All the earth is a grave and nothing escapes it;  
nothing is so perfect that it does not descend to its tomb.  
Rivers, rivulets, fountains, and waters flow,  
but never return to their joyful beginnings;  
anxiously they hasten on to the vast realms of the rain god.  
As they widen their banks, they also fashion the sad urn of their burial.  
Filled are the bowels of the earth with pestilential dust  
once flesh and bone, once animate bodies of men  
who sat upon thrones, decided cases, presided in council,  
commanded armies conquered provinces, possessed treasure, destroyed temples,  
exulted in their pride, majesty, fortune, praise and power.  
Vanished are these glories, just as the fearful smoke vanishes  
that belches forth from the infernal fires of Popocatepetl.  
Nothing recalls them but the written page.

Netzahualcoyotl (Fasting-Coyote)  
King of Texcoco (1431-72)

In this course we examine art, cosmology, architecture, mythology, literature, social  
structure, religion, social roles, ideology, economic and political organization, world  
view, and the family of Ancient Mexican society. The course covers the pre-classic,  
classic, and post-classic periods, focusing on several cultural areas including the Olmec,  
Teotihuacan, Monte Alban and the Zapotec and Mixtec of Oaxaca, the Toltecs, the Maya,  
and the Aztec, or Mexica peoples. Among other topics of interest to the course are the  
calendar, writing, concepts of space and time, the ballgame, tribute, human sacrifice and  
bloodletting, sacred plants, and specific Mesoamerican deities.
Course and Reading Schedule (read items before you come to class):

**WEEK 1**
Introduction to Mesoamerica (geography, periods, languages)
Mesoamerican cyclic world view, balance, harmony, duality, world centering
Oxomoco & Cipactonal
READ Miller Ch. 1; Berdan Ch.2

**WEEK 2**
Creation: *The Five Suns*
Mesoamerican Ideology and Social Organization
Introduction to the Calendar: day names—Bring your Codex Nuttall
READ Miller Ch. 2

**WEEK 3**
Calendar: space, time, days, Trecenas, Veintanas, 260-day sacred, 365-day solar, and venus calendars, calendar round, long count
Religion, offerings, sacred, profane—Reading the Nuttall, bring it to class.
Smoking Mirror, Feathered Serpent and Rain God (Tlaloc)
READ Miller Ch.3; Berdan Ch. 3

**WEEK 4**
Preclassic Period: Olmec, Colossal heads, were-jaguars, rain babies, jade, basalt
Olmec; reading the Nuttall, bring it to class.
READ Miller Ch.4; Berdan Ch. 5

**WEEK 5**
Classic Period: urban planning, and sacred geography
Butterflies, warfare, murals, pulque, pottery
Teotihuacan,
Feathered Serpent, Great Goddess/Spider Woman
READ Miller Ch. 6; Berdan Ch. 6

**WEEK 6**
Classic Period: Maya and the *Popol Vuh*
Maya:, Xibalba, Maize God, Hero Twins: Hunahpu and Xabalanque, Ballgame
READ Miller Ch. 7; Berdan Ch. 4

**WEEK 7**
Maya: Chocolate; reading the Nuttall, bring it to class.
Maya: Lord Pacal, Lady Xoc, Dresden Codex: Venus pages

**WEEK 8**
Pre-Columbian books and writing
Sacred books, writing, scribes
reading the Nuttall, bring it to class.
READ Berdan Ch. 6
MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK 9
Monte Alban: Zapotec, Xipe Totec, Danzantes
Royal lineages, warriors; reading the Nuttall, bring it to class
READ Miller Ch. 5

WEEK 10
Toltec
Post-classic: Toltec
READ Miller Ch. 8

WEEK 11
Mixtec: Lord 8 Deer, Tiger Claw, Tilantongo
READ Codex Nuttall

WEEK 12
Mixtec: Finishing the Nuttall
Ocho Venado y Seis Mono
CODEX NUTTALL READING DUE

WEEK 13
Aztec: Tenochtitlan and the Mexica
Huitzilopochtli, New Fire Ceremony, Mictlantecuhtli, Coatlicue, Coyolxauhqui
READ Miller Ch. 9; Berdan Ch. 1 and 4

WEEK 14
Tenochtitlan: Child rearing, poetry, warfare
Codex Borbonicus, Codex Florentine
PAPER DUE
READ Berdan Ch. 7

WEEK 15
Aztec poetry and literature
After the arrival of the Spaniards
READ Berdan Ch. 8

WEEK 16
Final Exam

Texts:
1. Miller, Mary  Art of Mesoamerica
2. Berdan, Francis  The Aztecs of Central Mexico: an Imperial Society
3. Nuttall, Zelia  The Codex Nuttall

Assignments:
• Nuttall Reading: (25%)
Acquire a notebook and take detailed notes of your reading of the Codex Nuttall pages 42-84. Include all dates, precise character description with type of dress, implements, objects, and symbols accompanying phrases. Every four pages you must provide an overall summary of the events presented in those four pages of the Nuttall and their possible significance, i.e. What is the story about? What happened in the last four pages? How do they seem to relate to the previous four pages? Who are the characters presented and what do they do or what happens to them? Have we seen any of those characters elsewhere in the codex and if so, in what context? Do we know the relationships between 8 Deer and others who appear on the pages of the Nuttall? Include in your answers to these questions hypotheses about the significance of the objects you see associated with the characters. Your understanding should increase as you become familiar with Mesoamerican concepts, ideology, society, and iconography. Include a three page summary of the events occurring between pages 42-84 at the end of your notebook.

- In-Depth Study: (25%)
  In-depth research of an art work, historical or mythological figure, sacred symbol, mural, site, practice, belief, phenomenon or symbol represented in the codices, an architectural structure, calendrical aspect, or other pre-columbian Mesoamerican-specific phenomenon. Analysis includes concepts discussed in class (i.e. world view, social structure, political organization, aesthetics, function, meaning), employs critical thinking, and places the topic of study within a larger social, political, economic, historic and ideological context. Some examples of an in-depth study include chocolate, trade, jade, the venus calendar, butterfly symbolism, military organization, women and power, Mexica poetry, healing, education, child rearing, etc. Choose a topic that has not been discussed in detail in class. Before you do all the work, discuss your topic with the professor to ensure its viability. Five pages double-spaced. Five minimum bibliographic sources, only one of which is electronic.

- Midterm Exam (25%)
- Final Exam (25%)
NOTE: Exams are based on the lectures, videos, class discussion topics, and readings. Attendance is crucial to achieve a satisfactory grade.
Extra Credit: Attend Museum of Man exhibit on Maya. Bring back ticket stub.
Further Bibliographic Sources:
Bernal, Ignacio

Blanton, Richard E. Stephen A, Kowalewski, Gary M. Feinman, and Laura M. Finsten

Berdan, David

Chase, Diane Z. and Arlen F. Chase

Miller, Michael D.

Diaz del Castillo, Bernal
1956 *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico 1517-1521.* Kingsport: Kingsport Press.

Freudel, David, Linda Schele, and Joy Parker

Gillespie, Susan D.

Goetz, Delia and Sylvanus G. Morley

Gruzinski, Serge

Léon-Portilla, Miguel
1992 *The Aztec Image of Self and Society.* University of Utah Press.

López-Austin, Alfredo
1996 *The Rabbit on the Face of the Moon.* University of Utah Press.

McKeever Furst, Jill Lesley
1995 *The Natural History of the Soul in Ancient Mexico.* Yale University Press.

Miller, Mary and Karl Taube

Monaghan, John

Schele, Linda and Mary Ellen Miller
Soustelle, Jacques
1963  *The daily life of the Aztecs, on the eve of the Spanish conquest.*

Taube, Karl
1995  *Aztec and Maya Myths.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Wolf, Eric
1959  *Sons of the Shaking Earth.* University of Chicago Press.