



ARHS 6811 Material Meaning in the Americas

Dr. Barbara E. Mundy Wednesdays 3:30-5:55pm



This class examines the materials and technologies used to make art in the Ancient Americas to understand how worldviews are expressed in matter. It covers a wide sweep of indigenous empires (Maya, Aztec, Inca, Olmec, Chavin, Moche) and media (jade, gold, feathers, ceramic, paper, flint, obsidian, shell, and bones). It considers Indigenous categories of art and materials—as expressed in language and the facture of objects themselves—as a way of decentering traditional art historical categories of “art.” We will also look at bodies of theory coming from literature, anthropology, and art history itself to help us ask frame questions about artworks and their material basis and nature.