

## AH/SS 399A: Maya Art, Architecture, and Culture

College of Visual Arts, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

Spring 2007

3 credits

Meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 – 9:50 a.m.

Summit 210



Maya Rabbit Scribe, Image from  
Funerary Vase. Illus by M.Coe.

Dr. Sue Short, Associate Professor

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<http://shortstreet.net/cva.htm>

651-224-3416

Office hours:

Monday: 11:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday: 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Wednesday: 11:30 – 4:00 p.m.

Thursday: 11:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Office location: Summit 306 (third floor, near computer classrooms and lab)

### I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will study the ancient Maya civilization by examining Maya ways of life, including the crucial roles of ideology, cosmology, astronomy, and pictographic writing in Maya culture. Maya architecture, sculpture, painting, ceramics, and lithics will be the focus of the course. We will also examine the Maya pictographic language and see how the elaborate glyphs augment our understanding of Maya history and culture. Course activities will include readings, lecture, class discussion, and videos. There will be two mid-term exams and a final exam. A research project and class presentation will also be required. The course objective is for students to gain a full understanding of the meaning and significance of art and architecture as active social and political instruments in the ancient Maya culture.

### II. LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course will emphasize the following CVA Learning goal:

**E. Knowledge of diverse cultures and beliefs, as a way of understanding human interactions and the diverse contexts of all art and design.**

Learning more about the ancient Maya civilization exposes students to a culture that had significantly different ideological and political systems than found in cultures based on Western European ideas. The recent major motion picture, *Apocalypto*, presents an example of a highly distorted vision of ancient Maya life, as filtered through European standards and values. In this course, students will encounter Maya culture on its own terms and seek to understand its values and principles and learn the valuable lessons it offers for contemporary life instead of condemning it for ancient practices at odds with Western European expectations.

### III. METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

Assessments will be conducted at various points in the course to measure the development of student sensitivity to non-Western cultural ideas and practices.

### IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### A. Evaluation and Grading

##### Weight of Assignments:

Midterm Exam #1:	20%
Midterm Exam #2:	20%
Final Exam:	30%
Research Project:	30%

#### Examinations

The two mid-term examinations and the final examination will consist of short answer and essay questions. The midterm exams will cover only material addressed during that time interval, while the final examination will cover material for the entire course. The content of the examinations will emphasize analysis and synthesis of materials. Students may use a “cheat sheet” for reference during the exams, consisting of one 8 ½ x 11 inch page with notes and drawings. The cheat sheet must be written by the student and cannot consist merely of copied and pasted text from the course web site or other reference sources.

#### Research Project

Instructions for the research project, which will involve working with an exhibition at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts through April 8, 2007, will be distributed separately.

## **B. Attendance**

Classes that meet 2 times per week recognize 4 absences as grounds for failure.

Classes that meet 1 time per week recognize 3 absences as grounds for failure.

2 tardy are equivalent to 1 absence. After 15 minutes, a tardy becomes an absence.

A student will forfeit all rights and privileges for the course failed due to attendance and/or tardy absences.

Excused absences are only granted due to hospitalization and/ or death in the family. Students are required to show documentation of their circumstance to the Office of Academic Affairs. This office will communicate to the given faculty.

CVA recognizes all religions and will grant excused absences for documented religious holidays. Students are required to register the particular times and dates of these holidays at the beginning of each semester with the Office of Academic Affairs. This office will communicate to the given faculty.

Students are responsible for understanding this policy and tracking their own attendance and tardiness.

## **C. Academic Honor Code**

### **I. Principles**

Every student at the College of Visual Arts must adhere to high standards of honorable behavior. Academic work for all liberal arts and studio classes must be a student's own, with appropriate credit given for use of the words, images, and ideas of another. If a student uses fraudulent means to obtain grades or other advantages in academic work, he or she has not truly gained in knowledge, understanding, or skill. Grades, honors, and other marks of achievement lose their meaning; the reputation of the College of Visual Arts is diminished and the value of its B. F. A. degree reduced. It is therefore essential to the integrity of the college that every member of the community -- students, faculty, staff, and administration -- uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

### **II. Definition and Examples of Academic Dishonesty**

#### *Cheating*

1. Copying another student's answers on a quiz or exam
2. Using notes or other source materials on a quiz or exam without the instructor's permission
3. Collaborating on a take-home exam meant to be completed individually
4. Using electronic devices such as phones, computers, or calculators during an exam without the
5. Copying another student's homework assignment
6. Using answers from an instructor's version of a textbook for a homework assignment meant to be completed individually.

#### *Plagiarizing*

1. Presenting for either a liberal arts or studio class the work of another without acknowledgement, as though it were your own
2. Using the "cut and paste" method of constructing a paper from internet or print sources without synthesizing the ideas to create your own independent thesis or identifying the sources
3. Using information, ideas, or images from any source (internet, book, article, a classmate's research paper or artwork) without proper attribution
4. Using the exact words of another without using quotation marks and citing the source
5. Paraphrasing the words of another without citing the source

#### *Making multiple submissions*

1. Submitting, without prior permission, a paper, project, or other assignment completed in one class to fulfill a requirement for another class

#### *Facilitating academic dishonesty*

1. Allowing another student to copy answers from your exam paper
2. Giving or selling another student a completed assignment, project, or paper
3. Informing students in a later section of a class the questions on an exam

#### *Stealing or defacing materials or other property*

1. Theft or defacement of any materials or property belonging to another student or member of the staff or faculty
2. Theft or defacement of any materials or property belonging to the college
3. Theft or defacement of library books or other materials
4. Theft of proprietary software

#### *Using materials in an unauthorized manner*

1. Unauthorized entry into college property such as classrooms, studios, computer labs, faculty offices, or library
2. Unauthorized use or manipulation of studio equipment or computer programs

### *Falsifying academic records*

1. Alteration of grade books or files
2. Use of personal relationships to gain grades or favors
3. Any attempt to obtain grades or credit through fraudulent means.

### III. Process for Dealing with Violations of the Honor Code

The College of Visual Arts will treat violations of the honor code with the utmost seriousness. If a student is accused of academic dishonesty, the student will be informed of the alleged violation and the evidence on which the allegation is based. If circumstances warrant, the instructor and relevant department chair, in consultation with the academic dean, may decide on a penalty such as a failing grade or 0 on the assignment or exam or a failing grade in the course. A record of the violation will be filed in the office of the dean, who will maintain a permanent record of reported student violations. Students may appeal to the relevant department chair. If dissatisfied with that decision, the student may appeal to the academic dean. The decision from that office will be final. In special circumstances, a student may appeal to a standing hearing committee. Second and subsequent violations of the honor code will be dealt with by the academic dean. Students may appeal decisions to the standing committee, the decision of which is final.

### IV. Penalties for Violations

Penalties for students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty may include

1. A grade of F or 0 on an assignment, paper, or exam
2. A grade of F for the course
3. Suspension from the college
4. Expulsion from the college

### D. Student Responsibilities

1. Treat class time as an opportunity to learn.
2. Abide by the CVA Attendance Policy, Honor Code, Grievance Procedure and Code of Conduct (see Student Handbook).
3. Arrive on class on time, with all materials, ready to work steadily throughout the session.
4. Be prepared with all your required materials for every class.
5. Complete assignments on time. There will be no exceptions.
6. Cite all research, text and image sources (see Student Handbook and visit <http://www.shortstreet.net/WRsec4.htm>)
7. Participate in all class discussions and critiques.
8. Confront difficulties in your work in the spirit of learning, creative exploration, and personal growth.
9. Ask for help from your instructors when needed.
10. Avail yourself of all available support services including advising, tutorials, and workshops.
11. Respect your fellow students at all times.
12. Disruptive behavior, including inappropriate talking in class, is not tolerated. Students whose behavior is disturbing the class will be asked to leave and will be marked absent.
13. You are responsible for cleaning up after yourself at the end of each class.
14. No radios, players, walkmans, pagers, or cellular phones are allowed in class.
15. No smoking is permitted anywhere in any CVA building. Smoke only in designated outdoor smoking areas on campus.

### V. RESOURCES AND READINGS

#### **Required Text:**

Sharer, Robert J. *The Ancient Maya*, Sixth Edition. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. (Called Sharer in assignments).

#### **Web site:**

A web site with the course syllabus, the research project assignment, outlines of class lectures, and supplementary images and other materials is available for students at <http://www.shortstreet.net/Maya/maya.htm>.

### VI. MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

Students will need the usual note taking supplies for class sessions (paper, pen or pencil). Access to the Internet and a personal computer will be needed to view and download materials from the web site and to complete the research project.

### VII. COURSE METHODOLOGY

Course activities will include readings, lecture, class discussion, and videos. There will be two mid-term exams and a final exam. A research project and class presentation will also be required. The course objective is for students to gain a full understanding of the meaning and significance of art and architecture as active social and political instruments in the ancient Maya culture.

VIII. OUTLINE AND OBJECTIVES

**Course schedule**  
(Subject to revision)

**Overall plan:**

1. First section covers the cultural background of the Maya civilization in general terms.
2. Second section traces cultural development at specific Maya cities from the Preclassic through Late Classic periods.
3. Third section follows development through the cities of the Terminal Classic and Postclassic periods and synthesizes concepts concerning the meanings of the Maya architecture, sculpture, ceramics, murals, and other artifacts.

Tuesday	Thursday
1.23 Introduction, Assessment exercise	1.25 <b>Sharer 2</b> Video: <i>The Maya</i> ; Overview of Maya culture
1.30 <b>Sharer 1 &amp; 2</b> Overview of Maya Culture; Natural Setting.	2.1 <b>Sharer 4</b> Origins of Maya Civilization
2.6 <b>Sharer 11</b> Subsistence and trade.	2.8 <b>Sharer 12</b> Social organization. Political systems.
2.13 <b>Sharer 13</b> Ideology, cosmology.	2.15 <b>Sharer 13</b> Cosmology, Ahauob, <i>Popol Vuh</i> .
2.20 <b>Sharer 3</b> Astronomy, calendar.	2.22 <b>Sharer 3</b> Maya writing
2.27 Catch-up. Discuss progress on research projects. Review for exam.	3.1 <b>Midterm exam #1</b>
3.6 <b>Sharer 5</b> Video: <i>Dawn of the Maya</i> , Preclassic	3.8 <b>Sharer 6</b> Late Preclassic
3.13 <b>Sharer 7</b> Early Classic	3.15 <b>Sharer 7</b> Early Classic
3.27 <b>Sharer 8</b> Late Classic	3.29 <b>Sharer 8</b> Late Classic
4.3 <b>Sharer 8</b> Finish Late Classic..	4.5 Video: <i>Lost Kings of the Maya</i> (about Copan)
4.10 Synthesis and review: Preclassic through Late Classic periods.	4.12 <b>Midterm Exam #2</b>
4.17 <b>Sharer 9</b> Terminal classic	4.19 <b>Sharer 9, 10</b> Terminal Classic, Postclassic.
4.24 <b>No class</b> [Museum project comp time]	4.26 <b>Sharer 10</b> Postclassic
5.1 <b>Sharer Epilogue</b> End of the Ancient Maya literate world. Spanish conquest.	5.3 Review, Synthesis of course material Final assessment and evaluation.
5.8 <b>Final exam</b> <b>Final paper is due.</b>	5.10 <b>No class (PF reviews)</b>

**IX. AGREEMENT**

I have received, read, and understand the course syllabus for as well as the CVA Student Handbook. The instructor has, within the structure of the class, explained the material contained within the syllabus.

I hereby agree to abide by the structure outlined in the syllabus and by the policies dictated in the CVA Student Handbook.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information (please print clearly):

CVA box number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty advisor: \_\_\_\_\_