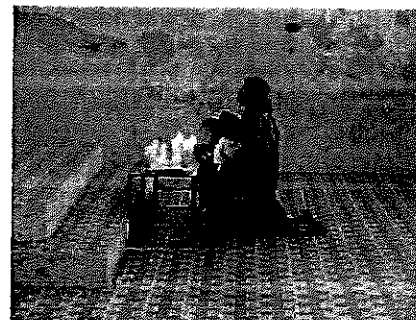
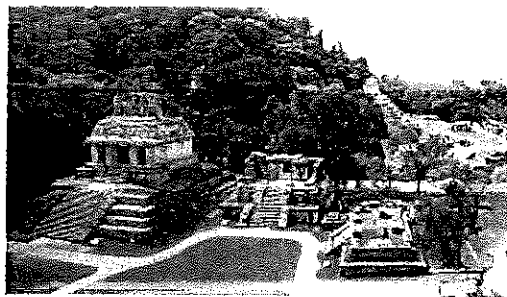


**RSOC 33 Maya Spirituality**  
**Religious Studies Department**  
**Santa Clara University**  
**Winter 2017 Jean Molesky-Poz, Ph. D.**  
**T/TH 12:10 – 1:50 Kenna 212**

[jmoleskypoz@scu.edu](mailto:jmoleskypoz@scu.edu)  
 Off. Hrs. T/Th 9:45 – 10:45; and by apt.  
 Kenna 307



### **Spirituality of the Maya (47638)**

"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 examines highland and lowland Maya spiritualities within Mesoamerican culture, and the contemporary global context. The first unit examines foundational principles of Maya worldview, inquiring into sacred geography/space, time (Chol Q'ij), and ritual in ancient Mesoamerican culture. Here we investigate geography, astronomy, archaeology, political history, art history, literature, including *Popol Wuj*, to illuminate root meanings. The second unit investigates Maya belief expressions in the encounter with Spanish Catholic colonialism, emergent syncretic forms, Maya response to Catholic Action of the 1950s, faith during the civil war and Protestant fundamentalism since the 1970s. We inquire into the public emergence of Maya spiritual practice, its theology, and its distinct cosmovision, and the public reclamation of Maya sacred place, time and ritual. We ask why there is this reclamation in the cultural, historical and political contexts of genocide, human rights efforts, and globalization processes on Maya beliefs. The third unit examines transformed continuities in contemporary spiritual practices and beliefs in southern Mexico and Guatemalan highlands, including emergent forms of evangelical fundamentalism, neo-Pentecostalism, and inculturated Catholicism among the Maya in diaspora. 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.  
 Accepted for Pathways: Politics and Religion; Beauty;

**PATHWAYS: EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT PATHWAYS** You can find information about Pathways on the Core Curriculum website <http://scu.edu/core> including specific Pathways, all courses associated with them, and the Reflection Essay prompt and rubric used to evaluate the final essay you will submit.  
<http://www.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core/pathways/resources/>

### **SAVE YOUR WORK FROM THIS CLASS**

If you declare this Pathway, you may use a representative piece of work from this course as one of the Pathway

materials you will upload via CAMINO during your junior or senior year. Therefore, we recommend that you keep electronic copies of your work using Dropbox or Google Docs, in addition to saving copies on your own computer or flash drives. This may ensure you will have a range of choices for retrieving your saved files when you analyze and assemble your Pathway materials in preparation to write the Pathway reflection essay.

#### **Course Goals:**

After completing this course, students should be able to:

- **Discuss** ways diverse peoples of Mesoamerica constructed worldviews of sacred geography, sacred time, ritual practice, theocratic social, religious and political systems; (*Focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena*)
- **Identify** characteristics of Maya spiritual belief and practices of reciprocity, built up over time; (*Focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena*)
- **Integrate** and **compare** archaeological, literary, theological and ethnographic disciplinary approaches to Maya religious belief and ritual practices; (*multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary approaches to study of religious phenomena*);
- **Clarify** and **Express** processes of Colonial Spanish Catholicism, Liberal Protestantism, Liberation Theology, neo-Pentecostalism, inculturated Catholicism and how Maya have negotiated their religious beliefs; (*Focus on complex and diverse religious phenomena*)
- **Identify** ways in which Native peoples have continued, changed, resisted, retrieved and adapted their religious ways, with an emphasis on their recent reaffirmation of indigenous traditions and inculturated Christianity;
- **Clarify** and **express** beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of indigenous human existence as understood by peoples of Central America. (*Integrate critical inquiry and reflection on beliefs*).

#### **Objective for Core Area:**

- Students will be able to **analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena** (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, literature, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).
- Students will be able to **integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches** to a coherent set of religious phenomena.
- Students will be able to **clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimension of human existence**.

#### **Required Texts:**

Molesky-Poz. 2006. *Contemporary Maya Spirituality: The Ancient Ways Are Not Lost*.

Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

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.

Additional texts: Readings and guidelines posted on CAMINO are required for all students.

CAMINO. Also provides maps, visuals, links for research.

#### **Requirements:**

##### **Attendance & Engaged Participation**

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. (10%)

Midterms, two exams (20% each) (40%)

Quizzes on the readings: (10%)

Presentation and Discussion Leadership (20%)

Critical Inquiry: (20%)

There is a one final 5-6 page research paper. You will be asked to list and rank your presentation choices during the second week of the quarter, so that presentations will sufficiently cover the topics. You will produce your own research paper at the end of the quarter, but will also work with co-researchers on teams to present your work with the class.

2<sup>nd</sup> week  
3<sup>rd</sup> week  
Finals week

List and rank research projects  
Research projects/teams/presentation dates posted  
Individual research papers due.

**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.

**Disability Accommodation:**

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://www.scu.edu/disabilities> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to pregnancy may also be eligible for accommodations. While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

**Academic Integrity:**

*The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:*

*I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.*

*Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see [www.scu.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity).*

To encourage lively engaging with one another and with the material, no electronics are permitted in class: (laptops, ipads, cell/smartphones, mp3 players, etc.). If you need to use your phone, please step outside the room, before class, or during break. Get to know one another.

**Grading Scale:**

A 100-93.5; A- 93.4-90.0 excellent; B+ 89.9-87.6 very good; B 86.6-83.3 good; B- 83.2-80.0 solid performance; C+ 79.9-76.7; C 76.6-73.3; C- 73.2-70.0; D+ 69.9-66.7; D 66.6-63.3; D- 63.2-60.0; F <59.9

## **. The Roots and Legacies of Maya Spirituality**

### **Week One**

**(January 10-12)**

**T** Introduction, orientations, inventories, regional geography & the construction of knowledge  
Inventory of student knowledge. What do we know of the Maya? How do we know it?  
What do we want to know? How will we know it?

**TH Standing at Dawn at the Portal (Ethnography/ Literature)**

Read: Molesky-Poz, CMS, Chapter 3, 57-62, Portal; At the Dawn, xi-xviii. Guidelines on CAMINO.

### **Week Two**

**(January 17-19)**

**T The Aesthetics of Sacred Geography: Renting our Time Here (Ethnography/Hieroglyphics)**

Here we inquire into the felt reciprocity between Maya and the Earth, which has build up over time. Through studies in ethnography, archaeology, and hieroglyphic writings, we examine sacred geography and sacred sites, and the Mesoamerican image-space, quatrefoil mapping,

Read: Molesky-Poz, CMS, Chapter 4, Sacred Geography, 93-126. Reading guidelines: CAMINO.

View and note-take: NOVA science NOW video: 21<sup>st</sup> technology and centuries-old archeological techniques. Uncover San Bartolo <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/maya.html> (13 minutes)

Students list and rank research topics.

**TH What Do Maya Hieroglyphs Tell Us? (Archaeology, Epigraphy)**

Maya have along tradition of inscribing ornaments, pottery vessels, monuments and the walls of temples and palaces and also wrote books, codices. They created a complex script, featuring over 800 hieroglyphs. In centuries-long decipherment, scholars can now read more than 90 percent of the glyphs.

View, and note-take: Cracking the Mayan Code PBS Nova (56 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5ppfC6y-5s>

Reference: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/ancient/deciphering-maya-time-line.html>

Launch interactive, you may want to also view the printable version.

### **Week Three (January 24-26)**

**T Creation of the Cosmos: Astronomy, Kings & Queens, & Earth Lords (Archaeology)**

Ancient Maya believed in recurring cycles of birth and death; and thought in terms of eras lasting about 5,200 modern years. The current cycle is believed to have begun in either 3114 B.C. or 3113 B.C. of our calendar, and is expected to end in 2012. The primary focus of Maya cosmology and religious ceremony centers on the creation of the cosmos. Creation events are recorded in celestial events, to which the Maya were keen observers. The nature of the ancient Maya kingship, and role of rituals of sacrifice, which honored the Earth Lord, sustained this worldview. Here we investigate the role of astronomy, of the King, and of the Earth Lord.

Read: Fields, "Introduction; The First Sacred Kings of Mesoamerica," Virginia M. Fields and Dorie Reents-Bidet (2005) in *Lords of Creation*, London and Los Angeles: Scala Publishers Limited, 21-27. CAMINO

View: Lost Kingdoms of the Maya Stephens and Frederick Catherwood, 58 minutes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99foDilswZA>

**TH Ancient Maya Beliefs, Worldviews and Practices (Ethnohistory, Archaeology)**

Read: **Ideology and Cosmology** Michael D. Coe (2005): *The Maya* (Seventh Edition); Thames & Hudson, 513-531; 539-547, CAMINO

Read: Cosmology and Religion:

<http://www.historymuseum.ca/cmcc/exhibitions/civil/maya/mmc03eng.shtml>

**Week Four**

**(January 31, February 2)**  
**T Introduction to Popol Vuh, and**

MIDTERM #1      Bring text: *Popol Wuj* to class.

**TH Cosmic Beginnings, the Ball Game & Creation of Humans (Literature)**

**Popul Vuh: The Counsel Book of Seeing & Cosmic Origins**

The most comprehensive and complex written text of the indigenous Americas, written in the sixteenth century in K'iche' Maya.

*Popul Vuh*: Introduction, 23-35.

*Popul Vuh*: Part 1, "This is the beginning of the Ancient Word . . .", 71-86.

In-class Film: Selections from *Popul Vuh*

**Week Five**

**(February 7 - 9)**

**T The Tricksters and their Destiny**

**The Defeat and Destruction of the Day of Seven Macaw, (Literature)**

Popol Vuh warns of the pitfalls and defeat of one who engages in self-magnification and deceit. The Hero Twins see Seven Macaw, a vainglorious scarlet bird, and see "evil in this" – its' merely a "matter of metal." With the help of the ancestors they defeat Seven Macaw, making the earth ready for light. The father and uncle of the Hero Twins play ball in Xibalba, ruled by the lords of the underworld, and a virgin becomes pregnant with a set of twins. In-class Film: Selections from *Popul Vuh*

*Popul Vuh*, Part 3, 91-116 Ballgame of 1 Hunahpu and 7 Hunahpu in Xibalba

*Popul Vuh*, Part 3, 116-130 Birth of Hunaphu and Ixbalanque

**TH The Hero Twins: Outwitting the Lords of Xibalba (Literature)**

The twins find their real destiny is not as farmers, but as ball players. They undergo tests in Xib'alb'a as their relatives before them, but they defeat the lords of the underworld.

Film: Selections from *Popul Vuh*

*Popul Vuh*: The Hero Twins Defeat the Death Lords of Xibalba, 130-160.

**. . Encounters between Two Worlds**

**Week Six**

**(Feb 14-16)**

**T Creation of the First Human Persons. (Literature)**

"Truly, now, double thanks, triple thanks, that we've been formed." What marks humanity as distinct from other creations, according to the Maya worldview?

Read: *Popul Vuh*, Part 4, 163-187.

**TH Religious Encounters between Two Worlds:**

**Construction of Religious Expression of the Maya Under Spanish Catholic Colonial Projects**  
Development of *congregaciones*, *reducciones*, *cofradias*, *syncretism* within religious expressions.

Orellana, Sandra. "Religion" *The Tzutujil Maya*, 195-215. CAMINO

**. . . Transformed Continuities of Geography, Time, and Ritual Practice:  
The Public Emergence and Florescence of Maya Spirituality**

**Week Seven (Feb 21-23)**

**T The Genocide in Guatemala, 1960-1998 (History, Ethnography, Political Science)**

At the end of Guatemala's civil war, 440 villages had been burned off the face of the planet. The Guatemalan state had conducted approximately 660 massacres, displaced 1.5

million people, and murdered between 150 and 200 thousand individuals. Tens of thousands of civilians remain documented as "disappeared."

View film: When the Mountains Tremble <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4rG8nmgRw4>, 1 hr. 23 min

**TH Religion during and after the Civil War: (History, Ethnography, Anthropology)**

This section situates the reclamation of Maya traditional ways and identity during and the U.S. backed civil war in Guatemala (1960—1996), during which 200,000 were killed, hundreds of thousands fled their villages and country. Lecture raises complex issues of U.S. policies in Guatemala (ownership of land and means of production since 1830; training of Guatemalan military; the flood of U.S. evangelical and Pentecostal missionaries into Guatemala during and after the war, and the consequences on the indigenous population.

Read: Molesky-Poz, Chapter 1 A New Cycle of Light, 11-33

**Week Eight**

(Feb 28, March 2)

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

Here we examine the notion of spirituality as a universal experience and process, then examine the foundational principles and distinct marks of Maya worldview, and ask what they contribute to the human community? What is distinct about Maya spirituality?

Read: Molesky-Poz, Chapter 2, Maya Cosmovision and Spirituality, 34-54.

**TH Ajq'ijab': Maya Daykeepers: Why do women and men become an Ajq'ij'?**

Ajq'ijab', religious guides, interpret their sense of vocation, of personal transformation and of commitment to their communities. In-class film clip: *A New Cycle of Light*

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

**... Pentecostalism, Evangelical Christianity, Inculturated Catholicism  
Contemporary Issues**

**Week Nine**

(March 7 - 9)

**T Discovering Dominga**

Denese Joy Becker, a manicurist living in Iowa, discovers she is indeed Dominga Sic Ruiz, a survivor from a 1982 Guatemalan massacre, when more than 200 people were killed in the small village of Rio Negro, after opposing the construction of a dam, sponsored by World Bank. She then tries to unveil the truth.

View: Filmmaker interview: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/discoveringdominga/video/patricia-flynn/>

MIDTERM #2 Due.

**TH The Aesthetics of Sacred Time**

The primacy and sacredness of time among the Maya is well established. Here we look into their use and interpretation of the Chol Q'ij, the 260-day calendar which is the central matrix of this culture.

Read: Molesky-Poz, Chapter 5, The Calendar, 127-153.

**Week Ten**

(March 14-16)

**T Maya migration and religious identities**

**Theological Innovations and Identity among indigenous Maya**

Pentecostalism, Evangelical fundamentalism

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

**TH Environmental Issues Maya face today, and responses based on faith**

Read: TBD