



# ANCIENT MESOAMERICAN CITIES

ARKY 537.1  
Winter 2019

Dr. Elizabeth Paris  
Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

M 15:30 – 18:15  
SA 109

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will discuss and evaluate theoretical and methodological approaches to ancient cities and towns, with a particular focus on the cities of pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. Readings and discussions will emphasize innovative approaches to the study of pre-modern urbanism, while also addressing key theoretical contributions and debates in the field. Readings will particularly address topics such as the relationship between city and polity; networks approaches, and the study of neighborhoods and districts.

This is seminar-format course. Students should have a basic background in the culture history of Mesoamerica.

Prerequisite: 6 units (1.0 full course equivalent) from ARKY 341, 343, 345 or 347, or instructor permission.

## WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Describe the historical development of the study of Mesoamerican urbanism, including key debates in the field
- Discuss and debate the current theoretical approaches and methods used to study ancient Mesoamerican cities in archaeology today.
- Apply innovative theoretical concepts and methods to particular case studies.
- Develop professional research skills, including formal writing in the discipline, and formal presentation of research results.

**Office:** ES 818

**Office Hours:** M 1:00-2:15 PM and by appointment (sometimes held in ES 859)

**EMAIL:** [ELIZABETH.PARIS@UCALGARY.CA](mailto:ELIZABETH.PARIS@UCALGARY.CA)

Please expect 48 hours for a response. If more than 48 hours have passed with no reply, check the email address and re-send. Please use your UCalgary email address for course business.

## REQUIRED READINGS

Course textbooks:

Scott Hutson, 2016. *The Ancient Urban Maya: Neighborhoods, Inequality, and Built Form*. University Press of Florida (on reserve at TFDL).

Michael E. Smith. 2008. *Aztec City-State Capitals*. University Press of Florida (on reserve at TFDL)

For additional culture history (optional):

Evans, Susan T. 2013. *Ancient Mexico and Central America: Archaeology and Culture History*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thames and Hudson.

Additional readings will be listed on D2L. Links to articles, ebook chapters and videos will be posted on D2L in modules that correspond to the week in which they are due.

All readings are required!

## COURSE STRUCTURE

Grades will be based on the following course activities:

1.	Participation	20%	See schedule
2.	Discussion leadership	10%	See schedule
2.	Case study presentation	15%	See schedule
3.	Final paper presentation	15%	April 8, due in class
4.	Final paper	40%	April 14, due on D2L

**NOTE: There is no registrar-scheduled final examination for this course.**

In this class, grades are assigned according to the following chart:

Percentages	Letter grade	Interpretation
97-100%	A+	<i>The A range denotes excellent performance.</i>
90-96%	A	
86-89%	A-	
82-85%	B+	<i>The B range denotes good performance.</i>
78-81%	B	
74-77%	B-	
70-73%	C+	<i>The C range denotes satisfactory performance.</i>
66-69%	C	
62-65%	C-	
56-61%	D+	<i>The D range denotes unsatisfactory performance.</i>
50-55%	D	
<50%	F	<i>An F denotes failing performance.</i>

## EVALUATION METHODS

This class will be run in a seminar format, based on the discussion and debate of assigned readings. You will be expected to attend all course meetings, and participate fully in course activities.

### 1. PARTICIPATION (20%)

This course will be in a seminar format, and students will be graded for their participation in in-class discussions and activities.

- Grading for “participation” assumes that you come to class regularly and on time, ready to talk about the required reading/assignments, or to provide useful comments on classmates’ presentations. Please come prepared to comment on and discuss class-related material in a way that demonstrates to me that you have done the readings and thought seriously about them. You must also follow the rules of course etiquette (see below).
- Participation grades for each course meeting will be assessed out of 5 points, and will be assessed as a proportion of the total number of possible points. Late arrivals or early departures to course

meetings will lower the participation grade. Where students have absences with an official university excuse, participation will be calculated as a proportion from the course meetings attended.

- If you find you are having difficulties in class, please meet with me early in the semester to work on them. It will be hard to turn things around if you wait until the last two weeks of class to seek help.

## 2. DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP (10%)

On the first day of class, you will sign up to lead one week of discussion for the class. Each student will be responsible for leading the discussion on the assigned course readings for that week. Additionally, each student will be responsible for finding and reading a scholarly article, book, or book chapter relating to the theme of the discussion. Students will send the UCalgary library link to the instructor 48 hours prior to their discussion to add to the class resources on D2L. Students will be evaluated based on the appropriateness of the article for the topic, and the quality of the article, in addition to their overall performance as discussion leader.

## 3. CASE STUDY PRESENTATION (15%)

You will be asked to make one 30-minute Powerpoint presentation on a specific ancient city, town, or urban network in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. Highlight past and current approaches to studying the organization of the city, with respect to specific methodological and/or theoretical concepts discussed in class. Presentations that compare pre-Hispanic Mesoamerican cities to other pre-industrial cities will be considered on request, and on a case-by-case basis. Please provide the class with a one-page list of the best references on your case study.

## 4. FINAL PAPER PRESENTATION (15%) and WRITTEN PAPER (40%)

Your final assignment in this class will consist of two parts: a written paper, in the style of a research article; and an in-class presentation that presents the findings of your paper. You may choose to do an original project that analyzes published data in new ways, or you may write a theoretical or methodological paper that reviews the literature in the area of your own research interests. Topics can be negotiated with the instructor, but must pertain to the themes of the class.

The in-class presentation will take place during the last week of classes, **Monday, April 8**. It should be prepared in the format of a 20-minute, professional archaeology conference-style presentation. You are encouraged to use conference-style Powerpoint slides to accompany your presentation.

Written papers should be typed and should be at least 20 pages of text, double-spaced, with a standard 12 point font (Arial, Calibri, TNR). Figures, tables and citations are not counted in the 20-page limit, and should conform to Latin American Antiquity style. The written version of the final paper must be uploaded to D2L by **Sunday, April 14, at 11:59 pm**.

As it is possible to turn in written assignments prior to the due date, foreseen schedule conflicts resulting from university athletic competitions, religious observances, etc. must be arranged individually with the professor in advance. Unforeseen emergency or situations should be reported to the professor as soon as possible, and any alternative arrangements will be based on individual circumstances.

# COURSE SCHEDULE

Students should do all readings and assignments during the week in which they are assigned.

\*\*Note that this syllabus is subject to change at any time at the professor's discretion.

WEEK	DUE DATE	TOPICS AND READINGS
Week 1	M, Jan. 7	<b>Topic: Introduction to the course</b>
Week 2	M, Jan. 14	<p><b>Topic: Theoretical perspectives I: The Classics</b></p> <p>Childe, V. Gordon. 1950. The Urban Revolution. <i>The Town Planning Review</i> 21(1):3-17.</p> <p>Childe, V. Gordon. 1957 Civilization, cities, and towns. <i>Antiquity</i> 31(121): 36-38.</p> <p>Adams, Robert M. 1960. The Origin of Cities. <i>Scientific American</i> 203(3): 153-172.</p> <p>Southall, Aidan 1998 <i>The City in Time and Space</i>. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. (Chs. 1 and 2)</p> <p>Optional: Sjoberg, Gideon. 1955 The Preindustrial City. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 60(5):438-445.</p>
Week 3	M, Jan. 21	<p><b>Topic: Theoretical perspectives II: Broad brushstrokes</b></p> <p>Marcus, Joyce 1983. The Nature of the Mesoamerican City. In <i>Prehistoric Settlement Patterns: Essays in Honor of Gordon R. Willey</i>. Evan Z. Vogt and Richard M. Leventhal, eds. Pp. 195-242. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.</p> <p>Joyce, Arthur A. 2009. Theorizing Urbanism in Ancient Mesoamerica 20:189-196.</p> <p>Smith, Michael E. 2011. Empirical Urban Theory for Archaeologists. <i>Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory</i> 18:167-192.</p> <p>Optional: Cowgill, George L. 2004. Origins and Development of Urbanism: Archaeological Perspectives. <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 33: 525-549.</p>
Week 4	M, Jan. 28	<p><b>Topic: Early Cities in Mesoamerica</b></p> <p>Balkansky, Andrew. 1998. Urbanism and Early State Formation in the Huamelulpan Valley of Southern Mexico. <i>Latin American Antiquity</i> 9(1):37-67.</p> <p>Hansen, Richard D. 2001. The first cities: The beginnings of urbanization and state formation in the Maya Lowlands. <i>Maya: Divine Kings of the Rainforest</i>.</p> <p>Pool, Christopher A. 2003. Centers and peripheries: Urbanization and political economy at Tres Zapotes. <i>Settlement Archaeology and Political Economy at Tres Zapotes, Veracruz, Mexico</i>, pp. 90-98.</p> <p>Optional: Nelson, Ben A. 1995. Complexity, Hierarchy, and Scale: A Controlled Comparison between Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, and la Quemada, Zacatecas. <i>American Antiquity</i> 60(4):597-618.</p>
Week 5	M, Feb. 4	<p><b>Topic: Low-density Urbanism</b></p> <p>Sanders, William T. and David Webster 1988. The Mesoamerican Urban Tradition. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 90(3): 521-546.</p> <p>Smith, Michael E. 1989. Cities, Towns, and Urbanism: Comment on Sanders and Webster. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 91(2): 454-460.</p> <p>Isendahl, Christian and Michael E. Smith 2013. Sustainable agrarian urbanism: The low-density cities of the Mayas and Aztecs. <i>Cities</i> 31: 132-143.</p>

		<p>Masson, Marilyn A. 2014. Kukulcan's realm: urban life at ancient Mayapán. Chapter 4.</p> <p>Optional: Chase, Diane Z., Arlen F. Chase, and William A. Haviland. 1990 The Classic Maya City: Reconsidering the "Mesoamerican Urban Tradition." <i>American Anthropologist</i> 92: 499–506.</p>
<b>Week 6</b>	M, Feb. 11	<p><b>Topic: City size and density</b></p> <p>Smith, Michael E. 2005. City Size in Late Postclassic Mesoamerica. <i>Journal of Urban History</i> 31(4): 403-434.</p> <p><b>Topic: Minor centers and provincial capitals</b></p> <p>Iannone, Gyles, and Samuel V. Connell 2003 Perspectives on Ancient Maya Rural Complexity: An Introduction. In <i>Perspectives on Ancient Maya Rural Complexity</i>, edited by Gyles Iannone and Samuel V. Connell, pp. 1–6. Monograph No. 49, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.</p> <p>Iannone, Gyles. 2003 Rural Complexity in the Cahal Pech Microregion. In <i>Perspectives on Ancient Maya Rural Complexity</i>, edited by Gyles Iannone and Samuel V. Connell, pp. 13–26. Monograph No. 49, Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles.</p> <p><b>Topic: Cities and polity boundaries</b></p> <p>Paris, Elizabeth H. 2014. Cross-valley communities: Identity and interaction in Early Postclassic period highland Chiapas. <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i> 34: 78-99.</p> <p>Optional: Stoner, Wesley J. 2012. Modeling and testing polity boundaries in the Classic Tuxtla mountains, southern Veracruz, Mexico. <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i>. 31(3): 381-402.</p>
<b>Week 7</b>	M, Feb. 18	<b>Mid-Semester Break</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	M, Feb. 25	<p><b>Topic: Imperial centers vs. provincial capitals</b></p> <p>Michael E. Smith. 2008. <i>Aztec City-State Capitals</i>. University Press of Florida (on reserve at TFDL)</p>
<b>Week 9</b>	M, Mar. 4	<p><b>Topic: Site planning principles</b></p> <p>Smith, Michael E. 2007 Form and Meaning in the Earliest Cities: A New Approach to Ancient Urban Planning. <i>Journal of Planning History</i> 6(1):3-47.</p> <p>Rapoport, Amos. 1982. <i>The Meaning of the Built Environment: A Nonverbal Communication Approach</i>. California: Sage Publications, Ltd.</p> <p>Ashmore, Wendy. 1991. Site Planning Principles and Concepts of Directionality Among the Ancient Maya. <i>Latin American Antiquity</i> 2(3):199-226.</p> <p>Hirth, Kenneth. 2000. Ch. 10: Public Architecture, Site Planning, and Urban Community Organization. In <i>Ancient Urbanism at Xochicalco</i>, pp.200-243</p> <p>Optional: Pollard, Helen P. 1977. An Analysis of Urban Zoning and Planning at Prehispanic Tzintzuntzan. <i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society</i> 121(1):46-69</p>
<b>Week 10</b>	M, Mar. 11	<p><b>Topic: Plazas and Markets I</b></p> <p>Shaw, Leslie C. 2012. The Elusive Maya Marketplace: An Archaeological Consideration of the Evidence. <i>Journal of Archaeological Research</i> 20(1): 117-155.</p> <p>Cap, Bernadette 2015. How to Know It When We See It: Marketplace Identification at the Classic Maya Site of Buenavista Del Cayo, Belize. In <i>The</i></p>

		<p>Ancient Maya Marketplace. Eleanor M. King, ed. Pp. 111–137. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.</p> <p>Hutson 2000. Carnival and Contestation in the Aztec Marketplace. <i>Dialectical Anthropology</i> 25:123-149.</p> <p>Stark, Barbara. 2014. Ancient Open Space, Gardens and Parks: A Comparative Discussion of Mesoamerican Urbanism. In Creekmore, Andrew T. and Fisher, Kevin D. <i>Making Ancient Cities: Space and Place in Early Urban Societies</i>, pp. 370-406.</p> <p>Optional: Inomata, Takeshi. 2006. Plazas, Performers, and Spectators Political Theaters of the Classic Maya. <i>Current Anthropology</i> 47(5):805-842.</p>
<b>Week 11</b>	M, Mar. 18	<p><b>Topic: Neighborhoods I</b></p> <p>Smith, Michael E. 2010. The archaeological study of neighborhoods and districts in ancient cities. <i>Journal of Anthropological Archaeology</i> 29: 137-154.</p> <p>Fisher, Christopher T., and Stephen J. Leisz. 2013. <i>New Perspectives on Purépecha Urbanism Through the Use of LiDAR at the Site of Angamuco, Mexico. Mapping Archaeological Landscapes from Space.</i> Springer New York, pp.199-210.</p> <p>Feinman, Gary and Linda M. Nicholas. 2012 Compact Versus Dispersed Settlement in Pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica: The Role of Neighborhood Organization and Collective Action. In M. Charlotte Arnauld, Linda Manzanilla and Michael E. Smith. <i>The Neighborhood as a Social and Spatial Unit in Mesoamerican Cities</i>, Pp. 132-157.</p>
<b>Week 12</b>	M, Mar. 25	<p><b>Topic: Neighborhoods II</b></p> <p>Hutson, Scott. 2016. <i>The Ancient Urban Maya: Neighborhoods, Inequality, and Built Form.</i> University Press of Florida</p>
<b>Week 13</b>	M, Apr. 1	<p><b>Topic: Cities After Sociopolitical Collapse</b></p> <p>Clayton, Sarah C. 2016. After Teotihuacan: A View of Collapse and Reorganization from the Southern Basin of Mexico. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 118(1):104-120.</p> <p>Swenson, Edward R. 2003. Cities of Violence: Sacrifice, Power and Urbanization in the Andes. <i>Journal of Social Archaeology</i> 3: 256-296.</p> <p>Low, Setha M. 1995. Indigenous Architecture and the Spanish American Plaza in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean. <i>American Anthropologist</i> 97(4):748-762.</p>
<b>Week 14</b>	M, Apr. 8	<b>FINAL PRESENTATIONS</b>
	Su, Apr. 14	<b>Final Paper DUE on D2L on Sunday, April 14 at 11:59 pm</b>

## CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

- Please make this class a scheduling priority. Arrive on time, and do not leave before the end of the period. It is more distracting than you might realize. If you have to leave class early for a legitimate personal reason or emergency, let me know in advance if possible, and do so without disrupting class.
- Treat everyone in the class as a colleague—show respect to both your fellow students and myself, even if you strongly disagree with someone’s opinion. Be friendly, courteous and kind during discussions. Do not talk over or interrupt the instructor or other students.
- Silence and stow your phones, and do not use them during class. They are distracting to everyone.

- You may only use laptops and tablets for note-taking purposes. Using them for other activities is highly distracting. If I observe that your laptop or tablet is distracting your fellow students, I will ask you to place it on the podium, and you will lose participation points for that day.
- Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures presented by the instructor, are the property of the instructor. You may not make video and audio recordings of lectures and labs without the explicit consent of the instructor, nor transfer them to another student, whether or not that student is enrolled in the course.

## STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES ACCOMODATIONS

Students needing an accommodation because of a physical, psychiatric/emotional, or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, please contact Student Accessibility Services at (403)220-8237.

It is the responsibility of the student to request academic accommodations. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Students who have registered with SAS prior to the start of the semester are required to discuss their needs with the professor no later than ten (10) business days after the first day of class for the course. Students with a recent diagnosis of a disability, a change in status of a disability, or a temporary disability may request accommodations outside of this timeline, but should discuss their needs with the professor as soon as possible.

Please consult the website for more information: [www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities\\_0.pdf](http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/procedure-for-accommodations-for-students-with-disabilities_0.pdf)

## 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, instructors can and may use writing and the grading thereof in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office can be utilized by all students who feel they require further assistance.

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The pursuit of knowledge in the University community must be carried out with sincerity, truthfulness, and integrity. Students at the University of Calgary are expected to uphold high academic standards. Academic misconduct will not be tolerated in this class. Students are expected to be aware of all of the types of activities that constitute academic misconduct, and should read the Student Misconduct section of the University Calendar to make sure they know what those are:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

The most common forms of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- Presenting another student's work as your own, or copying another student's work.

- Presenting an author's work or ideas as your own, or failing to attribute these ideas correctly through full in-text and/or bibliographic citations.
- Using work completed for another course.
- Using unauthorized notes or other materials during labs and quizzes.

In this course, students who do not abide by the Academic Misconduct policy will be dealt with following the procedures outlined in the University Calendar. Students may receive a failing grade, and a notation of academic misconduct will be placed on the student's record.

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In the event that the classroom is evacuated due to an emergency situation, please note that the primary assembly point shall be at the ICT Food Court.

Please consult the website for further information: <http://ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

## USRI

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://ucalgary.ca/usri>