

SPRING SEMESTER 2010

■ ARHS 535: From Splendor to Survival: Aztecs Before and After the Conquest

William Barnes

TBD (Tues. or Wed.), 5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

By the early part of the 16th century the Aztecs of Central Mexico ruled one of the largest empires in the ancient Americas. The royal art produced in the imperial capital of Tenochtitlan had a rich history that drew heavily on earlier Mesoamerican artistic traditions such as those developed at Teotihuacan, El Tajin, and Monte Alban. Surprisingly, many of these artistic traditions continued following the disastrous conclusion of the Aztec-Spanish war (the Conquest). Some artistic survivals, such as feather mosaic, flourished with Spanish patronage and church support. Others, like manuscript painting and cartographic histories, developed a hybrid existence, as they were useful to both Spanish colonial officials and surviving indigenous nobles and communities.

During the course of the semester, seminar participants will follow Aztec artistic developments from their humble beginnings to their imperial apogee, and, following the conquest, trace the threads of artistic survival. Some of the specific topics that may be covered are Aztec art's relationship to the past; writing (?) without words; Aztec art, iconography, and ritual; cosmic design and sacred landscape; indigenous agency and artistic survival; *indigenismo* in the later art of Mexico.

This course fulfills the Non-Western Art core requirement.

This course fulfills the Non-Western/non-European requirement for those beginning in fall 2009 and beyond.

Background Reading:

Esther Pasztory, *Aztec Art* (U of OK Press, 2000).

Michael Coe and Rex Koontz, *Mexico: From the Olmecs to the Aztecs* 6th ed. (Thames and Hudson, 2008).

Elizabeth Brumfiel and Gary Feinman, eds., *The Aztec World* (Abrams, 2008).