

Printable View of: Syllabus

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Course Description

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Course Title: HIST 350. The Aztec, Maya, and Inca.

Credits: 3 Hr.

Description

This is a survey of political, religious, and social structures of the Aztec, Maya, and Inca civilizations; exploring their origins, daily lives, cultural productions, understanding of the universe, and perspectives on Europeans. Additionally, it analyzes different aspects of the respective civilizations including their economies, intellectual achievements, and collapse.

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File: Course Objectives

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Course Objectives

Course objectives:

1. Distinguish and describe great indigenous civilizations of Mesoamerica and the Andean region.
2. Contrast this understanding with the widely used images and myths commonly portrayed in culture today
3. Use the methodology and techniques of historical analysis through secondary and primary sources.
4. Assess the students' individual cultural values by comparison and contrast with the values of earlier and different cultures.
5. Discuss how working with historical records with translations from one language and culture to another and with personal observations of other cultures entail an inevitable element of subjectivity
6. Describe and reflect upon the profound meanings of cultural clashes during and after encounters with different cultures, especially with those of the New World and the Old World. Cite specific examples of problems of today that are direct legacies from the colonial encounters.
7. Analyze the religions, ideologies, social structures, political infrastructures, economies, and intellectual achievements of the three indigenous civilizations studied in the course.

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File: Required Texts and Materials

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Required Texts and Materials**Required Texts**

The required texts for this course are as follows:

Mann, Charles, 1491, New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus, Second Edition, paperback, Vintage Books, NY, 2011, ISBN: 978-1-4000-3205-1

McKillop, Heather, The Ancient Maya, paperback, W.W. Norton, NY, 2006, ISBN: 978-0-393-32890-5

Townsend, Richard, The Aztecs, Third Edition, paperback, Thames and Hudson, London, 2009, ISBN: 978-0-500-28791-0

Malpass, Michael A. Daily Life in the Inca Empire, paperback, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, 2008, ISBN: 978-0-87220-932-9.

Recommended Works

Covey, R. Alan, How the Incas Built Their Heartland, University of Michigan Press, 2006; ISBN: 978-0-472-11478-8

Tuerenhout, Dirk R. van, The Aztecs, New Perspectives, ABC-CLIO, Denver, 2005, ISBN: 1-57607-921-X

McEwan, Gordon F. The Incas, New Perspectives, ABC-CLIO, Denver, 2006, ISBN: 1-85109-574-8

Diaz, Bernal, The Conquest of New Spain, translated by J. M. Cohen, Penguin Classics, 1963, ISBN: 978-0-140-44123-9.

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File: Guidelines

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Guidelines

I will attempt to grade projects, assignments, and discussion questions within seven days of its due date.

E-mail policy

I will make every effort to answer your e-mail messages within 24 hours. I will notify everyone in the class if I will be away for any extended time. Please communicate with me through eCampus e-mail. If eCampus e-mail is down, I will communicate with students through Mix e-mail.

Emergencies

If you have an emergency and need to reach me, please ring me at 970-384-2388 or e-mail me at Mwadyko@mix.wvu.edu. E-mail is generally the quickest and easiest way to

Attendance

Since this course is delivered via eCampus, active participation is essential for making the optimal grade in this course. I will grade your discussions on both quality and quantity.

Late Assignments

I will accept late assignments within seven days of due date, but late submission will result in a possible 25-50% reduction in assignment grade. Please contact me as soon as possible, if you are experiencing a problem with completing an assignment on time, as I allow for family, work, and personal emergencies when submitting assignments. Keep in mind the dictum that the student's lack of planning does not constitute an emergency for the instructor. I post discussion topics for a period of two weeks each, which should give everyone enough time to provide an initial response to the topic and at least three feedback responses to fellow class members.

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File: Discussions and Class Participation

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Discussions and Class Participation

What is the purpose of the discussion?

Discussion boards are an integral part of this on line course. They are designed to stimulate thought, to disseminate information, to clarify concepts, to share ideas, to explore course materials in detail, and to examine the course concepts from a new or different perspective. As well, discussion boards create and maintain a connection between and among students and the instructor. They provide an opportunity for conversation. Because there are no formal class meetings, the discussion boards acquire center stage in an online course. They provide a learning environment that is highly interactive where we can collaborate with each other. Participation in the discussion boards is a critical part of this class, as much of what you learn will take place through our discussions.

What are the general guidelines for the discussions?

Here are the Ground rules for discussion postings:

Review the active discussion topics regularly (a minimum of at least three times each week). Read the postings for an entire thread before posting a response.

All discussions are closed discussions. This means that only students who are currently enrolled in this class have access to the discussion tool, topics, and content. Our discussions stay in the virtual classroom. In other words, **what is shared in class stays in class.**

Keep discussions relevant. Minimize discussion of unrelated topics. If you must have a lengthy discussion with one of your classmates, please do not use the class discussions to carry on a personal conversation. Instead, use the e-mail tool to send a message to that individual.

Avoid using offensive language. Offensive and abusive statements will not be tolerated in the classroom. "...be respectful of your classmates' opinions."

Some of the topics have no right or wrong answer. It is fine to disagree. However, be respectful of your classmates' opinions. Expect different feelings and perspectives. Consider the possibility that your classmates may express ideas that are totally foreign to you, because this class is very diverse. If you disagree with someone, disagree with their ideas. Listen and learn from your fellow students. Do not criticize the classmates for their ideas.

Consider these Principles of Genuine Dialogue:

- Suspend judgment.
- Identify assumptions
- Listen for meaning
- Balance inquiry and advocacy
- Reflect. Reflection is thoughtful contemplation in the search for meaning. It opens the door for creative breakthroughs.

Remember, the goal of posting is not to win a debate. Rather, the idea is to have a rational and informed discussion about topics as they relate to the concepts and ideas discussed in class.

Those who violate the ground rules will receive a warning at the time of the first violation. I reserve the right to immediately remove extremely offensive or inappropriate postings and to exclude permanently students who repeatedly violate the discussion ground rules.

Repeated or extreme violations of the ground rules will result in a discussion grade of F.

How can I do well on the discussions?

As noted in the Course Requirements and Grading sections of the course syllabus, part of your grade in this class is based on participation. Participating in this class is defined as posting to the discussion boards using the discussion tool.

I will post new topics weekly throughout the course: See the announcements for alerts on when to watch for new discussion topics. Initial responses are due roughly by midweek and interactive responses by the end of the week.

Think of the discussion postings the same way you would think of class participation in the traditional classroom. Speak up regularly, make comments that are relevant, consider what classmates have said, and be respectful. Quantity is important (number of postings) but quality is even more important. Quality is based on the substantive contribution a posting makes to the discussion. Is it relevant? Does it add new information or a different perspective? Does it synthesize the discussion thread in a unique way?

Avoid waiting until the last minute to "catch up". Doing so is the electronic equivalent of raising your hand repeatedly at the end of a class session and trying to cover all of the discussion at once.

I will sometimes make a point, ask a question, or bring up another viewpoint. This is designed to keep the discussion moving, stimulate you to consider new ideas, or clarify the point you are making.

Here are a few concrete suggestions:

Respond to every discussion topic that is posted. We will discuss several topics throughout the semester, and a new topic will be posted weekly.

Read and consider what your classmates have said. Postings that merely respond to my initial question are adequate, but there must be at least three interactive posts. If someone else has already mentioned a point, acknowledge this before making your own point. Postings that mention what others have said or summarize the main points in the discussion are better than adequate.

Add to the discussion. If you have read something in a major, reputable newspaper that relates to the discussion, mention it. If you have had related readings for another class, mention them. Be certain to tell your classmates how to find out more. Postings that go beyond the classroom readings and related the topics to the larger world are superior.

In addition to all of the above **post regularly and post often.** Regular postings are evenly spread through the semester (generally, every three to 5 days: weekly at a minimum). Frequent postings average out to about 4 per week.

There is no tolerance for plagiarism in the course. You must respond in your own words and cite your sources when necessary, especially when borrowing exact wording from an author or source. Use of quotes and citations adds to the depth and clarity of your response.

How Are Discussions Graded?

Overall, I look for postings that are:

Substantive. Merely saying, "I agree" is not substantive, but explaining why you agree is.

Thorough. Is there at least one substantive posting for each of the discussion topics? Is there a follow-up response to questions from others?

Regular. Do substantive postings appear at least twice a week?

Frequent. How many substantive postings are there overall?

Timely. Are postings regular, or are they clustered toward the end of the week allowing little time for follow up?

Accurate. Are the "facts" and assumptions consistent with the concepts presented in the class materials?

Insightful. Do the postings add to the discussion by bringing up a new topic, referring to a recommended reading or introducing ideas from outside sources?

Criteria	A 90-100 outstanding	B 80-84 proficient	C 70-79 basic	D/F below 70 below expectations
Critical Thinking	Rich in content; full of thought, insight and analysis	Contains substantial information; thought, insight and analysis has clearly taken place	Generally competent, yet information is thin and commonplace	Rudimentary and superficial displaying no analysis or insight
Uniqueness	New ideas and new connections made with depth and detail	Contains new ideas that lack depth or detail	Few, if any, new ideas, rehashes or summarizes other postings	No new ideas or "I agree/disagree with . . ." statement
Timeliness	All required postings appear early throughout the discussion	All required postings with some not in time for others to respond	All required postings with most at the last minute without allowing time for others to respond	Some or all required postings missing
Stylistics	Few grammatical or stylistic errors	Several grammatical or stylistic errors	Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors that interfere with the readability	Obvious grammatical or stylistic errors making understanding nearly impossible

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File: Policies

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Policies

Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. 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 Student Conduct Code at:

http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code

Included in these rules is the prohibition of plagiarism (passing someone else's work off as your own or not citing another's work in your own), scholastic dishonesty (e.g. cheating, falsifying research), and creating a hostile learning environment for students or staff. 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 me *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Social Justice

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

I reserve the right to amend this syllabus to better facilitate students' learning.

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File: Grading

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Grading

- Fifteen Discussion Topics - 40 points apiece – 600 points
- Midterm – 100 points
- Final Exam – 150 points
- Research Endeavor – 150 points
- Total – 1000 points

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File: Course Schedule

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Course Schedule**Module One – Origins of Indigenous American Peoples**

1. Week One - Introduction and Overview 14 – 20 Jan 13
Initial discussion topic of introductions due by the end of the 17th
Readings: Mann, Charles, pp. 3 -31,110 – 151.
2. Week Two – Predecessors to These Civilizations 22 – 27 Jan 13 21st Jan, Martin Luther King Day
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 25th
Readings: McKillop, Heather, Ch. 4, pp. 71 – 85; Townsend, Richard, Ch. 2, pp. 32 – 52
3. Week Three – Predecessors to These Civilizations 28 Jan – 3 Feb 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 31st
Readings: Malpass, Michael A., pp. 1 - 30

Module Two – The Maya Civilization

4. Week Four –Origins and Growth of the Maya Civilization 4 – 10 Feb 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 7th
Readings: McKillop, Heather, pp. 85 - 105
5. Week Five – Language, Culture, Social and Political Infrastructure, Intellectual Accomplishments 11 – 17 Feb 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 14th
Readings: McKillop, Heather, Chapters. 6, 7, 8, 10
6. Week Six – Economy 18 – 24 Feb 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 21st
Readings: McKillop, Heather, Ch. 5.

Module Three – The Aztec Civilization

7. Week Seven – Origins and Development 25 Feb – 3 Mar 13
Initial discussion topic responses due by the end of the 28th
Readings: Townsend, Richard, Ch. 2, pp. 54 – 62; Chapters. 3, 4, 5
Midterm exam online through the 3rd on Modules I and II
8. Week Eight – Language, Culture, Heritage, Social and Political Infrastructure 4 – 10 Mar 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 7th
Readings: Townsend, Richard, Chapters, 6, 7, 9.
9. Week Nine – Economy 11 – 17 Mar 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 14th
Readings: Townsend, Richard, Ch. 8

Module Four – The Inca Civilization

10. Week Ten – Origins and Development 18 – 23 Mar 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 21st
Readings: Malpass, Michael. A., Ch. 1; Mann, Charles, Ch. 3

- Spring Break 23 – 31 Mar 13
11. Week Eleven – Language, Culture, Social Infrastructure 1 – 7 Apr 13
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 4th
Readings: Malpass, Michael A., Chapters 2, 3, 4
12. Week Twelve – Religious Ideology and Intellectual Accomplishments 8 – 14 Apr 13
Initial Discussion responses due by the end of the 11th
Readings: Malpass, Michael A., Ch. 5
13. Week Thirteen – Economy and Political Infrastructure 15 – 21 Apr 13
Initial Discussion responses due by the end of the 18th
Malpass, Michael A. Ch. 2

Module Five – Decline and Demise of the Three Civilizations: The Spanish Conquest

14. Week Fourteen – Decline and Collapse of the Maya, Conquest of the Aztecs and Incas
22 – 28 Apr 13
Initial Discussion responses due by the end of the 25th
Readings: Townsend, Richard, Ch. 10
15. Week Fifteen – Epilogue – Comparisons/Contrasts of the Three Civilizations
Final project 29 April – 5 May
Initial discussion responses due by the end of the 2nd
Readings: Review material in the three texts on Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilizations.
16. Week Sixteen - Final Exam on Modules, III, IV, V. 6 – 11 May 13

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