

UPPER DIVISION GENERAL EDUCATION NEW COURSE PROPOSAL
FOR AREA CC – HUMANITIES

Please Read Instructions on Next Page of This Form

Course Number ANTH 385 Course Title Divine Lords and Earth Monsters: Archaeology of the Maya

- * This is a new course. A FORM C is being filed concurrently.
☐ This is an existing course not currently satisfying an UDGE requirement, which is not being changed.
☐ This is an existing course not currently satisfying an UDGE requirement, which is undergoing change. A FORM C-2 is being filed concurrently.
☐ This is an existing course currently satisfying an UDGE requirement which is being submitted for recertification. A FORM C-2 is required only if the course is being changed.

1. Please attach a syllabus or draft syllabus of the course.
 2. How many units is this course? 3 (Upper-Division General Education courses are limited to 3 units.)
 3.a. Does this course have (a) prerequisite (s) other than completion of LDGE requirements?

 yes * no

- b. Does this course fulfill requirements for a major by the academic unit in which the course is offered? Check the YES box even if the course counts as an elective in the major.

 * yes no

- c. If you answered "yes" to 3.a. or 3.b., then the course is an exception to the definition printed on the next page of this form, and you must explain why the GE committee should make an exception for this course. Please describe how this course is designed to provide valuable and appropriate learning experiences to both majors and non-majors.

The discipline of Anthropology has four major sub-fields, cultural anthropology (the study of people today), archaeology (the study of the human past through material objects), biological anthropology (the study of people as biological entities) and linguistics (the study of language in culture), each of which draw on one another for supporting data. This class is primarily focused on archaeology, which is also multidisciplinary in nature, drawing heavily from the other sub-disciplines of anthropology as well as from Humanities and the Arts, such as: Literature, Visual Arts, Philosophy, and History. For the ancient Maya, spirituality and philosophy were inextricably interwoven in mythology, metaphysics, and everyday practice surrounding maize, ancestors, and the landscape. Not only were spirituality and philosophy inextricably linked in ancient Maya thought, the mytho-historical stories associated with them were the primary subject matter of Maya art and writing. In this class, students will study various *objets d'art*; wall murals, public sculpture, and ceramics, and learn to read actual Maya hieroglyphic texts, all for understanding ancient Maya life, world view, philosophy, and history.

Moreover, CSUSM is an Hispanic ^{this aspect of} serving institution. This class offers the first opportunity on campus for students interested in learning more about the pre-Hispanic past of Latin America, and, in doing so, it helps fulfill the University's mission of serving regional needs and addressing educational equity, a key strategic priority of the University.

Read Questions 4-8 in the instructions on the next page of this form and submit your answers as attachments. The instructions do not have to be printed or submitted.

[Signature]
 Originator
[Signature]
 Program Director

General Education Coordinator

General Education Committee Chair

Signatures

10/28/16Date
10-28-16

Date

Date

Date



4. Upper division general-education students may have fulfilled their lower division area C requirements in broad, interdisciplinary courses or in a different discipline than the discipline in which this course is offered. Please explain how this course introduces such students to the basic assumptions, principles and methods of the discipline, and how connection is made between these fundamentals and the particular applications emphasized in the course.

The discipline of Anthropology has four major sub-fields, cultural anthropology (the study of people today), archaeology (the study of the human past through material objects), biological anthropology (the study of people as biological entities) and linguistics (the study of language in culture), each of which draw on one another for supporting data. This class is primarily focused on archaeology, which is also multidisciplinary in nature, drawing heavily from the other sub-disciplines of anthropology as well as from physical sciences—geology, chemistry, and biology—for interpreting the past. In this class, students will learn about contemporary Maya cultures from a cultural anthropology perspective. While much has changed within Maya culture since Spanish colonization, many practices and beliefs remain present in these cultures, which can be used as an analog for understanding the past. The pre-Hispanic Maya had a fully developed writing system using hieroglyphs, and many of their texts, particularly those on carved stone monuments and written on pottery, have survived the nearly 2000 years since they were created. The texts on the monuments are mythic-historic in nature, discussing the actions of the kings and elites: warfare, marriage, alliances, and political maneuverings, their occurrence at specific landmarks, and how these actions at these particular places related to the past actions of the gods and ancestors, all anchored to specific dates in history through an elaborate system of calendars (based on solar, lunar, other planetary movements, cycles of day and night, phases of the moon, human gestation, human life span etc.). Texts on ceramics tell individual stories, they often name the vessel's owners, the vessel's contents, and at times, the contexts in which the vase was used (in a feast, or commissioned for a funerary rite). Students will learn to read Maya hieroglyphic texts on a basic level, learning about Maya history, life, and worldview using actual texts. Much of what we know about the daily life of the Maya comes from burials, the purview of biological anthropology. Students will learn about the study of human remains from pathological and chemical compositional analyses, particularly isotopic and DNA studies, techniques derived from the physical sciences of chemistry and biology. These various studies of skeletons tell about daily life, warfare, and disease (pathology) as well as help reconstruct diet across social classes, migrations of individuals (isotopes), and relationships with living Maya cultures today (DNA). Through the study of ancient trade networks of economically important stone (obsidian and chert), and the formation of caves, which were landmarks of prime religious importance for the Maya, students will learn how geological sciences have helped inform our understanding of the Maya world.

5. Please specify how this course represents both past and present approaches to at least one of the following: a) spirituality, b) the arts, c) philosophy or intellectual thought.

For the ancient Maya, spirituality and philosophy were inextricably interwoven in mythology, metaphysics, and everyday practice surrounding maize, ancestors, and the landscape. For example, the Maya believed they were created from maize collected from a cave by the gods. This maize was ground into powder on a grinding stone, and the gods added drops of their blood to make dough from which the first Maya were created. This primordial corn was ground on

stones identical to the ones the Maya continued to use, but this story also indicates the ancestors came from caves. Moreover, the Maya believe that because the gods gave their blood to give life to humans, the Maya were forever indebted to them and required to provide ritual sustenance for the world to continue. Another aspect of Maya mythology revolves around the mythological heroes, the Hero Twins. This story tells about how the Hero Twins defeated the Gods of the Underworld after one was decapitated and had his head planted in the ground. After being buried, the head sprouted only to impregnate one of the gods' daughters. The daughter birthed a second generation of twins who defeated the gods through trickery and knowledge gained from their fathers. This story is the Maya philosophy of life; that life is only possible through death. It is also a metaphor for the life cycle of maize, telling farmers how to successfully grow corn. Each generation is decapitated (the cob is removed from the corn stalk, and the kernels removed from the cob), those severed heads (corn kernels) are planted in the ground, from which the next generation sprouts, and the cycle continues. Not only were spirituality and philosophy inextricably linked in ancient Maya thought, the mytho-historical stories associated with them were the primary subject matter of Maya art and writing. Thus, students study various *objets d'art*; wall murals, public sculpture, ceramics, and hieroglyphic texts for understanding ancient Maya life and history.

6. Please specify how in this course students address issues involving both the cognitive and affective aspects of human experience either using critical analysis or creative activity.

Maya writing was poetic in nature, using nested couplets and triplets, and parallel texts, often times over the course of an entire piece to tell mytho-historic stories about the lives, accomplishments, and feats of rulers, ancestors, and gods. Students will learn to read Maya hieroglyphic texts, giving them the opportunity to understand the world through the actual words written by the Maya. Moreover, the Maya created art in a variety of media, including public monuments, painted pottery, ceramic figurines, and wall murals. These works are populated by historical people and other beings interacting with one another, sometimes joking, sometimes in political dialog, other times in market exchanges, in ritual trances, and sometimes as war prisoners being publically humiliated and tortured. In all such scenes, actors contort their faces, limbs, and bodies, and various artistic devices are used showing the participants sensing the world around them and reacting emotionally to their experiences. As the course covers topics such as warfare, religion and ritual, and everyday life, students will be presented with corresponding pieces of art, while class discussions parse them for understanding the events depicted. Lastly, students will learn about the complex calendar systems, which were largely divinatory in nature. This will be done through the study of the four surviving screenfold books, called codices, including the Dresden, Madrid, Paris, and Grolier, as well as calendrical information carved on public stone monuments. The codices are divinatory almanacs for determining when certain actions should be taken, and when they should be avoided. Largely based on astronomical positions of the sun, moon, and Venus, these divinatory almanacs provided advice for rain ritual, bee keeping, warfare, hunting, etc. The public monuments were used for political propaganda, tying chronologically the actions of the commissioning ruler to the actions of the gods and ancestors.

7. Please provide specific examples of the way in which this course examines at least one of the following: aesthetic, metaphysical, or ethical manifestations of the human intellect in at least one of the following contexts: a) diverse historical contexts; b) diverse cultural contexts.

This course will be taught from a Mesoamericanist perspective, positioning the Maya as one of many state-level societies involved a dynamic, complex regional interaction network over a span of roughly 3000 years (1200 BC-1500 AD). Thus, by its very structure, this course deals with both diverse historical contexts and diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, for the people of Mesoamerica, metaphysical and ethical manifestations of the human intellect were expressed through aesthetic practices, as mentioned above in my answer to question #5. For example, students will learn about the maize god, a deity inherited from the Olmec culture. The maize god's story, that of the Hero Twins mentioned in my question #5 response, although mythological in nature is metaphor for growing corn, and was also an ethical guide for kings. Another way this course examines aesthetic, metaphysical and ethical manifestations in diverse historical and cultural contexts is through examining the rise of a military ethic in Early Classic period (AD 1—600) in central Mexico associated with the rise of the Teotihuacan empire, which included the conquest of a large portion of the Maya area, and the adoption by Late Classic period (AD 600—900) Maya rulers of Teotihuacan institutions, costumes, and gods to justify their rule. The class will also study the Maya “collapse” at the end of the Late Classic period; the downfall of the divine, warrior regents and their attendant elite. In the subsequent Post Classic period (AD 900—1500), merchants became the new elite, and with them developed extensive trade and exchange networks spanning all of Mesoamerica as evidenced by a new style of art shared among the various cultures of that time period. Lastly, this class will also review the Spanish conquest of the Maya, and study the living Maya within a global framework, specifically focusing on the decades-long Guatemalan civil war, which resulted in Maya genocide and culturicide, and how the NAFTA trade deal led to the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico.

8. *Please give examples explaining how the work assigned to students (quizzes, tests, essays, projects, etc.) allows you to measure how successful individual students are in meeting the UDGE learning objectives for this course. Please attach an example of the type of assignment you will use to evaluate how successfully students meet the UDGE learning objectives.*

UDGELOs

- **Compare and contrast relationships within and between human cultures.**
- **Describe and/or apply principles and methods that are necessary to understand the physical and natural world.**

As described above, the Maya are part of a larger cultural area archaeologists refer to as Mesoamerica. Within this system, spirituality, arts, philosophy, and intellectual thought were inextricably intertwined, not distinct categories as treated in the West. Although the Mesoamerican societies shared many similarities, they also had distinct differences and their own histories. By studying the Maya as belonging to this culture area, in particular studying the influences these other societies had on one another, students will be exposed to the various ways these categories overlapped in the different societies. This learning objectives will be measured largely through quizzes, and essay questions on exams. Sample essay questions include:

The Maya Early Classic period is largely defined by influence from the central Mexican metropolis, Teotihuacan. Drawing on artifactual, iconographic, and hieroglyphic data, discuss the nature of its influence, including its origins, and the impact it had on Maya culture throughout the Early Classic, as well as its legacy into the Late Classic period.

The people of ancient Mesoamerica believed that rain came from caves. While today we may look at this belief with an understanding of the water cycle and think it illogical, for the people of Mesoamerica it was a logical observation. Name at least three specific iconographic, or hieroglyphic, or archaeological instances demonstrating this connection between rain and caves. Drawing on geological, climatological, and/or geographical evidence, explain the Mesoamerican logic underlying the connection between rain and caves.

UDGELOs

- **Compare and contrast relationships within and between human cultures.**
- **Find, evaluate, and use authoritative and/or scholarly information to comprehend a line of inquiry.**
- **Apply numerical/mathematical concepts in order to illustrate fundamental concepts within fields of study.**
- **Communicate effectively in writing, using conventions appropriate to various contexts and diverse audiences.**
- **Describe and/or apply principles and methods that are necessary to understand the physical and natural world.**

Approximately 3 weeks of class will be devoted to learning to read Maya hieroglyphic texts. This will be done through a series of in-class workshops where students will be presented with texts that they will break down into their basic grammatical components (calendrical dates, subjects, verbs, objects), a method of instruction derived from the classical anthropological approaches to studying languages; descriptive linguistics, and structural linguistics (e.g. Saussure 2007). These workshops will have the students cut up photocopies of hieroglyphic texts and reorganize them lineally on graph paper, allowing the sentences to be in a more familiar format (left to right, rather than in zig-zagging down in columns of two). Reorganizing the sentences allows students to make informed guesses about what function each hieroglyph has in each sentence, whether it be subject, object, or verb, and ultimately, revealing the poetic structure of the texts as well as their contents.

Accompanying the in-class workshops, students will be assigned regular graded homework from the book, *Reading the Maya Hieroglyphs* (Coe and Van Stone 2005). Through using actual Maya texts, students will learn how to identify the various classes of hieroglyphic signs that appear in Maya writing, learn how the Maya calendar system works (see answer to question 4 above for further detail), their worldview (a belief in an animate world controlling natural forces), and how to break hieroglyphs down into their constituent parts to use Mayan language dictionaries and grammars to read them. Each chapter in the book contains summary exercises that the students will complete for homework. This section of class will be evaluated

with students being presented with a previously unseen text that they will be required to translate.

Coe, Michael D., and Mark Van Stone 2005 *Reading the Maya glyphs*. Second ed. Thames & Hudson, New York.

Saussure, Ferdinand de, Charles Bally, Albert Sechehaye, and Albert Riedlinger 2007 *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Roy Harris. Open Court, Chicago.

UDGELOs:

- **Communicate effectively in writing, using conventions appropriate to various contexts and diverse audiences.**
- **Find, evaluate, and use authoritative and/or scholarly information to comprehend a line of inquiry.**
- **Compare and contrast relationships within and between human cultures.**

These learning outcomes will also be met through a research project detailed in the syllabus.