sites, buildings, particular artifacts, cultures, or time periods) that are particularly important. When you take notes in class or from your book, you might want to underline these. Start a list of these items (maybe even on note cards) and write very brief definitions that stress the important facts. This list will be critical for the id sections of your exams and also for the details in your short answers and essays. There are about 40 site names to learn, and unless you understand Mayan and Spanish, they can be a little confusing!

*(3) Identify the main ideas discussed in each lecture and chapter.* This might sound obvious, but a lot of people lose the forest for the trees. There are probably no more than a dozen "themes" or "big questions" that are emphasized in the course. It is very easy to figure out—in a general way—what essays and short answers will be about. Write outline essays for these themes!

*(4) Budget your time.* Each section of the exam is worth a certain number of percentage points. Make sure that you do not get bogged down in a section. For example, if the essay is worth 50%, dedicate half of the exam time to writing the essay.

**Term Identifications**

The important idea behind this section is to show that you know what is important about each word or phrase. Do not worry about writing complete sentences. Use your list of terms to study for this section. While making your list, order what you think is most important for each item.

**Short Answers**

These are usually designed to fill about one to two blue-book pages. Try not to write a long essay, although each of these themes could certainly be expanded to that length. In your short answer, be

sure to: (1) actually address the question; (2) write in complete sentences; (3) cite examples that support your argument. The last is important. Do not be vague or try to glide through the question without hanging any meat on a skeletal answer. You need both the big point, but also the supporting examples or data.

### **Essay Questions**

It is important to work on this part ahead of time when you study. The essay, of course, must be written in complete sentences and structured in a logical order. My questions will guide you in that structure. Keep these points particularly in mind:

- Many student essays do not address the question! Even if you write true things, you can't get points if your essay is about something else.
- Begin by carefully reading the question. Don't start writing until you understand it.
- Next, break down the question into its various parts.
- Make sure that as you write, you specifically answer each part of the question. Keep each part of the question in a different paragraph or set of paragraphs. Don't mix up each part.
- Be sure to illustrate your answer with specific examples. Don't be vague.
- End with a concluding paragraph that summarizes your argument. In many ways, this will resemble an abbreviated version of a "short answer."

As indicated above, there are not too many big questions/themes in this course. If you study and try to identify them ahead of time, you will do well on the essays. Again, write outlines for questions or topics to which I give particular import in my lectures. Organize these outlines for each theme with examples or data that can be used to make an argument one way or another.

### **Slide Identifications**

The purpose of the slide ids is very much the same as that of the word identifications. The difference is that this stimulates visual rather than verbal memory. Nonetheless, this section of the final often creates consternation and worry, especially for students who miss a lot of classes. Here are some easy tips on how to study for the slide identifications in the final exam:

- Come to every class! There are 20 classes and 20 slides to identify.
  - Look at the pictures in your book and compare them with your notes.
  - Concentrate on images that appear in the book and your class notes.
  - Make a list of photos in the book that show the same subject as what you have seen in class. • Take notes on the pictures in your book that you think I have shown.
  - Use your list of terms to identify potential photos that are not in the book.
  - Go online and search for additional images of things in your list of terms and your list of figures in the book.
- \*Believe it or not, Wikipedia is pretty darned good for Maya archaeological sites. Look up the sites and read about them. Make sure to google for images of places, sculpture, etc. I discuss in class.

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### **MAP ASSIGNMENT**

**Due Thursday, 24 January, at the beginning of class**

Draw a map of the Maya region. *Your map should be made to scale, and the scale should be indicated.* Do not hand in printouts of maps available on line; such maps are *not* your own work. Make sure that the following physiographic, geographic, and political features are clearly identified on the map:

- (1) The international borders of Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador.
- (2) The state borders of Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán, and Quintana Roo.
- (3) The rivers: Usumacinta, Motagua, Mopan, Belize River, New River, Hondo, Grijalva, Pasión, Ulúa, Lempa, Chixoy, Chamelecón, San Pedro Martír, Candelaria, and Machaquilá.
- (4) The lakes: Atitlán, Amatitlán, Izabal, Bacalar, Petén-Itza, Yaxhá, and Yojoa.
- (5) The bodies of water: Pacific Ocean, Gulf of Honduras, Gulf of Campeche, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, Laguna de Terminos, Bay of Chetumal.
- (6) The modern cities/towns: Guatemala City, Quetzaltenango (Xelajúj), Flores, Belmopan, Belize City, Punta Gorda, Chetumal, Cancún, Valladolid, Mérida, Campeche, Ciudad del Carmen, Villahermosa, San Cristobal de las Casas, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Puerto Barrios, Puerto Cortés, San Pedro Sula, Tegucigalpa, San Salvador.
- (7) The mountain/hill chains: the Southern Volcanic Axis (i.e., the volcanic chain running through Chiapas, Guatemala, and El Salvador), the Maya Mountains, the Sierra Lacandón, the Sierra Puuc, the Sierra Cuchumatanes.
- (8) Indicate the general location of: the Pacific Piedmont, the southern Maya highlands, the northern Maya highlands, the southern Maya lowlands, the central Maya lowlands, and the northern Maya lowlands.

This map will be useful to you throughout the course. In specific, you will be able to locate various Maya sites we study on it. Make sure that the map is large enough for you to fit all this information on it!