



The Institute for Mesoamerican Studies
is pleased to present:



Poverty, Power, and Prehistory in Mesoamerica: Insights from the Basin of Mexico

What are the roots of poverty? How have the experiences and interests of the poor shaped different societies? How can we study past poverty without historical records? My current research draws together archaeological and ethnohistoric evidence to explore the nature and history of poverty in central Mexico. This talk will focus on how archaeologists can see the experience of poverty in exposure to environmental risks, economic precarity, and social marginalization under Mexica and Spanish rule. One line of evidence comes from my archaeological investigations of salt-makers who lived and worked before and during the Spanish Conquest in the agriculturally marginal edges of saline lakes outside of what is today Mexico City. The other line of evidence comes from thousands of sites recorded during the archaeological surveys of the Basin of Mexico project. Together, these sources show how population growth and expanding settlements under the Mexica created environmental conditions that disadvantaged particular populations after the Conquest. More broadly, this case demonstrates how an archaeological approach to the study of poverty enhances our knowledge of its causes and consequences outside of the West and before the rise of capitalism.



Dr. John Millhauser

John Millhauser is an Associate Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at North Carolina State University. His work focuses on the economies of Postclassic and Colonial central Mexico. His current research integrates economic anthropology and political ecology to better understand the origins of poverty and structural violence.

Friday, April 21st, 2023 at 4:30pm

126 Fine Arts Building, SUNY Albany