

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

ARKY 411: Mesoamerican Writing Systems

Winter 2018

Monday-Wednesday 2:00-3:15 pm

Professor Kathryn Reese-Taylor
850 Earth Sciences
Office hours: Monday 11:00 -12:00
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Prerequisite(s): Archaeology 341 and 343.

Course Description:

This course is designed as an introduction to Mesoamerican writing systems. We begin with an overview of the discovery, documentation and study of Mesoamerican scripts, followed by an introduction to various script traditions. Throughout the course we focus on the connection between inscriptions and their cultural and political contexts. Class time is divided between acquiring the fundamentals of the system's structure and applying that knowledge in a series of practical exercises in decipherment.

Required Readings:

All required course readings will be available online or in the Department reading room.

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course the student should be able to:

- understand central concepts in *grammatology* (the study of comparative writing)
- explore processes of script decipherment from a comparative perspective
- apply the tools and methodologies of archaeological decipherment
- attain an understanding of the kinds of evidence required for successful decipherments
- attain a regional understanding of the origins, development, and interconnections of the writing systems of Mesoamerica
- understand the hallmarks of a featural script and be able to identify one
- explore the origins and development of Mesoamerican writing systems, and the connections between writing and civilization
- mesh socio-cultural anthropological theory, archaeological, epigraphic, and linguistic evidence to model ancient Mesoamerican societies

Course Grading:

- 20% of your grade is based on a midterm.
- 20% of your grade is based on a take-home final.
- 15% of your grade will be based on a class presentation of your research topic.

- 25% of your grade will be based on a research paper.
- 20% of your grade is based on class participation, including in-class exercises and discussion of the readings.

Exams:

The midterm will be taken in class on Feb. 28. The final is a take-home exam, which will be handed out on Apr. 11 and due on Apr. 16. The final exam is not cumulative.

Both the midterm and the final exams will include brief definitions, identification questions (fill in the blanks, matching, and multiple choices), and 1 or 2 essays. The essays are intended to foster critical thinking by comparing and contrasting assumptions, statements, or theoretical issues.

Description of Class Presentation:

The presentation should be 15 minutes in length and should present the results of an analysis that you have conducted on a specific text/image (or group of texts/images) or problem in decipherment.

Research Paper:

All research paper topics must be approved by the instructor by Mar. 7. Your research paper should be approximately 10-12 pages in length and address the same topic as your class presentation. A final version of your paper is due on Apr. 9. If the paper is submitted after the deadline, 5% of the grade will be subtracted for each subsequent day.

Grading Scale:

A+ > / = 100-97	B+ 88-85	C+ 76-73	D+ 64-61
A 96-93	B 84-81	C 72-69	D 60-57
A- 92-89	B- 80-77	C- 68-65	F <56

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING

Plagiarism: “to steal and pass off the ideas or words of another as one’s own” (Webster’s). Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will automatically result in a failing grade for the submission. Any student caught plagiarizing will also be subject to additional University sanctions. Students are expected to be familiar with the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology’s policy on intellectual honesty

DEFERRED EXAMS:

A student who is absent from a test for legitimate reasons must discuss an alternative course of action with the instructor. The instructor at their discretion may transfer the percentage weight for the test to the final examination, if there is a final examination in the course, set another test, etc. An instructor will normally make this decision on the basis of verbal information provided by the student. In the event that an instructor feels that they cannot judge the veracity of the information provided, Students must be aware that they are responsible for payment of any charge associated with the medical assessment and documentation as this service falls outside the realm of services provided by the Provincial Health Care Plan. Deferral of the registrar scheduled final exam requires Registrar approval.

If a deferred exam is administered, the format of the exam may be different than the original exam.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy>

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the instructor of this course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Calgary is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievements. As a result, the University treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously. Non-academic integrity also constitutes an important component of this program.

For detailed information on what constitutes academic and non-academic misconduct, please refer to the following link: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

All suspected cases of academic and non-academic misconduct will be investigated following procedures outlined in the University Calendar. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behavior or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Where there is a criminal act involved in plagiarism, cheating or other academic misconduct, e.g., theft (taking another student's paper from their possession, or from the possession of a faculty member without permission), breaking and entering (forcibly entering an office to gain access to papers, grades or records), forgery, personation and conspiracy (impersonating another student by agreement and writing their paper) and other such offences under the Criminal Code of Canada, the University may take legal advice on the appropriate response and, where appropriate, refer the matter to the police, in addition to or in substitution for any action taken under these regulations by the University

TEACHING EVALUATIONS / USRI (Universal Student Ratings of Instruction)

At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses. Your responses make a difference, please participate!

Website: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/usri/>

Writing Across the Curriculum

Writing skills are not exclusive to English courses and, in fact, should cross all disciplines. The University supports the belief that throughout their University careers, students should be taught how to write well so that when they graduate their writing abilities will be far above the minimal standards required at entrance. Consistent with this belief, students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their University courses and, where appropriate, members of faculty can and should use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Support, part of the Student Success Centre, can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance

Emergency Evacuation Assembly Points: In the event of an emergency that requires evacuation, please refer to the following link to become familiar with the assembly points for the class:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

The University of Calgary is committed to protecting the privacy of individuals who work and study at the University or who otherwise interact with the University in accordance with the standards set out in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Please refer to the following link for detailed information: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip>

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology's FOIP (Freedom of Information and Privacy) policy requires all reports/examinations to be returned to students during class time or the instructor's office hours. Any term work not picked up will be placed in the Anthropology and Archaeology Office (ES620) for distribution. Any student not wishing to have their work placed in the office must make alternative arrangements with the course instructor early in the term.

Safewalk Information: Campus Security, in partnership with the Students' Union, provides the Safewalk service, 24 hours a day to any location on Campus including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones and University residences. Contact Campus Security at (403) 220-5333 or use a help phone, and Safewalkers or a Campus Security Officer will accompany you to your campus destination.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources: Have a question, but not sure where to start? Arts Students' Centre

The Faculty of Arts Students' Centre is the overall headquarters for undergraduate programs in the Faculty of Arts. The key objective of this office is to connect students with whatever academic assistance that they require.

In addition to housing the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs and Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Teaching and Learning, the Arts Students' Centre is the specific home to:

- program advising
- the Faculty's Co-operative Education Program
- the Arts and Science Honours Academy
- the Faculty's Interdisciplinary Programs
- a Student Help Desk

Location: Social Sciences Room 102

Phone: 403.220.3580

Email: ascarts@ucalgary.ca

Website: arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate/

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contacts for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca

arts2@su.ucalgary.ca

arts3@su.ucalgary.ca

arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Ombudsman's office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/>