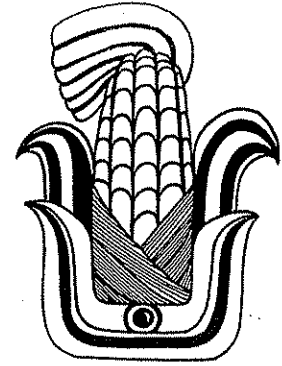


RSOC 33 Maya Spirituality
Religious Studies, Santa Clara University
Fall Quarter 2006

T/TH 11:50-1:35 Bannan 333
Jean Molesky-Poz, Ph.D.
Office Hours: T/TH 1:45-3:00, and by apt.
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Spirituality of the Highland Maya (27122)

"It's about cycles. For the Maya, things are hidden, revealed, hidden, revealed . . .
This is a time of manifestation." Matias Miguel, Kanjob'al Ajq'ijab'

This course introduces contemporary highland Maya spiritualities and their rootedness in Mesoamerican culture. We look at the contemporary public re-emergence and transformed continuities of ancient practice, as well as Maya participation in evangelical religions and inculturated Catholicism. The first unit examines legacies and foundational principles of contemporary Maya cosmovision, spirituality, and ceremonial practices, seeking their legacy in sacred geography/space, sacred time (Chol Q'ij), and ritual in ancient Mesoamerican culture. Here we investigate astronomy, archaeology, political history, mythology, including *Popol Wuj*, and hieroglyphs to illuminate root meanings. The second unit, discusses the public emergence of Maya spiritual practice, its theology, and its distinct cosmovision, and their public reclamation of Maya sacred place, time and ritual. We consider the recent cultural, historical and political contexts of genocide, human rights efforts, and globalization processes on Maya beliefs; we also step back to investigate Maya belief expressions in the encounter with Spanish Catholic colonialism, its emergent syncretic forms, Maya response to Catholic Action of the 1950s, and to Protestant fundamentalism since the 1970s. The third unit, examines transformed continuities in contemporary spiritual practices and beliefs in southern Mexico and Guatemalan highlands, including emergent forms of evangelical fundamentalism, and inculturated Catholicism. Prerequisite: Introductory level course (SCTR 1-19; TESP 1-19, or RSOC 1-19).

Course meets both second level Religious Studies and World Cultures & Societies cores.

Required Texts:

Molesky-Poz. 2006. *Contemporary Maya Spirituality: The Ancient Ways Are Not Lost*.
Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Montejo, Victor: 1988. *El Kanil: Man of Lightning*. (purchased in class)

Tedlock, Dennis. 1985. *Popul Vuh: The Definitive Edition of the Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life and the Glories of Gods and Kings*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

These are the basic texts for the course. Further readings, maps, visuals will be posted via ERES. Password: RSOC33

Requirements:

Attendance & Participation (15%): Students are expected to attend each class, to have completed all the readings and be ready to engage in conversation with observations, connections, and questions for each class. Attendance is taken at the beginning class. Three unexcused absences is a drop in a letter grade; three late arrivals equal one absence. (15%)

Quizzes, constitute 15% of your grade. (15%)

Exams. Two midterms (25 % each) (50%)

Final paper Dialogue: *Contemporary Maya Spirituality and El Kanil: Man of Lightning* (20%)

Incompletes, Plagiarism and Cheating. Late papers, make-up exams, or incompletes are not acceptable except under unusual circumstances and with prior permission. Please speak with me in anticipation of a problem. In accordance with the Student Handbook, plagiarism and cheating of any kind are a serious breach of morality and can lead to expulsion.

. The Roots and Legacies of Maya Spirituality

Week One **Encounters with the Maya:**
Sept. 19 Introduction, orientations, inventories, regional geography & the construction of knowledge
What do we know of the Maya? How do we know it?
What do we want to know? How will we know it?

Video: Contemporary Maya (BBC)

Sept 21 **Mesoamerica: Legacies for the Maya**
Mesoamerica, its geography, human settlements, cultural markers, with focus on Olmec Teotihuacan, Toltec and Aztec influences. Roots of Maya culture: astronomy, the concept "zero," writing system, mathematics, irrigation systems, temple-pyramid structures in urban centers. Video: Palenque (20 minutes)

- 1) Construct two maps (from class notes or refined from websites below)
 - a) topographical map of Mesoamerica, identifying mountain ranges, rivers and riverine valleys.
 - b) settlement map identifying sites and time periods of Olmecs, Veracruz, Zapotec, Teotihuacan Western Mexico, Lowland Maya, Highland Maya, Mixtec kingdoms, Zapotec, Toltec and Aztec.I suggest you begin with this geographical/chronological interactive map of Mesoamerica, http://www.ballgame.org/sub_section.asp?section=1&sub_section=1

Optional: Resources for Maps of Mesoamerica.

Regional Overview of Mesoamerica *

<http://weber.ucsd.edu/~anthclub/quetzalcoatl/map1.htm>

Peoples and migrations of Precolumbian Mexico map: *

<http://weber.ucsd.edu/~anthclub/quetzalcoatl/map2.htm>

Topographical maps:

<http://sacarcims.sac.accd.edu/website/maya2/viewer.htm>

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/guatemala.html>

2) Molesky-Poz. 57-62. If you were to meet Calixta, what questions would you have for her? Questions written for discussion.

3) Browse: Maya civilization for following topics.

Cities of the ancient Maya, Maya Society and "Cosmology and Religion, Maya today.

<http://www.civilization.ca/civil/maya/mmc01eng.html#menu>

Note take in a way that you can begin to describe and inquire into characteristics of the Maya world. This website is particularly valuable as a reference tool.

Week Two
Sept 26

Astronomy, Kings, Queens, Calendars, Ball Games, & Hieroglyphics

Celestial cycles, codices, calendars, Rituals of Sacrifice, Ballgames, Foliating Cross,

Video: *The Lost King of the Maya* (Copan)

1) Maya Astronomy: <http://www.civilization.ca/civil/maya/mmc01eng.html#menu>
Note-take in a way that helps establish the Maya relation to celestial cycles.

2) Spero, *Beyond Rainstorms: The Kawak as an Ancestor, Warrior, and Patron of Witchcraft*, Hand-out, 1-11. An indepth examination of Kawak, the Earth Lord, which will serve as foundational for understanding of Maya cosmovision.

3) The Sport of Life and Death: The Mesoamerican ball game: This site is an educational website developed in conjunction with an art exhibit. <http://www.ballgame.org/>
Note-take as this will serve as a valuable tool for discussion today, and for understanding our next text, *Popul Vuh*.

Bring *Popul Vuh* to class.

Sept 28

Cosmic Beginnings, the Ball Game & Creation of Humans **Popul Vuh: The Counsel Book of Seeing & Cosmic Origins**

Popul Vuh: Introduction, 21-33.

Popul Vuh: This is the beginning of the Ancient Word . . . ", 63-74.

Week Three
October 3

The Tricksters and their Destiny

The Defeat and Destruction of the Day of Seven Macaw,

Film: Selections from *Popul Vuh*

Popul Vuh, 77-88, Destruction of Seven Macaw

Popul Vuh, 91-104 Ballgame of Hunahpu and 7 Hunahpu in Xibalba

October 5

The Hero Twins: Outwitting the Lords of Xibalba

Popul Vuh: The Hero Twins, 104-142.

Week Four
October 10

The Creation of the First Humans

**Here it is: The Epitaph, the Death of Hunahpu and Xbalanque,
And Creation of the First Human Persons. Film: Popul Vuh**

Popul Vuh, 130-175.

October 12 Midterm #1

Week Five **Encounters between Two Worlds**

October 17 **Interpreting Colonial Accounts**

Social Construction of Maya Under Spanish Catholic Colonial Projects

Development of *cofradías*, *congregaciones*, *reducciones*, *repartimiento*, *xyncretism*

Compare: the accounts of Pedro de Alvarado and Bartolome de las Casas

Account Given by Pedro de Alvarado to Hernando Cortes, 53-61, E-Res

Selection from *The Devastation of the Indies*, 56-74, E-Res

Orellana, Sandra. "Religion" *The Tzutuñil Maya*, 195-215. E-Res.

. . The Public Emergence and Florescence of Maya Spirituality

October 19 "It's no longer covered up, but time for a manifestation of light."

Film clip: *A New Cycle of Light*

Molesky-Poz, Introduction, 1-8, and

Chapter 1, *A New Cycle of Light*, 9-33

Week Six **Maya Cosmivision and Spirituality: Transformed Continuities**

October 24 **"The Earth is Not Ours, We are only Renting our Time Here"**

Molesky-Poz, Chapter 2, *Maya Cosmivision and Spirituality*, 34-54.

October 26 ***Ajq' Ijab'*: Maya Daykeepers: Answerability, Transformation, Responsibility**

Molesky-Poz, Chapter 3, *Ajq' Ijab'* "To Enter the Mystery is our Reality," 55-89

Week Seven

October 31 **The Flowering of the Dead.**

Carlsen, "The Flowering of the Dead," in *The War for the Heart & Soul of a Highland Maya Town*, 47-67, E-res

Bring *Contemporary Maya Spirituality* to class.

November 2 **The Aesthetics of Sacred Geography**

Sacred Geography, Sacred Sites, Quatrefoil Mapping,

Molesky-Poz, Chapter 4, *Sacred Geography*, 93-126.

Week Eight **The Aesthetics of Sacred Space, Sacred Time, and Movement**

November 7 Sacred Time: The *Chol Q'ij*, The heart of the wisdom of the Maya

Molesky-Poz, Chapter 5, *The Calendar*, 127-153.

Browse, under Writing and Hieroglyphics, Calendar, Astronomy, Calendar

<http://www.civilization.ca/civil/maya/mmc01eng.html#menu>

November 9 **Ritual Practice; Maya Ceremony, Fire Ritual, Divination, Maximon**
Molesky-Poz, Portal xi-xviii, Chapter 6, Ceremony: The Fire Speaks, 154-168,
Chap.7, The Ancient Things Received from our Parents, 171-176.

. . . Pentecostalism, Evangelical Christianity, Inculturated Catholicism

Week Nine

November 14 **Emergent Forms in Guatemala's Multi-Religious Society**
Evangelical Protestantism among the Maya

Martin. "New Spiritual Communications: Healings and Tongues, 163-184. E-Res.
Goldin and Metz, "Invisible Converts to Protestantism in Highland Guatemala
61-80, E-Res.

November 16 **Inculturated Catholicism**

Kovic, Mayan Catholics in Chiapas, Mexico, 187-206, E-Res..

Midterm

November 21-23 Thanksgiving

Week Ten The Maya Movement, Indigenous Theology in Guatemala

November 30 Theological Innovations and Issues of Identity among indigenous Maya populations

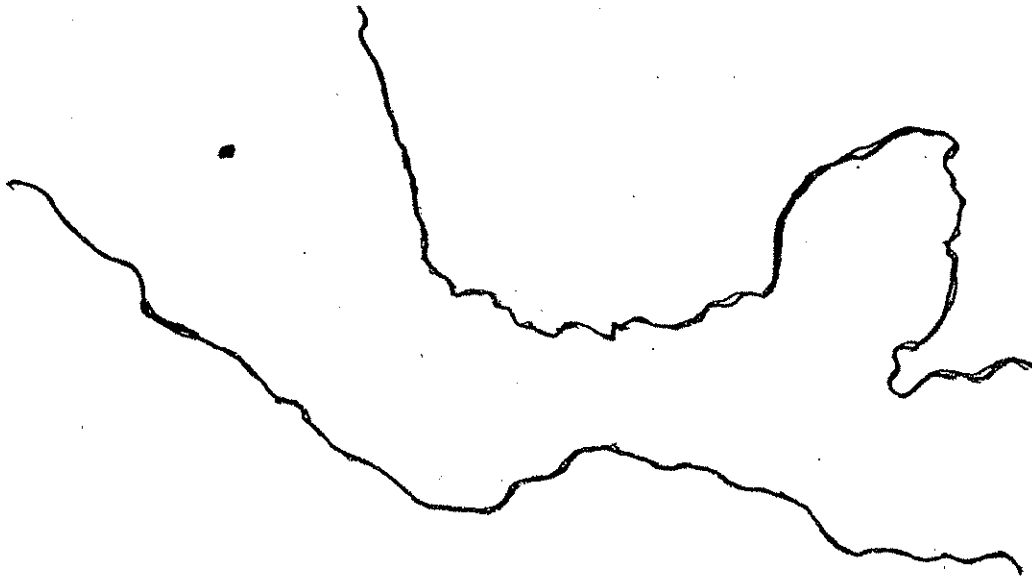
Garrard-Burnett, "God Was Already Here When Columbus Arrived, 125-146, E-Res.
Montejo: *El Kanil: Man of Lightning*,

November 28 **Maya mythic traditions: a story from Jacaltenango**

"The use of light and subsequent enlightenment and the responsibility for the good of
others, which is inherent in the use of light" (Thorn

Montejo: *El Kanil: Man of Lightning*

Final will be a 3-4 page dialogue paper, using Joanne Spero's "Beyond Rainstorms: The Kawak as an Ancestor, Warrior, and Patron of Witchcraft," Jean Molesky-Poz's *Contemporary Maya Spirituality*, and Virginia Garrard-Burnett's "God Was Already Here When Columbus Arrived," to illuminate Victor Montejo's *El Kanil: Man of Lightning*.



Mesoamerican Time Line for Approximate Historical Perspective

