

Prehistory of the Americas

Prehistoric Native American cultures and civilizations

This seminar will examine the history, culture and archaeology of the pre-historic native peoples living in the Americas before the arrival of Columbus and the immigration of Europeans.

Moderator:	Larry Ambs
Date and Time:	Wednesday 10:00 AM - Noon 10 weeks, starting February 21, 2018
Format:	Seminar
Location:	UMass Renaissance Center Library, Amherst

Description: In this seminar, we will explore the life and times of Native American cultures before the arrival of Columbus. These cultures developed complex societies, reached high levels of technological evolution, built monumental constructions, and shared many cultural concepts. As time passes more and more is being determined about the habitats and behavior of these Native American peoples. It will be of interest to explore the emergence of agriculture, the development of village life (cities) and the rise of complex societies (civilizations) as well as their religious and scientific practices. Each participant will choose one of these early civilizations and will learn and convey to the group the prehistorical and cultural activities of these indigenous peoples. Let us try to understand the relationship between the landscape, material culture, architecture and the political organizations of these groups that existed before the 15th century in the Americas. Potential topics include: Anasazi, Adena, Hopewell, Hohokam, Cahokia, Mississippian, Athabaskan, Mogollon, Intuits, Incas, Moche, Chimu, Olmecs, Zapotecs, Teotihuacan, Maya and Aztecs.

Role of participants: Each seminar participant will investigate one of the indigenous cultures that existed in the Americas before the 1400's, prepare a 30-minute presentation and lead a discussion on the topic. Both archeological and cultural aspects should be considered as well as what is known about interactions with other groups.

Resources: Many books and numerous internet sites are available. A bibliography list will be available at the Preview.

About the Moderator: I have offered seminars every semester since 2007. I have been interested in early American history and archaeology and have previously studied the Native Americans of the SW.

Maximum number of participants: 18

Emeriti accepted: yes

Course # 18SPA