Biographical Sketch of Conference Participants

Jaime Awe is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Northern Arizona University, as well as Emeritus member of the Belize Institute of Archaeology, where he served as Director from 2003 to 2014. Between 1990 and 2000, he taught in the Anthropology Departments of Trent University in Ontario, Canada, then at the Universities of New Hampshire and Montana. He received his Ph.D. from the University of London, England. During his extensive career in archaeology, Awe has conducted important research and conservation work at most of the major sites in Belize (including Altun Ha, Baking Pot, Cahal Pech, Caracol, Cerros, Lamanai, Lubaantun, and Xunantunich, and Actun Tunichil Muknal, Chechem Ha, and Barton Creek Caves). He has also published numerous articles in various books, journals, and magazines, and his research has been featured in several national and international television documentaries.

Emily Davis-Hale earned her BA in Linguistics in 2015 and is currently a PhD student in Anthropology at Tulane University. Her primary research interest is in the linguistics and epigraphy of Mayan languages. She has also done work in epigraphic illustration for academic publication.

Arthur Demarest is the Ingram Chair of Anthropology at Vanderbilt University and Director of the Vanderbilt Institute of Mesoamerican Archaeology and Development. He has led 37 field and lab seasons of large-scale multidisciplinary archaeological projects and authored or edited over 40 books or monographs and 200 articles or book chapters on the Aztec, Inca, Olmec, and Maya civilizations. Prof. Demarest also teaches philosophy and ethics and directs Maya community development projects. His most important professional awards have been his mixology school graduation diploma, making him a licensed bartender, and the sacrifice of a bull in his honor at a Maya Hac ritual by the neighboring and collaborating Q’eqchi’ Maya communities.

Rachel Gill received her Master’s from the University of Central Florida and wrote her thesis on the use of Reflectance Transformation Imaging photography to document and analyze incised Ancient Maya graffiti at the site of Holtun, Guatemala. Currently, she is pursuing her PhD at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign under the advisement of Dr. Lisa Lucero, where she intends to study Ancient Mayan diet and past climate using zooarchaeological remains. Her interests range from studying the effects of digital documentation methods to help preserve and protect fragile cultural heritage in the Maya lowlands as well as past diet and climate reconstruction to understand how humans have impacted the Maya region across time.

Stanley Guenter studied archaeology at the University of Calgary and La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, before getting his Ph.D. in anthropology at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. He has worked with three projects in Guatemala, at the sites of El Peru-Waka, La Corona, and a number in the Mirador Basin, as well as at Cañal Pech in Belize with AFAR, at Lake Minnewanka, in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta, Canada, and at Phnom Kulen in Cambodia.
Stan’s work involves combining archaeological, epigraphic, and ethnohistoric data to better understand ancient civilizations and their history, and to compare this with paleoenvironmental data to better understand how ancient societies affected and were affected by their changing climates.

Rodrigo Guzman is a Guatemalan archaeologist with a BA in Archaeology from Universidad Del Valle de Guatemala and a Masters in Anthropology from the University of Central Florida. Rodrigo is currently pursuing a PhD in Integrative Anthropological Sciences at UCF focused on Landscape Archaeology, Mapping, and...
GIS applied to the Ancient Maya. Rodrigo is currently performing research at the site Holtun, in the central lakes region of the Maya Lowlands.

Rachel A. Horowitz is an anthropological archaeologist interested in the study of ancient economies through the lens of lithics, or stone tool technology. She received her PhD from Tulane University. Her current research addresses the role of lithic technology and lithic producers among the Late Classic Maya, focusing on comparisons and variability between different areas of the central Maya lowlands. In addition to the Maya region, specifically Belize and Guatemala, she has performed research in Namibia and the western and southeastern United States.

Brett A. Houk is an associate professor of archaeology at Texas Tech University in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Work. He earned MA and PhD degrees in anthropology from The University of Texas at Austin. Houk has over 25 years of experience investigating the ancient Maya ruins and landscapes of northwestern Belize, most notably at the sites of Dos Hombres, La Milpa, and Chan Chich. He is currently the director of the Chan Chich Archaeological Project and its regional component, the Belize Estates Archaeological Survey Team. He is the author of Ancient Maya Cities of the Eastern Lowlands (2015) and co-editor of Ritual, Violence, and Fall of the Classic Maya Kings (2016), both published by University Press of Florida, and his research focuses on ancient urban planning and the Classic Maya collapse.

Gyles Iannone is a Professor in the Anthropology Department at Trent University. His degrees were earned at Simon Fraser University (B.A.), Trent University (M.A.), and University College London (Ph.D.). An anthropological archaeologist, Professor Iannone's main areas of interest include: The Archaeology of Climate Change, Natural Disasters, Human Impact on Ancient Environments, and Collapse; Resilience Theory; Settlement Archaeology; Early Tropical State Formations; Mesoamerica (especially Maya); South and Southeast Asia (especially Myanmar and Cambodia). He conducted archaeological excavations in Belize for 24 field seasons (1991-2013) and held two consecutive Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grants for his examination of the rise and fall of the ancient Maya city-state of “Minanha.” Professor Iannone is currently the Director of the Socio-ecological Entanglement in Tropical Societies (SETS) project, and the Integrated Socio-Ecological History of Residential Patterning, Agricultural Practices, and Water Management at the “Classical” Burmese (Bama) Capital of Bagan, Myanmar (11th To 14th Century CE) Project (IRAW@Bagan). He is also a member of the Integrated History and future Of People on Earth (IHOPE) research team. Professor Iannone’s selected publications include: Ritual, Violence, and the Fall of the Classic Maya Kings (2016; with Brett Houk and Sonja Schwake, University Press of Florida), and The Great Maya Droughts in Cultural Context: Case Studies in Resilience and Vulnerability (2014; University Press of Colorado).

Mary Kate Kelly is a PhD Candidate at Tulane University, studying the linguistics of Maya hieroglyphic writing. Her research investigates the distribution of language over space and time, how variations are recorded in hieroglyphic texts, and whether and how political institutions influenced the spread and use of linguistic features. For the 2019-2020 academic year she is an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Native American Scholars Initiative (NASI) Predoctoral Fellow at the American Philosophical Society located in Philadelphia where she will complete her dissertation.
**Harri Kettunen** (adjunct professor of Latin American Studies at the University of Helsinki) has carried out interdisciplinary research projects on Mesoamerican related topics, combining archaeology, anthropology, iconography, epigraphy, and linguistics. His publications include textbooks on Maya hieroglyphs, methodological studies on Maya iconography, and interdisciplinary articles on Mesoamerican related topics.

**Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire** is a Visiting Assistant Professor in Archaeology in the Anthropology Department of Davidson College. He received his Ph.D. from Tulane University (2018) and his M.A. from Trent University (2011). Max has a keen interest for cross-cultural comparisons in archaeology and is most fascinated by how ancient governments worked. Specifically, he studies the structure of Classic Maya royal courts as evidenced by their regal palaces. Most recently, Max has excavated the regal palace of La Corona, Guatemala, although his archaeological path has also led him to work in Belize, Mexico, Honduras and Québec.

**Lisa J. Lucero** (PhD, UCLA, 1994) is an AAAS Fellow and a Professor in the Anthropology Department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her interests focus on the emergence and demise of political power, ritual, water management, the impact of climate change on society, and the Classic Maya. She has been conducting archaeology projects in Belize for 30 years; recently, she has been excavating ceremonial architecture near cenotes that served as part of a pilgrimage landscape. Dr. Lucero uses insights from the Maya on tropical sustainability issues, working with UNESCO Mexico and colleagues in Southeast Asia.

**Haley Holt Mehta** teaches science at the Florida State University Schools and she is currently a PhD candidate at Tulane University in the Department of Anthropology. Her academic interests include colonial encounters and identity in the archaeological record, ceramic analysis and sourcing, cultivation of citizen scientists, and the empowerment of girls and young women in STEM fields.

**Jayur Madhusudan Mehta** is an Assistant Professor in Anthropology at Florida State University, specializing in the study of North American Native Americans, human-environment relationships, and the consequences of French and Spanish colonization in the Gulf South.

**Marc Zender** received his PhD from the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology of the University of Calgary in 2004. He has since taught at the University of Calgary (2002-2004) and Harvard University (2005-2011), and is now an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Tulane University, New Orleans, where he leads classes in linguistics, epigraphy, and Mesoamerican indigenous languages (e.g., Yucatec Maya, Classical and Modern Nahuatl) since September 2011.

Professor Zender's research interests include anthropological and historical linguistics, comparative writing systems, and archaeological decipherment, with a regional focus on Mesoamerica (particularly Mayan and Nahuatl/Aztec).

He is the author of several books and dozens of academic articles exploring these subjects. Since 1997, he has conducted archaeological, linguistic, and epigraphic research at numerous sites across the Maya area.

He is the project epigrapher for the Proyecto Arqueológico de Comalcalco (in Tabasco, Mexico) and, since 2011, has been a member of the American Foreign Academic Research Project at Cahal Pech, Belize.

In addition to his research and writing, he is the editor of The PARI Journal, the director of Precolumbia-Mesoweb Press, and (with Joel Skidmore) manager of Mesoweb, a major Internet resource for Mesoamerican cultures.
Hieroglyphic Workshop Abstracts

Logosyllabic Scripts of the Ancient and Modern World
Marc Zender – Tulane University, Stanley Guenter - American Foreign Academic Research, Harri Kettunen - University of Helsinki, and Mary Kate Kelly - Tulane University

It can be tempting to think of Maya hieroglyphic as a completely foreign and intricate system in which “anything goes”, particularly when seen from the perspective of the alphabetic scripts which predominate in the modern world. For some of the first Western students of Maya writing, for instance, it was easy to regard the hieroglyphs as whimsical pictures rather than a record of the sounds of the Maya language. However, while almost all of today’s alphabets stem from a single ancient script (the theme of Sunday’s forum), almost all of the other early writing systems around the world were logosyllabic in nature (e.g., Egyptian hieroglyphs and the cuneiform scripts), and several logosyllabic writing systems remain in widespread use today (e.g., Chinese and Japanese). In this forum we will examine several of these logosyllabic scripts, with a focus on comparison and contrast with Maya writing. This forum is open to all, and no prior knowledge of any of these writing systems is either required or assumed. A handout package of inscriptions and script examples will be provided to participants.

“So it is Written…”: A Survey of the Evolution of Alphabetic Scripts and their Comparison with the Logosyllabic Scripts of Antiquity
Stanley Guenter – American Foreign Academic Research, Marc Zender - Tulane University, Mary Kate Kelly - Tulane University, and Harri Kettunen – University of Helsinki

The ancient Maya hieroglyphic script was one of many logosyllabic scripts used in antiquity. Logosyllabic scripts are the most common type of writing system found in the earliest civilizations. Yet today, apart from in east Asia, almost all widely-used scripts in every other part of the world are a type of alphabet, almost all of which can be traced back to a single original script developed by Semitic speakers living in Egypt nearly 4000 years ago. In this forum, we will examine the history of alphabets and their three main different types, as well as how they were used and what kind of information we can glean from ancient inscriptions using these different writing systems. This forum is open to all and no prior knowledge of any of these writing systems is required or assumed. A handout package of inscriptions and script examples will be provided to participants.
Lecture Abstracts

Archaeology in “Foreign” Places: The Personal and Professional Value of Archaeological Research in Regions Outside of our Focus
C. Mathew Saunders - Davidson Day School; American Foreign Academic Research

Six years ago, I was asked to organize a field school program at a Medieval castle in central Spain. Although the prospect sounded exciting, the thought of a Mayanist of twelve years working anywhere outside of the Maya World seemed irrational and irresponsible. So I of course said yes and I now find myself carrying our research in four very different sites across the globe annually. This presentation will discuss my experiences working in research areas outside of my scope of study and experience and will highlight the benefits and obstacles I’ve faced through these “foreign” branches of research.

Microcosms Among the Classic Maya and 19th Century Texas: A Cross-cultural Comparison
Brett A. Houk - Texas Tech University

Many archeologists who study the ancient Maya refer to the practice of symbolically structuring the built environment as site planning, a term popularized by the late Wendy Ashmore. Proponents of Ashmore’s approach argue that rulers would use site planning for two common purposes: first, to symbolically recreate or express a cultural worldview by creating a microcosm of the universe or cosmos, and, second, to politically link a site or building to a powerful peer through architectural emulation. In addition to conveying symbolic information through architecture, site planning can also include the manipulation of time to relate events in the present to important dates in the past. Critics, however, often dismiss site planning studies as highly speculative, given that the ancient Maya left us no architectural plans or written texts related to city planning. Cross cultural comparisons, however, provide examples of other cultures’ manipulating architecture and landscapes to convey meaning and suggest the practice was common around the world. In this presentation, I use downtown historic Austin, Texas as an example of 19th-century American site planning and demonstrate that the leaders of Texas created a microcosm of the republic in the design of Austin in the late 1830s and decades later completed the plan with the construction of the state capitol building. This example provides a springboard for discussing likely microcosms in Classic-period ancient Maya city design.

From Phaistos to Palenque: Paleography in Translation
Emily Davis-Hale - Tulane University

Thanks to the complexity and ongoing decipherment of the Mayan writing system, subdisciplines of epigraphy such as paleography are relatively new to our field. Aside from Alfonso Lacadena’s pioneering work in the last several decades, Mayan paleography must necessarily be informed by cross-cultural perspectives. To this end I present the methodologies of earlier paleographic work, particularly on the Greek alphabet, and discuss their applicability to our investigations moving forward.

Cross-Cultural Approaches to Ancient Mayan Linguistics
Mary Kate Kelly - Tulane University

Writing is speech made permanent. As such, the written word can be used to understand linguistic features of long-ago forms of languages, those with descendant languages spoken today and those that have since passed entirely out of existence. Speech is fickle, and over generations changes accumulate which make the spoken language of today sound differently than it did in the past. Thus, any written form of language tends to be
conservative, maintaining spellings that were fossilized in earlier stages of the spoken language, and does not necessarily change in order to keep up with the pace of language change. Additionally, writing has traditionally been accessible only to the elites, and thus the language recorded in documents becomes a prestige language – exclusively used by those of the upper echelons of society.

2019 AFAR Research Reports
Sydney Brown, Brendan Clark, Audrey Hanson, Emma McMahon, Abby Myers, Mark Myers, Justin Riou, Christian Yellow Robe Yates - Davidson Day School

Members of the 2019 AFAR research teams will summarize their work in Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Belize. These summaries will include the results of each projects as well as some of the highlights of their time abroad.

Medieval South Mesoamerica: Comparing Western Upper Medieval Europe and the Classic Maya
Maxime Lamoureux-St-Hilaire - Davidson College

Cross-cultural analogies are a preferred tool of archaeologists for coloring the past and making it recognizable to us and our audiences. As such, these comparisons are useful pedagogical tools, which can however be misleading if used uncritically.

While direct analogies between Medieval Europe and the Classic Maya world are fairly common in passing, they have rarely made it to print. And when they have, they were generally poorly received. Yet, many loaded terms used in our Mayanist vocabulary can be directly related to the Medieval world – more specifically Western Europe. For example, terms like divine king and queen, royal court, regal palace, feudal, nobility, peasant, courtier, or tribute are used by Medievalists worldwide. In this paper, I discuss key parallels and distinctions between Upper Medieval Western Europe and the Classic Maya Lowlands. By doing so, I explore aspects of Classic Maya geopolitics, regimes, economy, and technology. This process will identify key misconceptions about Medieval Europe while also highlighting its relevance as a comparative case-study to help us solve enigmas about the ancient Mayas.

From Belize to Bagan: A Personal Journey Into the Realm of Cross-Cultural Comparison
Gyles Iannone - Trent University

Although eschewed by post-modern scholars, and disregarded by most Mayanists, the comparative approach remains an essential instrument in our archaeological toolkit. Indeed, cross-cultural comparison remains an invaluable part of the analogy building process – itself a fundamental aspect of most archaeological interpretations – because it adds depth and nuance to our reconstructions of past lifeways. After all, the archaeological record – due to its constitution, transformation, and archaeological reconstitution – is always an imperfect representation of the complex processes that produced and reproduced the ancient communities we are interested in knowing about. This does not mean that all cross-cultural approaches are the same. Some represent little more than the “cherry-picking” of decontextualized bits of data in order to support or refute a specific interpretation. More effective comparisons involve considerations of both similarities and differences across case-studies – between source and subject – with particular emphasis on the “relational” aspects of those mechanisms and relationships deemed essential to the particular processes being investigated. Such analogy building can be further strengthened by following the idea first espoused by Julian Steward and later presented as a “canon” by Robert Ascher (1961:319), which suggests that we should “seek analogies in cultures which manipulate similar environments in similar ways.” Finally, in order to fully comprehend the intricacies of our source analogies – thereby reaching a level of understanding essential to carrying out relationally structured comparisons – we are required to firmly contextualize our datasets using “data proximity” methods.
This criterion can be met through rigorous engagement with primary data and primary sources, or better yet, through fully immersive, onsite visitations. These criteria for effective cross-cultural approaches will be presented as part of a chronicle outlining how the author, unintentionally, shifted his archaeological research program from Belize to Bagan, Myanmar.

“There is Only One Way to Skin a Dead Cat, but Many Tools That Can Be Used to Do It”: Comparative Approaches to Maya Stone Tool Analysis
Rachel A. Horowitz - Appalachian State University

Lithics, or stone tools, are one of the most widely discovered archaeological materials. While the study of lithics has focused mostly on mobile, hunter-gatherer societies, they can provide us with important information about the life-ways of all stone-tool using peoples, including the ancient Maya. This talk addresses why stone tools are of interest to Mayanists and what they can tell us about ancient Maya life-ways. By utilizing comparative perspectives, particularly in terms of the techniques used to interpret lithics, we can gain a better understanding of the ways stone tools were integrated with other aspects of Maya life including social, economic, and political activities. Through a case study examining the manufacturing of different types of tools in western Belize this paper explores the utility of these analyses for understanding past Maya economies, with a focus on the role of elite and non-elite individuals in lithic production. This paper will focus on two lithic production areas, Callar Creek Quarry, a locus of generalized tool production, and the Succotz Lithic Workshop, an area of specialized production. This paper will employ these examples to illustrate the utility of cross-cultural comparison and studying tool production to shed light on the daily practices of the ancient Maya.

Cross Cultural Comparisons in Maya Archaeology: A Cautionary Tale
Jaime J. Awe - Northern Arizona University

The application of cross-cultural comparisons with Asian, European and Middle Eastern cultures has had a long history in Maya and Mesoamerican studies. In some cases, these comparisons have led to hyper diffusionist models designed to explain the rise of civilization in middle America. In other cases, specific subjects, such as Maya urbanism, Maya political organization, warfare, and human sacrifice, to name a few, have also been examined through the lens of comparative data. In this presentation, I attempt to demonstrate that too often some of these cross-cultural comparisons are made with certain biases, and with a certain lack of scholarly rigor. I further suggest that a better understanding of contemporary Maya culture can sometimes provide us with significantly more accurate clues for understanding their ancient predecessors.

Losing the Landscape: Settlement Transformations During the Preclassic Abandonment of Holtun and the 21st Century Crisis in Detroit, Michigan
Rodrigo Guzman - University of Central Florida

The abandonment of a human settlements results from the interaction between the community and adverse factors that reach breaking points. This was experienced by ancient civilizations during periods of social instability or collapse, which is archaeologically observed in the decrease of material culture. Nevertheless, modern cities are also susceptible to abandonment and urban decay, indicating failures in local social systems. The archaeological site of Holtun, in Guatemala, experienced a population decay near AD 100. It was part of a regional phenomenon that affected several centers in the Maya Lowlands at the end of the Preclassic period (2000 BC –AD 250). Concomitantly, the city of Detroit, Michigan, experienced a demographic decrease and increase of urban decay since the 50s. The historic context and factors that led to the partial or total abandon-
ment might differ between both Holtun and Detroit, as much as the strategies of resilience and revitalization. However, the mediation of the social and natural landscape, as well as the transformations of meaning and value of living space might provide elements for a cross-cultural analysis. The objective of this paper is to analyze people’s interaction with the social and natural factors that shaped their cultural landscape. The archaeological research performed at Holtun during more than a decade facilitates information that allows scholars to understand the process of settlement and adaptation of the site. Additionally, archaeologists and paleo-environmentalists have documented and hypothesized factors that led to the Preclassic abandonment. Maps, research reports, and publications constitute the corpus of information regarding Holtun abandonment. A comparative analysis with the information documented regarding the case of Detroit expands the field of knowledge of social transformations. Moreover, Holtun and Detroit are poignant examples how communities mediate their location, and exhaust strategies to continuously occupy the land until more suitable alternatives materialize.

**The Afterlife History of the Dead: The Ancient Maya**

Rachel Gill - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The physical act of death does not say as much about a society as their treatment of the dead postmortem. Afterlife histories of bodies and spirits vary cross-culturally and are enacted based on the belief systems of the living. Some faiths, like Islam, demand the immediate burial of the dead, while others, like the Ancient Egyptians, take several days and a sequence of rituals before the dead can be laid to rest. Several Native American tribes, like the Zuni, do not care what happens to the physical body once the spirit has departed it. These beliefs turned into action ultimately leave physical evidence that can then be examined. Archaeological evidence has shown that the Classic Period Maya interacted with their dead in a variety of ways, and it is through this life history of the afterlife that we can gain a deeper understanding of the interactions among the living. Using both archaeological evidence of burials of Classic Maya people as well as cross-cultural cases of the treatment of the dead, this paper seeks to explore these different afterlife histories (e.g., ancestors, sacrifice, human caches, violence against the “other”, etc.). It is supposed that only 10% of family members are buried in residential-related buildings (houses, temples, shrines, etc.); therefore, we also seek to posit explanations—based on current understandings of Ancient and Modern Maya belief systems—for the large portion of the Classic Maya population whose remains are, at this point, unaccounted for.

**Chronology & Causation: Comparative Approaches to the Study of the Collapse of Ancient Civilizations**

Stanley Guenter - American Foreign Academic Research

One of the most intensely debated and popular topics in archaeology is the study of the collapse of ancient civilizations, that of the Classic Maya being one of the most prominent examples. However, there are a number of other comparable examples, such as the Bronze Age Collapse, and the collapses of the Roman and Khmer Empires. Suggested explanations and causal factors for these varied collapses are remarkably similar and the majority of scholars in each of these areas now argue for either climate change, multi-causal explanations, or simply attempt to downplay the extent to which these cases can even be characterized as “collapse” and prefer to reframe these as examples of mere culture change and emphasize them as cases of “resilience” of local populations instead. In this presentation I will explain how much of this disagreement stems from inaccurate and/or poor resolution in the chronology of collapse and note how this confusion over the order of events in the process of collapse leads to confusing symptoms for causal factors in these studies. Furthermore, common influences from modern society, both in the academic and nonacademic worlds, have had a profound effect in the direction and evaluation of research in all of these different studies of collapse and often these result in poor arguments becoming widely accepted and unquestioned. By questioning these tropes of collapse...
studies and more closely examining the actual evidence in each case, and by tightening the chronologies by which we order this evidence, we can better clarify not only the actual histories of collapse for the Classic Maya and these other cases, we can better understand collapse as a general phenomenon in the cultural evolution of civilizations.

**Contrasting Trends in Early Monumentality Between Mesoamerica and North America**

Jayur Mehta - Florida State University and Haley Holt Mehta - Florida State University

The Gulf Coast of Mexico unites two distinct culture-historical regions, the Southeastern United States and Mesoamerica. In the Southeast United States, precocious earthen and shell monument construction dates to as early as 6500 BP and precedes agriculture by thousands of years. In Mesoamerica, the first public building dates to the early-middle Formative period, at around 2800 BP, after the development of corn agriculture. Other than differences in agriculture, what else divides these two regions? What unites these two regions? This paper strives to abandon a culture-historical perspective and consider an “Archaeology of the Americas” united by the Gulf of Mexico and related regions.

**A Radically Different Theoretical Direction to Solutions of the Enigmas of Ancient Maya Economy, Politics, and the Classic Maya Collapse**

Arthur Demarest - Vanderbilt University

Progress in many aspects of Maya archaeology has come to a halt due to three overarching problems: 1) The lack of success in refining ceramic chronologies leading to long periods of 50 to 250 years within which change occurs at the epicenters. That means that change cannot be evaluated at the site or regional level, 2) broad interpretations based on such low resolution chronologies and huge interregional areal frames for analysis, and 3) nearly complete isolation from the development of new concepts and approaches in Sociology, Economics, Philosophy, and Political Science.

The term **multi-disciplinary** usually refers to new scientific technologies and processes for data recovery and physical analysis. Broader interpretation is either **ad hoc** uses desultory, decontextualized, and poorly understood bits of ideas from other fields. Over the past ten years, however, collaborations with non- anthropology social scientists have led to integrated applications that have yielded credible solutions to many of the enigmas in the study of lowland Maya economy, politics, and especially the Collapse of the Classic Maya city-states. Here the logic and concepts from the enormous body of **integrated** social theory from the interdisciplinary fields of Institutional, Organization, and Strategic Management Studies will be presented using examples from recent studies proposing new understandings of ancient Maya economy and solutions to the “mysteries” of the Classic Maya Collapse, as well as drawing lessons for our looming crises today.

**A Cosmology of Conservation in the Tropical World: The Ancient Maya**

Lisa J. Lucero - University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In this presentation I will attempt to merge two seemingly disparate topics—cosmology and sustainability—into a cohesive narrative with two goals: 1) to understand how these two concepts intersect using cross-cultural cases, including the Maya; and 2) discuss possible implications of this intersection for sustainability issues today, particularly in tropical regions. I attempt to show that a cosmology of conservation resulted in embedded, long-term sustainable practices. This worldview was expressed in their daily existence—rituals, farming, hunting, socializing, etc. A cosmology of conservation espouses a belief system where humans were one of many parts (animals, birds, trees, clouds, stone, earth, etc.) with mutual responsibilities to maintain the world they shared. Maya civilization emerged in a world where everything was animated, connected, and
played a part in maintaining their home/world/environment. The Maya thus worked with nature, not against it; nor did they attempt to control it. As such, it was a non-anthropocentric, sustainable existence. I will show how such a view promoted biodiversity and conservation based on how the Classic Maya (c. 250-850 CE) interacted with their environment. This embedded system worked for the agricultural Maya for four thousand years and supported more people in the pre-Columbian era than presently—and without denuding the landscape. This embedded system, found elsewhere in the tropical world and beyond, provides insights for facing today’s challenges in devising a sustainable future.

**Classic Mayan Accent from a Comparative Perspective**

Marc Zender - Tulane University

In linguistics, stress or accent refers to a relative emphasis or prominence given to a certain syllable in a word, usually by increasing the volume, raising the pitch, lengthening the vowel, or fully pronouncing the vowel. Unstressed syllables, by contrast, are often reduced or even omitted. For these reasons, stress has long been known to play an important role in language change around the world. Because of this, many writing systems dutifully record accents that deviate from expectations. Spanish, for instance, marks unexpected accented syllables with an acute accent. Nonetheless, other scripts are ambiguous in this regard, relying on context and readers’ knowledge of the language to fill in this important detail. English, for example, stresses the word *present* differently depending on whether it means “gift” or “give”; and different dialects of English stress *laboratory* quite differently (e.g., as *lábratory* in the U.S., and as *labóratry* in England). Like English, Classic Maya writing does not mark stress, so the question arises: how do we know which, if any, syllables took stress in Classic Mayan? And how can we reconstruct the kind of stress-related changes the language might have undergone over time? This paper compares and contrasts modern and historically-attested Mayan languages to reconstruct ancestral stress patterns, and closely examines the epigraphic record for variant spellings and orthographic developments attesting to stress-related changes over several centuries. An ancient system of weight-related accentuation is proposed, and this is traced into modern Ch’orti’, where vestiges of this system still remain, and into the Western Ch’olan languages, where it was long ago replaced by a system of canonical final-syllable stress.

**Siguese Su A, B, C: Mesoamerican Writing Systems and the History of Conflicting Worldviews**

Harri Kettunen - University of Helsinki

Throughout the history of studying world’s writing systems, Mesoamerican scripts have been classified from proto-writing and pictographic scripts to true writing systems. While some Mesoamerican writing systems, such as Mayan, have been promoted to the status of “true” or “full” writing systems, some others are still considered by many to fall into the category of pictographic, ideographic, or semasiographic writing. This presentation addresses the varying Western academic notions regarding the nature of Mesoamerican scripts, the very issue of what constitutes “writing” – and whether there can be a cross-cultural understanding behind the concept.
# DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

**Thursday** - September 26, 2019

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**Friday** - September 27, 2019

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<td>10:30 - 11:00 am</td>
<td><em>Break</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:30 pm</td>
<td><em>Cross-cultural Approaches to Ancient Mayan Linguistics</em></td>
<td>Kelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 - 12:00 pm</td>
<td><em>2019 AFAR Research Reports</em></td>
<td>DDS Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 - 1:00 am</td>
<td><em>LUNCH</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td><em>Medieval South Mesoamerica: Comparing Western Upper Medieval Europe</em></td>
<td>Lamoureux-St-Hilaire</td>
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<td></td>
<td>and the Classic Maya</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 - 3:00 pm</td>
<td><em>From Belize to Bagan: A Personal Journey Into the Realm of Cross-Cultural</em></td>
<td>Iannone</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparison</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:00 - 3:30 pm</td>
<td><em>AFTERNOON BREAK</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 - 4:30 pm</td>
<td><em>“There is Only One Way to Skin a Dead Cat, But Many Tools that Can Be Used</em></td>
<td>Horowitz</td>
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<td>to Do It*: Comparative Approaches to Maya Stone Tool Analysis</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 - 5:30 pm</td>
<td><em>Cross Cultural Comparisons in Maya Archaeology: A Cautionary Tale</em></td>
<td>Awe</td>
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</table>
# DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

**Saturday** - September 28, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT NAME</th>
<th>PRESENTER</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 9:00 - 9:30 am | *Losing the Landscape: Settlement Transformations During the Preclassic*  
*Abandonment of Holtun and the 21st Century Crisis in Detroit, Michigan* | Guzman                         |
| 9:30 – 10:00 am | *The Afterlife History of the Dead: The Ancient Maya*                      | Gill                           |
| 10:00 - 11:00 am | *Chronology & Causation: Comparative Approaches to the Study of the Collapse*  
*of Ancient Civilizations* | Guenter                       |
| 11:00 - 12:00 pm | *Contrasting Trends in Early Monumentality Between Mesoamerica and North America* | Mehta                         |
| 12:00 - 1:00 pm | LUNCH                                                                       |                                |
| 1:00 - 2:00 pm | *A Radically Different Theoretical Direction to Solutions of the Enigmas of Ancient Maya Economy, Politics, and the Classic Maya Collapse* | Demarest                      |
| 2:00 – 3:00 pm | *A Cosmology of Conservation in the Tropical World: The Ancient Maya*        | Lucero                        |
| 3:00 - 3:30 pm | AFTERNOON BREAK                                                             |                                |
| 3:30 - 4:30 pm | *Classic Mayan Accent from a Comparative Perspective*                       | Zender                        |
| 4:30 - 5:30 pm | *Siguese Su A, B, C: Mesoamerican Writing Systems and the History of Conflicting Worldviews* | Kettunen                      |

**Sunday** - September 29, 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>EVENT NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00am -12:00pm</td>
<td><em>“So it is Written…”: A Survey of the Evolution of Alphabetic Scripts and Their Comparison with the Logosyllabic Scripts of Antiquity</em></td>
<td>Guenter, Kelly, Kettunen, Zender</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
American Foreign Academic Research and Davidson Day School would like to thank you for attending the Thirteenth Annual Maya at the Playa conference. We hope that the conference was personally educational, useful, and enjoyable. We are hopeful that you will choose to return for another visit in the future but for now, may you have a safe trip home.