

# ARTH-145: ART OF THE ANCIENT AMERICAS

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**Effective Term**

Fall 2025

**CC Approval**

02/07/2025

**AS Approval**

02/13/2025

**BOT Approval**

02/20/2025

**COCI Approval**

04/30/2025

## SECTION A - Course Data Elements

**CB04 Credit Status**

Credit - Degree Applicable

**Discipline**

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Art History (Master's Degree)	

**Subject Code**

ARTH - Art History

**Course Number**

145

**Department**

Art History (ARTH)

**Division**

Arts and Humanities (ARAH)

**Full Course Title**

Art of the Ancient Americas

**Short Title**

Art of the Ancient Americas

**CB03 TOP Code**

1002.00 - Art

**CB08 Basic Skills Status**

NBS - Not Basic Skills

**CB09 SAM Code**

E - Non-Occupational

**Rationale**

Updating common course numbering course change.

## SECTION B - Course Description

**Catalog Course Description**

A survey of the visual culture of select ancient civilizations of Mexico, Central America, and South America prior to European contact. Material covered will include how architecture, sculpture, textiles and ceramics function in their specific historic contexts.

## SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment

### Open Entry/Open Exit

No

### Repeatability

Not Repeatable

### Grading Options

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

### Allow Audit

Yes

## Requisites

### Advisory Prerequisite(s)

Completion of ENGL-C1000 or ENGL-120B with a minimum grade of C or appropriate placement.

## SECTION D - Course Standards

### Is this course variable unit?

No

### Units

3.00

### Lecture Hours

54

### Outside of Class Hours

108

### Total Contact Hours

54

### Total Student Hours

162

## Distance Education Approval

### Is this course offered through Distance Education?

Yes

### Online Delivery Methods

DE Modalities	Permanent or Emergency Only?
Hybrid	Permanent
Entirely Online	Permanent
Online with Proctored Exams	Permanent

## SECTION E - Course Content

### Student Learning Outcomes

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:	
1.	Recognize significant objects and monuments from the cultures of the Ancient Americas.
2.	Connect the creation, materials, and use of objects and structures with their specific spiritual, cultural, and political contexts.
3.	Identify and analyze specific visual characteristics that typify the historical era/culture of an artwork using art-specific terminology.

## Course Objectives

### Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Identify, examine, and assess representative objects and monuments from Mexico, Central America, and South America according to formal properties, such as (among others) line, shape, texture, and material.
2. Discern in objects and monuments the interrelationship of form with spiritual, political, or social functions.
3. In discussion and in written assignments, compare and contrast the similarities and differences among ancient objects and monuments created in the cultures of Mexico, Central America, and South America.
4. Employ appropriate art history terminology in the discussion and analysis of objects and monuments.

## Course Content

A. Defining terms: the role of the Ancient Americas in the discipline of art history.

B. Colonialism, collections, and the creation of Ancient American art history.

C. Mesoamerica (Mexico and Central America)

a. Classifying Mesoamerican art and culture

b. Olmec

a. colossal sculpture

b. architectural complexes

c. Zapotec

a. Cities and ceremonial centers

b. Sculpture and ceramics

d. Teotihuacan

a. The space of religion and commerce

b. Intersection of architecture and ritual

e. Maya

a. Political and Ceremonial centers

b. Architecture and patronage

c. Carved and molded sculpture

f. Classical Veracruz

a. Ritual and architecture

b. Visual material and status

g. Toltec

a. Palace complexes

b. Monumental sculpture

h. Aztec

a. Empire building

b. City design

c. Architecture and ritual

i. Ruptures and continuities

D. South America (Andean art)

a. Pre-Ceramic Period

b. Dualism and other themes of Andean art

c. Chavin de Huantar-foundation for Peruvian art

d. Paracas and Nazca

a. Textiles and textile making

b. Geoglyphs and possible interpretations

e. Tiwanaku and Wari

a. Gateway of the Sun, Ceremonial objects b. Status objects

f. Moche

a. Ceramics

b. Funerary rituals/burials

g. Inca

a. Defining empire

- b. Stonework in Cuzco
- c. Ritual centers and road networks
- d. Post-conquest Cuzco

## Methods of Instruction

### Methods of Instruction

Types	Examples of learning activities
Field Trips	Possibly field trip to DeYoung Museum.
Lecture	Material presented in image-based lecture/discussions.

### Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

Announcements/Bulletin Boards  
 Chat Rooms  
 Discussion Boards  
 E-mail Communication  
 Telephone Conversations  
 Video or Teleconferencing

### Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

Chat Rooms  
 Discussions  
 Group Work

### Course design is accessible

Yes

## Methods of Evaluation

### Methods of Evaluation

Types	Examples of classroom assessments
Exams/Tests	Tests will include objective and essay-style questions. Essays can be comparison/contrast of two objects/monuments. For example: Compare and contrast the use of animal imagery in Mayan and Incan cultures. Be sure to describe the formal characteristics of both and connect these to specific spiritual beliefs. Final Exam -- Objective and essay-form questions, which draw from larger themes of the class, such as art and communication, art and status, or art and ritual.
Quizzes	Identification of objects and monuments by name, date, culture, and material.
Projects	Research Projects - Topic which requires reading/analyzing of secondary sources from books, periodicals, and vetted online resources, culminating in a 6–10-page paper with images.
Oral Presentations	Students choose a topic and create image-based presentation. For example: use of Aztec imagery in the paintings of Frida Kahlo.
Other	Field Trips - Possible field trip to view permanent collection of Mesoamerican and Andean material at the DeYoung Museum, San Francisco.

## Assignments

### Reading Assignments

- Students will be assigned readings from textbooks, periodicals, or scholarly websites.
- Read the essay, "Teotihuacan: Planned City with Cosmic Pyramids," from *Teotihuacan: City of Water, City of Fire* and come to class prepared to discuss the intersection of design and ritual.

### Writing Assignments

- Students will choose an object from the permanent collection at the DeYoung Museum and write a one-page visual analysis.
- Or from online resources, students will study objects related to those covered in class.  
 For example: On the Metropolitan Museum of Art website, read "Dualism in Andean Art" and then choose an object from the collection that illustrates this dualism and write a 500-word essay

## SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials

### Material Type

Textbook

### Author

Pillsbury, J, Richter, K

### Title

Golden Kingdoms: Luxury Arts in the Ancient Americas

### Edition/Version

1st

### Publisher

J Paul Getty Museum

### Year

2017

### Material Type

Textbook

### Author

Miller, M

### Title

Art of Mesoamerica: From Olmec to Aztec

### Edition/Version

5th

### Publisher

Thames & Hudson: World of Art

### Year

2012

### Material Type

Textbook

### Author

Stone, Rebecca R

### Title

Art of the Andes

### Edition/Version

3rd

### Publisher

Thames & Hudson: World of Art

### Year

2012

### Material Type

Textbook

**Author**

Kelker, Nancy

**Title**

Art of the Non-Western World

**Edition/Version**

1st

**Publisher**

Oxford University Press

**Year**

2020

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**Course Codes (Admin Only)**

**ASSIST Update**

No

**CB00 State ID**

CCC000639340

**CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status**

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

**CB11 Course Classification Status**

Y - Credit Course

**CB13 Special Class Status**

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

**CB23 Funding Agency Category**

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

**CB24 Program Course Status**

Program Applicable

**Allow Pass/No Pass**

Yes

**Only Pass/No Pass**

No