

Duluth Campus

Department of Sociology -Anthropology
College of Liberal Arts

228 Cina Hall
1123 University Drive
Duluth, Minnesota 55812-3306

Office: 218-726-7551
Fax: 218-726-7759

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Ancient Middle America Week 2

“Mesoamerica: The Area and Its People”

I hope your first week with Ancient Middle America went well, and that you are enjoying both the texts and the class presentations.

This week we will continue to focus on slide materials aimed at **Orientation** and setting the **basic analytic, theoretical and historical framework** for the course, and, as time permits, we will set off to visit the “Nine Brothers” in the Sonora Desert in northern Mexico. This information on the “Nine Brothers,” and later information on the area where I lived—around the great Pyramids of Teotihuacán in the Central Highlands—will be very useful **“ethnographic analogies”** later on when we begin to look at prehistoric archaeological sites.

The basic orientation materials, including the visits to the “Nine Brothers” and rural Hidalgo will run into next week, and probably even into the week after.

Thursday of this week we’ll have our first look at the **Aztecs**. Along with the **“ethnographic analogy”** materials on contemporary peoples, it is important to ***try to begin to think a little bit from the point of view of the Ancient Middle American people themselves***. The best-known peoples are, of course, the Aztecs.

So on Thursday we’ll have a look at ***“The Fifth World of the Aztecs”*** in order to begin to try to understand Mesoamerica at the time of the first contact with the Spanish, and in order to try to begin to see the world through Aztec eyes.



We’ll do the same Week 8 with the Maya, when we look at the video “Forests of the Maya.” Both of these films are part of *Nature’s Spirits of the Jaguar* series. And with these films we’ll begin to see **how important the natural environments, and especially the animals in it, were to the thinking of the ancient Aztecs and Maya.**

It's a good time to have a look at the information for your **Case Study**, which you can find at http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth3618/case_studies/maCS-01.html. Your Case Study is basically a short report on one or more *individuals* involved with Ancient Middle America. This can include sixteenth century Europeans.

Your Informal Project Statement for your Case Study, or Project Proposal, is due by the end of Week 5, Friday, 3 October 2014. Basically that's a short summary informal statement of what you are interested in doing, how you think you might go about it, and what resources you are thinking about using. If you have trouble getting started on that—which is basically picking one or more people to write on—let me know and I'll help you work out an interesting topic.




If you have any **questions** about anthropology, or about the class and the assignments, please let me know: <mailto:troufs@d.umn.edu>. And that goes especially for questions about getting started on your Case Study.

Be sure to check the details of the **activities and assignments** of the week in your **Moodle** folder. With the Week 2 Activities we'd like to find out a little bit about your thoughts on Ancient Middle American topics, and your take on Ancient Mesoamerican chocolate . . .

-  Pre Assessing Yourself (Due by the End of Week 2, Friday, 12 September 2014) Feedback
-  Response to the film "The Fifth World of the Aztecs" episode 4 of the Spirits of the Jaguar series (Due at the End of Week 3, Friday, 19 September, 2014; Your Name Will Be Logged) Feedback

Share your ideas, including study-questions with your classmates. Discuss them on-line with the others in class . . .

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-  Wiki for Project Collaboration
-  Live chat for Project Collaboration
- <https://ay13.moodle.umn.edu/mod/wiki/view.php?id=227837>  Wiki for Project Collaboration
- QUICKMAIL (see sidebar)

The above items will be found at the top of your **Moodle** folder under "Student Collaboration Space".

A final note: As I mentioned in class on the first day, students in the past have commented that there is **TOO MUCH INFORMATION** available on the class **Moodle** and supporting WebSites. **Yes, there is a lot of information, no doubt about it**, and it can be confusing at first. It's helpful when starting out to remember that **the required information for the course is contained in the middle panel of your Moodle folder**. The information in the sidebars and many of the links are just there should you find those interesting and/or helpful.



Your **(1) Topics** and **(2) Readings** and **(3) Activities listings** are available in the **Week 2 Block** of your **Moodle** folder.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to post them on **Moodle** or e-mail troufs@d.umn.edu.

Best Regards,

Tim Roufs