

Archaeology of Mesoamerica

Institute of Continued Learning, Utah Tech University
Spring Semester 2025

Archaeology of Mesoamerica is a broad introduction to the archaeology, civilizations and indigenous peoples of Middle America (Mesoamerica) including central and southern Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. The course objectives are:

Objectives

- 1) Introduce students to the geography, archaeology, and major archaeological civilizations and sites of Central America.
- 2) Provide students with an appreciation of the broad range of human adaptation leading to civilization in Mesoamerica.
- 3) Provide students a better understanding of the archaeology of the area and enduring cultures that survive there today.

January 14, 2025 - Course Introduction, geography of Mesoamerica, human settling and beginnings (PaleoIndian and Archaic periods)

January 21, 2025 – Preclassic Period

January 28, 2025 – Preclassic Period (continued)

February 4, 2025 – Early Classic Period

February 11, 2025 - Late Classic Period

February 18, 2025 – Post Classic Period

February 25, 2025 – Historic and modern eras, Spanish Conquest and modern Indigenous cultures

Brief Chronology Chart

Period	Dates	Cultures
Paleoindian	12,000 – 6,000 BC	Big game hunters, ice age
Archaic	3500 – 1500 BC	Hunters and gatherers, incipient agriculture
Preclassic	1800 BC – AD 250	Olmec, Teotihuacan, Tlatilco, Maya, Zapotec
Early Classic	AD 250 - 650	Teotihuacan, Maya
Late Classic	AD 650 - 900	Maya, Toltec
Post-Classic	AD 900 - 1519	Toltec, Aztec (Mexico), Mixtec, Maya
Conquest and Beyond	AD 1519 - today	Various cultures

Recommended Readings

1993 Weaver, Muriel Porter

The Aztecs, Maya, and Their Predecessors: Archaeology of Mesoamerica. Third Ed., Academic Press, San Diego, CA.

2022 Coe, Michael D. and Stephen Houston

The Maya. Seventh Edition, Thames and Hudson, New York, NY.

2007 Robert Carmack, Janine L. Gasco, and Gary H. Gossen

The Legacy of Mesoamerica: History and Culture of a Native American Civilization. Second Ed., Prentice Hall, NJ.