

Sun lords: the Inca and Aztec empires

Start date Friday 21 January 2021 **End date** Sunday 23 January 2021

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor **Dr Nicholas James** **Course code** 2122NRX070

Director of ISP and LL Sarah Ormrod

For further information intenq@ice.cam.ac.uk

Tutor biography

Dr Nicholas James is a consultant in management and interpretation of historical resources. He is Director of Studies in Anthropology at Magdalene College.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 Two histories

22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

09:00 – 10:30 Andean megastructure

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Inca dynamics

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free time

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 Mexican volcano

18:00 – 18:30 Free time

18:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:30 **Aztec human sacrifice**

21:30 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

09:00 – 10:30 Case studies

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Comparison for generalisation

12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will introduce you to:

- 1) principles of archaic imperialism
- 2) the histories of the Aztecs and Incas
- 3) general issues in application to the Aztecs and Incas

Content:

Both the Aztecs and the Incas rose to power through intense and rapid conflict in the mid 1400s. The Inca regime was an attempt at totalitarianism. It has been interpreted variously as brutally oppressive or world's first welfare state. The Aztecs, in contrast, developed one of the world's biggest cities and, to support it, created radii of exploitation that ranged from steady to very unstable. Both regimes depended on political and ideological mechanisms too.

To understand either Aztecs or Incas, we must start by appraising both sociology and physical environment. That leads, in turn, to assessment of how they tried to manage economic circulation and integration. In both cases, attempts to control the distribution of resources depended on shifting balances of force, diplomacy and propaganda. That both regimes were in jeopardy even before the Spanish Conquistadores arrived helps to explain how quickly they were conquered.

Presentation of the course:

Most of our sessions will comprise illustrated lectures with discussion. You will be invited to analyse sets of data for assessing imperialist government and its effects.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- 1) recognize the phases of historical development among the Aztecs and Incas
- 2) recognize the comparative issues for the study of archaic imperialism
- 3) develop skills of analysis and interpretation
- 4) develop confidence in critical thinking and exchange of ideas

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk *

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Frances F Berdan	<i>Aztec archaeology and ethnohistory</i>	Cambridge University Press, 2014
Terence N d'Altroy	<i>The Incas</i> (2nd ed.)	Blackwell, 2014
Craig Morris & Adriana von Hagen	<i>The Incas, lords of the Four Quarters</i>	Thames & Hudson, 2011
Michael E Moseley	<i>The Incas and their ancestors</i> (2 nd ed.)	Thames & Hudson, 2001
José Luís de Rojas	<i>Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec empire</i>	University Press of Florida, 2021
Michael E Smith	<i>The Aztecs</i> (3rd ed.)	Blackwell, 2012