

The Mesoamerican Studies Group invites you to:

The Social Life of Cacao: A conversation and tasting

Thursday March 21, 6:30 pm
The Graduate Center, CUNY
Brockway Room, 6402

**There will be a chocolate tasting after the talks



The Importance of Cacao among the Pre-Columbian and Modern Maya by Dr. Cameron L. McNeil

We'll explore the use of the chocolate tree (*Theobroma cacao* L.) in Mesoamerican communities with a focus on the ancient Maya polity of Copan, Honduras. The areas where cacao thrived in Mesoamerica were limited, yet the seeds were easily transportable and became a valued source of stimulants. By 1900 B.C. cacao was used in feasting rituals — as evidenced by chemical residue analysis of vessels from Paso de la Amada, Mexico —, and came to be associated with markers of life passage (such as birth, marriage, and death), linked to rulership and power, and used as a medium of exchange. Where the cacao grew well, it aided populations in preserving forest cover while providing an esteemed comestible and trade good. Today, traditional cacao consumption and production has been lost in many areas.

Yes, You Can Have Your Chocolate & Eat It Too: Self-sustaining wild-harvested cacao... Might this change the world? Or just save it?

by Mark Christian

We'll explore the chocolate value chain, from its origin in the Amazon, to forest-dwelling storytellers who live among wild jungle cacaos, to the seedy underbelly of int'l brokers / traders, & sleek urban retailers. Plus, how end-users — that's you! — can find & taste wild chocolate that yields an investment-grade return on our natural capital.

Mark Christian — publishing editor, C-spot.com — the web's leading site for premium chocolate ratings & reviews; co-founder of Landmark Wild Chocolate Reserve in the Amazon Rainforest — home to the original prehistoric varieties / the rock stars of cacao — a developing network of indigenous communities who wild-harvest the very first-ever original chocolate.

Session will include a sample of wild chocolate, the purest & rarest on Earth



For more information, please visit: facebook.com/msgcuny

Co-sponsored by the CUNY
Anthropology Department

