

ROWAN COLLEGE
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Spring 97

(R)

PROPOSAL TITLE: THE MAYA

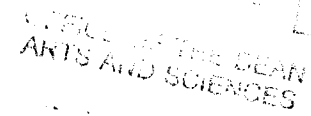
UNDERGRADUATE GRADUATE 3 CREDIT HOURS

SPONSOR(S): David Kasserman, Maria, Rosado, Diane Markowitz

DEPARTMENT & TELEPHONE# Geography/Anthropology Dept., ext. 4811

CHECK ONE: COURSE MINOR PROGRAM CONCENTRATION SPECIALIZATION
 ACHIEVEMENT CERTIFICATE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM MAJOR PROGRAM

STEP #1 (DEPARTMENT)	STEP #2 (RECEIPT)	STEP #3 (SCHOOL)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED/DATE: <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED/DATE: <hr/> DEPT. CURRICULUM CHR. <input type="checkbox"/> REVIEWED/DATE: <hr/> DEPT. CHR.	SCC# <u>97-96-102</u> DATE RECEIVED: <u>1-20-96</u> <hr/> <i>Ronald J. Goshen</i> SENATE CURRICULUM CHR.	REVIEWED DATE:- <u>2/13/96</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RECOMMEND TO APPROVE <input type="checkbox"/> RECOMMEND NOT TO APPROVE FORWARD FOR OPEN HEARING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WITHOUT RESERVATIONS <input type="checkbox"/> WITH RESERVATIONS COMMENTS: <hr/> <i>B. A. C.</i> SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHR.

STEP #4 (ACADEMIC DEAN)	COMMENTS:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/> NOT RECOMMEND <input type="checkbox"/> CONDITIONALLY RECOMMEND (SEE COMMENTS) DATE & SIGNATURE, DEAN OF SCHOOL	<div style="text-align: right;">  </div> <hr/> <i>Paul Bartlett</i> 3/5/96

STEP #5 (SENATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE)
DATE OF OPEN HEARING <u>4-24-96</u> APPROVED BY SENATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE (DATE) <u>4/24/96</u> <input type="checkbox"/> RETURNED TO SPONSOR(S) FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS: <hr/> <hr/>

STEP #6 (SENATE)
DATE PRESENTED TO SENATE <u>4/24/96</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> APPROVED <input type="checkbox"/> NOT APPROVED NOTIFICATION TO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST (DATE), _____ SENATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIR SIGNATURE/DATE <u><i>Ronald J. Goshen</i></u> <u>5/13/96</u>

STEP #7 (EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST)

DATE RECEIVED MAY 5 1996

APPROVED: YES NO

IF NO, REASONS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

STUDENT CREDIT HOURS 3

FACULTY LOAD HOURS 3

EQUALIZED CREDIT HOURS _____

OFFICIAL COPY & APPROVAL SHEET FILED (DATE) 5/20/96

SIGNATURE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/PROVOST [Signature]

REGISTRAR

DATE APPROVED COURSE DESCRIPTION RECEIVED 5/30/96

REGIS TAXONOMY AND COURSE NUMBER ASSIGNED 22.02 - 320

DATE/SIGNATURE OF REGISTRAR B. K. Keating 5/30/96

NOTIFICATION FORWARD:

___ SENATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

___ DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON(S)

___ ACADEMIC DEAN(S)

___ REGISTRAR

___ SPONSOR(S)

COURSE PROPOSAL: THE MAYA

1. Details

- a. Course Title: **The Maya**
- b. Sponsors: David Kasserman, Maria Rosado, Diane Markowitz (Department of Geography and Anthropology)
- c. Credit Hours: three
- d. Course Level: 300 level
- e. Curricular Effect: free elective; will provide basis for a projected minor in anthropology
- f. Prerequisite: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology OR Indians of North America
- g. Suggested Implementation: Spring 1997
- h. Adequacy of Staff and Library: Resources at present will meet the needs of this course. The library's collection of materials related to pre-contact Maya culture will, of course, be augmented in the future.

2. Rationale

Study of Maya culture will offer a variety of benefits to the College's students.

On the most basic level, a semester long course focusing on a single cultural tradition provides an opportunity to demonstrate (to a degree impossible in survey courses) the complexity of organization and world view and its transforming adaptation to the equally complex web of environmental influences to which it is a response.

The Maya themselves, however, are much more than a convenient vehicle for demonstrating the intricacy of cultural integration. As a significant and enduring part of the mesoamerican cultural complex, they offer an extremely valuable opportunity to study the development of an indigenous American civilization (and the only New World locus among the five centers of independent invention of writing). The recent explosion of Maya studies--archaeology, ethnohistory and ethnography, and the successful deciphering of Maya glyphic writing--has made it possible to trace the development of Maya culture through more than four thousand years, with remarkable detail in the classic and post-classic periods (from approximately 250 AD to 1530) during which the Maya recorded much of their history, theology, and science on public monuments, jewelry, household items, and codices. As a result, the old romantic view of the Maya as gentle philosophers contemplating the passage of Venus over their

peaceful forest homes has been replaced with a much more accurate picture of a dynamic and aggressive people creatively engaged in the turmoil of continuous adaptation to the changing ecological and sociological conditions they faced. Thus, the study of Mayan culture provides students with comparative data (demonstrating the independent American invention of urban-based cultures and writing), an introduction to a remarkable culture of great technical, organizational, and intellectual intricacy, and a demonstration of developmental depth that has often been lacking in the popular understanding of indigenous American cultures.

Though we can speak of the Maya "collapse" of the ninth century AD or the end of Mayan independence in the Conquest, Mayan culture, in fact, has remained significantly intact to the present day. One of the few indigenous American populations to assert their independence successfully in the nineteenth century (the Caste War of Yucatan produced a series of Maya states that maintained their independence from Mexican rule into the beginning of the twentieth century), the Maya today number approximately six million people. Mayan languages are still spoken, Mayan philosophy and theology are still a significant part of everyday life, and a strong sense of ethnic identity and pride survives. Much of the recent discord in Guatemala and southern Mexico (Chiapas), though described in the press most often in ideological or class terms, has at its heart the cultural identity and pride of Mayan peoples who still hope to preserve their way of life from the encroachments of culturally distinct invaders. Thus, learning the form of pre-contact Mayan culture is more than a historical or theoretical exercise; it will provide students with the foundation upon which to understand something of the dynamics of modern Central America.

3. Essence of the Course

- a. Objectives: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
 1. Identify the geographic location and environmental range in which Mayan culture developed.
 2. Identify the fundamental characteristics that define mesoamerican culture and identify their origins in the Olmec culture area.
 3. Identify the structural characteristics, approximate time periods, and geographic centers of Archaic, Preclassic, Classic, and Post-Classic Mayan culture.
 4. Identify major archaeological sites associated with each stage of Mayan culture and their associated material assemblages.
 5. Identify the neighboring cultures (particularly Teotihuacan and the Toltecs) that influenced the development of Mayan culture and the time period of their most significant impact.
 6. Describe the economic basis of Mayan culture.
 7. Describe the basic format and transformation of the Mayan concept of government.
 8. Describe the basic structure of Mayan theology
 9. Describe the basic form of Mayan integration of the concepts of time, astronomy, and theology (calendrics and the concept of *kinh*

[time/day/sun]).

10. Understand the basics of Mayan mathematics.
11. Understand the basics of Mayan glyphic writing.

b. Topical Outline

- A. Geographic and environmental setting of Maya culture
- B. Archaic Maya culture
 1. evidence of earliest Maya settlement
 2. cultural structure
- C. Antecedents to Maya civilization: the Olmecs
 1. location, time, and representative archaeological sites
 2. fundamental cultural traits characteristic of mesoamerica
- D. The Preclassic
 1. location, time, and representative archaeological sites
 - a. El Mirador
 - b. Nakbe
 2. cultural format
- E. The Classic
 1. location, time, and representative archaeological sites
 - a. Tikal
 - b. cities of the Usumacinta region
 - c. Palenque
 - d. Copan
 2. cultural format
 - a. influence of Teotihuacan
- F. The Post-classic
 1. location, time, and representative archaeological sites
 - a. Chichen Itza
 - b. Mayapan
 2. cultural format
 - a. Toltec domination
- G. Economic basis of Maya civilization
 1. subsistence: crops and agricultural technology
 2. economic specialization and trade
- H. Mayan government
 1. class structure and the nature of Mayan nobility
 2. the city-state
 3. transformations of the concept of rulership in the Post-classic
- I. Basic Mayan cosmology
 1. the community of Mayan gods
 - a. possible origins, real diversity of form
 - b. the structure of the spiritual world
 2. blood sacrifice complex
 3. surviving Maya mythology

- a. archaeological evidence
- b. the *Popul Vuh*
- J. Mayan concepts of time
 - 1. astronomy and the Maya discovery of time
 - 2. *K'in* as the sun, a day, and a god
 - a. integration of time, fate, transformation, and renewal
 - 3. Mayan calendrics
 - a. the *tzolkin*, the *haab*, and the Long Count.
- K. Mayan mathematics
 - 1. base 20 computation
- L. Mayan writing: glyphs
 - 1. origins
 - 2. structure of meaning and the basis for translation
- M. Cultural continuity in the post-contact world

c. Evaluation and grading procedure

At the teacher's discretion, students will be evaluated through a combination of one or more of the following: in-class or take-home examinations, literature reviews, classroom presentations, and research papers.

d. Course evaluation

Students will be asked to fill out SIR forms and a specialized questionnaire developed for the course. Faculty members of the Geography and Anthropology Department, and of the History Department, will be asked to evaluate the readings for the class and, if possible, to sit in on one or more classes; their oral and written responses will inform modifications of the course content or structure if they are indicated.

4. Consultation

This proposal has been discussed with members of the History Department (Dr. Lee Kress and Steven Gimber), and is being provided to them for evaluation. Their written responses are appended.

5. Additional information

This is a short bibliography of (mostly) recent relevant works. Coe (1993) would be an appropriate basic text for the course.

Coe, Michael D.

1992 Breaking the Maya Code. New York: Thames and Hudson.

1993 The Maya. Fifth edition. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Fash, William L.

1991 Scribes, Warriors and Kings: The City of Copan and the Ancient Maya. New York: Thames and Hudson.

Goetz, Delia, and Sylvanus G. Morley, trans.

1950 Popul Vuh: The Sacred Book of the Ancient Quiche Maya. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Harris, John F. and Stephen K. Stearns

1992 Understanding Maya Inscriptions: A Hieroglyph Handbook. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum.

Kerr, Justin and Bruce M. White

1995 The Olmec World: Ritual and Rulership. Princeton: Princeton Art Museum.

Krupp, E. C.

1983 Echoes of the Ancient Skies: The Astronomy of Lost Civilizations. New York: Oxford University Press.

Leon-Portilla, Miguel

1988 Time and Reality in the Thought of the Maya. Forward by Sir J. Eric S. Thompson. Appendices by Alphonso Villa Rojas and Miguel Leon-Portilla. Original 1968. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Sabloff, Jeremy A.

1990 The New Archaeology and the Ancient Maya. New York: Scientific American Library.

Scarborough, Vernon and David Wilcox, eds.

1991 The Mesoamerican Ballgame. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Schele, Linda and David Friedel
1990 A Forest of Kings: The Untold Story of the Ancient Maya. New
York: William Morrow.

Schele, Linda, David Friedel, and Joy Parker
1993 Maya Cosmos: Three Thousand Years on the Shaman's Path.
New York: William Morrow.

Sharer, Robert J.
1994 The Ancient Maya. Fifth edition. Stanford: Stanford University
Press.

Tate, Carolyn
1992 Yaxchilan: The Design of a Maya Ceremonial City. Austin:
University of Texas Press.

6. Course description:

This course traces the development of Maya culture from its earliest archaeological evidence to the eve of Old World contact, focusing on its adaptation to a variety of ecological settings, its interaction with other mesoamerican cultures, the development and transformation of city states, Mayan cosmology and world view, and the development of an indigenous system of writing. Prerequisite: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology OR Indians of North America.

January 23, 1996

Dear Dr. Kasserman,

I have examined the course proposal that you and your colleagues in Anthropology have developed on the Maya. In short, your course is impressive. Considering their significance in the history of the Americas, the Maya are certainly worthy of an in depth study. I find your proposal to be competent and thorough. I am confident that if approved, it will be of great value to students at Rowan - especially History students. Judging from the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response that I received from many History students regarding my courses in the history of Native Americans which were proposed last year, I am sure that the class will be well attended. We need more courses like this at Rowan and I encourage you to develop other ethnographic studies of the native peoples of North and South America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Gimber", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven Gimber

January 24, 1996

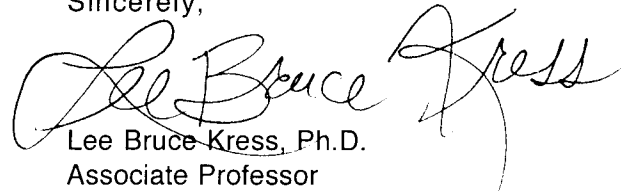
The native peoples of the Americas developed some of the great civilizations in the history of the world although until recent years their cultures have not been well understood or appreciated by current scholars. However, new methods of examination and new investigations in the field are finally revealing the significant nature of their past. This is particularly true of the Maya, and their study has grown as a result. As a historian trained in Latin American history, I have been fascinated by the recent findings about them presented at professional conferences and in scholarly literature. Much more will probably become available in coming years. But at last I feel we are beginning to understand Maya history, culture, and development in a realistic and accurate way.

I am extremely pleased to see that an academic course devoted to the Maya may soon be given at this college by the Anthropology Department. We have needed one to expand on such offerings as the "Indians of North America" and the "Indians of South America." The Maya people deserve special attention not only because of the advancements of their civilization, but also because their history has extended for nearly four thousand years and they still remain with us today in southern Mexico and parts of Central America. The Anthropology Department will offer a fine service to our students in presenting this course.

The study of indigenous groups is a proper focus for anthropologists. Although the Maya were conquered by the Spaniards beginning in 1527, they have continued to maintain their native language and many of their original cultural patterns. Therefore, it is appropriate that this course be offered by the Anthropology Department.

I have examined the course proposal entitled "The Maya." It is excellent. It covers all the proper topics in a thorough and professional way. This course will be a proper compliment to the History Department's offerings in "Traditional Latin America" (2205.260), "Modern Latin America" (2205.261), and the "History of Mexico" (2205.362). I am aware of the training and experience that some members of the Anthropology Department have had, and I welcome the opportunity to work with them to give Rowan students a better academic background in this subject.

Sincerely,



Lee Bruce Kress, Ph.D.
Associate Professor