

Andean Textile Art Studies

Textile Art & Science; Symbolism and Aesthetic



Apulaya – Center for Andean Culture is the first educational center where Andean indigenous culture is taught in an unprecedented and innovative way. Our success combines a high academic level with direct participatory experiences. The *Andean Textile Art Studies Program (ATAS)* opens the learning access doors of the Andean textile world, to interested students.

The Andean civilizations' main development base was agriculture and, today, most master-weavers are crop-farmers, as well. Therefore the Andean textile culture has a conceptual, metaphoric, symbolic and functional relation with agriculture. Furthermore, given the Andean culture's relational and holistic character, learning about Andean textiles implies a multidisciplinary and participative program that includes field experiences.

Permanently available practical areas

- Andean Textile Art and Weaving
- Pre-Columbian Textile Art and Painting
- Andean Knitting
- Kharka or K'upa technique
- Traditional Agriculture

Integrated Modules

- Traditional Fiestas and celebrations
- Natural dyeing Workshops
- Stay at Indigenous Communities
- Tours and Excursions
- Andean Rituals
- Andean Cinema

Seminars / Courses

- Semiology of Andean Textiles
- Archaeology and pre -Columbian Textiles
- Indigenous Social and Political System
- Impacts of Globalization:
The Andean textile's Commercialization
- Andean Philosophy, Religion and Spirituality
- Ritual mask dances: Sacredness and symbolism

Research Projects

- Participatory Research Methods and Ethics
- Independent Study Project

Generalities

Our program's unique goal is to prioritize students' individual interests and needs, which is gained through the flexible teaching model applied by Apulaya: The practice oriented areas are always simultaneously available (See Permanently Available Practical Areas), with their respective teachers and specialists. Thus, students are free to design their own program according to their specific interests.

The individual design program is supplemented by theory-focused modules within a fixed schedule (See Seminars/Courses), during which indigenous Science, Religion and Philosophy are taught. After one semester, students will have acquired considerable progress in the diverse weaving techniques. Likewise, they will have a general insight on the endemic systems and cultural patterns that are part of the textile culture, in the Andes.

Students can then apply this newly-acquired knowledge in a practical way, capable of the design and focus of a specific Independent Study Project (ISP) that will be tutored by our experts.

A digital and physical library including textile literature is permanently available for projects and research, which contains important documents such as the historical chronicles in digital version and an updated database that is specialized in Andean culture. Documentary movies, an extensive audio, textile collection and musical instrument collections are available and implemented by Apulaya. Our technical equipment also allows for individualized use of multi-media.

The Andean people's annual rhythm is defined by diverse celebrations and rituals. Apulaya includes the Cusco area's traditional events in its program as this is the best opportunity to directly experience the people's spirituality and religiosity. Students are previously introduced to and prepared for the respective celebration, and are then guided and informed throughout the events. Physically demanding pilgrimage celebrations, such as the "Señor de Qoyllu rit'i" or ritual battles can be considered in cases of special interest. During the final month of the semester students apply their study experience and research skills to conduct an Independent Study Project, (ISP).

Through this modern didactic structure, students experience an intensive and customized education on Andean life and processes.

The Apulaya Center is located in Calca; a picturesque village situated in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, 50 minutes by car from Cusco City. From Calca, archaeological sites and traditional indigenous communities are close by and easy to visit.

Language requirement for this program: Intermediate to advanced Spanish. Students are expected to have the ability to follow the courses and communicate with local people in Spanish.

Spanish language support and integrative Spanish: Most of our lecturers and teachers also speak English, but in order to enhance the students' Spanish skills and success in their ISP, courses are taught in Spanish. Students will receive constant Spanish language support.

Housing: Students live at family hostals, shared houses or with a local family. In the Sacred Valley of the Incas, students are fully immersed within the local culture, and have the great opportunity to practice their Spanish, through interaction with local people.

Syllabus Overview

Permanently available practical Areas

Andean Textile art & Weaving



The Andean textile tradition is based on thousands of years of inter-generational development and transmission of ancestral knowledge. Currently, master-weavers are using a variety of looms, warps and their techniques. This module's approach consists in getting trained in the weaving technique, from a simple panel (pampa), on to lineal combinations (lista, t'ullu/patapata), all the way to complex figurative geometrical compositions and abstract expressions. The textile pieces to be woven vary, from ribbons, on to ch'uspa, to get to large pieces:

- Training in textile technology: Preparation of looms, warps, use and handling of the respective instruments, preparation and handling of "illawa" (heddle), mini (weft yarn) as well as threading and thread-twisting processes.
- Pick-up technique: Iconographic development in a gradual manner on the back-strap loom.

Andean Knitting



The knitting technique dates back from pre-Colombian times and today, it is one of the most used to weave the "chullo" (ch'ullo). Students will learn the technique to weave the chullo in a gradual manner, as well as to develop consistent iconographies in geometrical and plant-like stylizations, abstractions of birds, mammals, etc.

Learning the application of diverse types of finish touches is part of the program, like in the case of the pointed-edge technique that also withholds an important symbolism for the Andeans.

The Kharka or K'upa Technique



This is a variation of the knitting technique, which consists in knots and ties. It was a technique used in pre-Colombian cultures, especially in the Huari culture (600-900 a.D.). Nowadays, using that technique, purses, chullos and small bags are woven.

In this program, participants learn how to weave their own articles which they have chosen. Gradually they will develop geometrical and abstract iconographies.

Andean Braiding and Knotting Technique



The braiding and knotting techniques are pre-columbian in their origin. Today, the diversity of items woven with those techniques are part of the garments and herding tools. Styles to be learned:

- Andean braiding (sinp'ay): Students will be trained in the preparation of the respective loom of the icon to be woven, and they will also learn how to handle the crossing and twisting of the threads in order to get a solid and quality work.
- Knotting technique (khipu): Preparation of the respective loom and learning how to form icons through knotting.

Pre-Columbian Textile Art and Painting



Pre-Columbian art impresses through the aesthetic beauty of its abstractions, and contemporaneity which stand out in elegance and pulsating vibration. In the course of our workshops, students will see that its impressive ways of transmitting cosmology and its rites, as well as deep understandings about nature and the world, will guide us to the contemporary indigenous culture and its heritage.

It is a fascinating journey to the past, still alive in the present. Students will also introduce themselves to the religious beliefs, myths and philosophy the pre-Colombian human being developed, to explain the world.

Techniques to be applied:

- Painting with earth pigments or aniline.
- Textile painting with natural dyes.
- Aniline based watercolor painting.

Traditional Agriculture



The Andean civilizations' main development basis was agriculture, in such a way that these developed their own production systems, together with their vision and concept of ecology and religion, ruled by a ritual calendar.

At the same time, weavers are shepherds and crop-farmers, and the practice of textile manufacturing is intrinsically bound to this. According to the seasons, participation in agricultural activities, allows for live experience and knowledge:

- The structure of textiles that reflect the agricultural and landscape's space.
- "Work", in its ritual and celebrative context.
- The concept of agriculture, as "nurturing of life".
- The observation of signals and indicators: Meteorological or climatic predictions and calculations, through observation of the behavior and manifestations of nature's elements.

Seminars and Courses

Semiology of Andean Textiles



Historically speaking, we know that textiles served as key information transmission documents. Nowadays, apart from their utilitarian functions, the diversity of pieces is still an information deposit paradigm, in such a way that, wearing textile is like "wrapping" oneself in a social skin of images and icons with complex meaning:

- Textile art, as an information panel: In fact, while decoding iconography, we will see that woven textiles transmit complex data about social memories, such as cosmology, astronomy, religion, myths and history.
- Textile garments, as a heritage from divinities and ancestors: Ethnographic information and the analysis of mythical cycles will show us the concept of 'costume', dress or garment, from the indigenous perspective.

Pre-Columbian Textiles



The development of the Andean textile art is millenary. Each civilization had a particular textile style that differentiate them from others but at the same time the ideology and worldview model united all. We will explore and analyze a variety of archaeological textiles of each pre-Hispanic civilization including Inca textiles under the following approaches:

- Textiles and garments styles of pre-Columbian civilizations.
- Semiology of archaeological textiles: iconographic interpretation.
- Concepts of time and space through the pre-Hispanic textiles, especially Wari, Paracas, Nazca and Inca
- Inca textiles, "khipu" (quipu) and "tocapu": textiles as storage system and transmission of information; an approximation to pre-Hispanic non-alphabetic writing.

Indigenous Social and political Systems



The territorial organization concepts, border landmarks and political ideologies are represented in the clothes of the *varayoc* (scepter carriers), the indigenous communities' authorities. The approach of the indigenous ideology and political system, from pre-Hispanic times 'till today, will give a broader vision about the already mentioned topic. Thus, we will invite traditional authorities in the course of our seminars. Thematic panorama:

- Role and function of textiles, in the frame of pre-Colombian politics, and today.
- Sacred politics: The duality and quadripartition in government's structures.
- Masculine and feminine spaces in the political and religious exercise: Gender roles.
- Indigenous political structures and their electoral system.
- Parallelism between the governmental political system, and indigenous authorities.

Impacts of Globalization: The Andean Textile's Commercialization

The introduction of Andean textiles in the market economy brings along diverse changes and impacts. Currently Andean textiles are subject to exportation, bought by tourists, and used in the fashion design world. Thematic panorama:

- Art or handicraft? Categorizations currently applied to Andean textiles in the commercial world.
- Changes, transformations and deformations of the original textile culture's aesthetics and concepts.
- Between a non-monetary system and the contemporary market economy, massive production of Andean textiles and the wave of imitations on an industrial level.

- Andean identity and the fashion world.

Andean Philosophy



Andean philosophy as such, is systemized on the basis of live thought lived in the present, and knowledge inherited from ancient Andean civilizations.

The program's goal is to introduce our students to the different parameters and principles that rule the Andean world. We will focus on the Andean rationality and its characteristics and derivations, the Andean vision of time and space, Andean theology with its implications, and the world's sacredness.

At the end of the seminar, students will have a panoramic insight on a set of knowledge based on holistic observation of nature and the cosmos, as well as on its application, in the Andean civilizations' social structures, politics and art such as the textile practice.

Ritual Mask Dances: Sacredness and Symbolism



Diverse syncretic celebrations are performed throughout the year, in which the main protagonists are the groups of masked dancers. Their performances, along with the music, like the *Taki* or pre-Hispanic theaters, in which all forms of art were integrated, make it so that collective memory might be updated and last, and that the different historical interpretations of Peru and the Andes might be represented as mythical speeches.

For example there is the representation of the Incas under the Spanish Crown, the war between Peru and Chile, the slavery of men and women proceeding from Africa, diseases and death in the coca plantations, myths, etc

We will analyze and decode the garments and choreography of different groups of dancers, while learning some basic dance steps as well.

Religion and Andean Spirituality



Archaeology and ethno-historical data show us the textiles' importance and function, in pre-Hispanic times. Today, textiles fulfill a very important role within the Andean farming and herding communities' religious system. Thematic panorama:

- Rites, offerings, divinities and 'animism' (*kawsan*): Woven fabrics possess a sacred category, in addition of being animated entities. Likewise, we will see their relationship with agriculture, the plants' growth, and their function as connectors between the world of the living and that of the ancestors.
- The Andean religious system: Methodic pluralism, holism and the sacred nature of the Cosmos (Pacha).
- The *wisa*, specialists of the Andean ritual practice: The *wisas*' categories, attributes, initiations and role in Andean societies.
- The textiles' function and role, in pre-Hispanic times.

At the end of this sequence of seminars, participants will have acquired the capacity to decode the symbolisms of the structure, sequence and ceremonial paraphernalia of the most usual offerings.

Ritual Calendar and Ethno-Astronomy



The cycle of the Pleiades, lunar seasons and constellations are determinants in the Andes, and particularly for agricultural activities. Through keen and precise observation, predictions were made of climatic behavior patterns that would influence the quality of future harvests. In traditional communities, the ritual calendar is still based on these celestial cycles.

Students will learn about Andean Cosmology, aspects of land structure and organization in native communities, as well as about celestial space organization and structure. Lectures will also include elements of Inca and pre-Inca astronomy and their ritual calendars, for a better understanding of contemporary practices.

At the end of the program, the students will be able to describe the main structure of the Andean ritual calendar, as well as festive cycles and their logics. They will also be able to recognize astronomical representations, in the textile iconography.

Integrated modules

Stay at Indigenous Communities

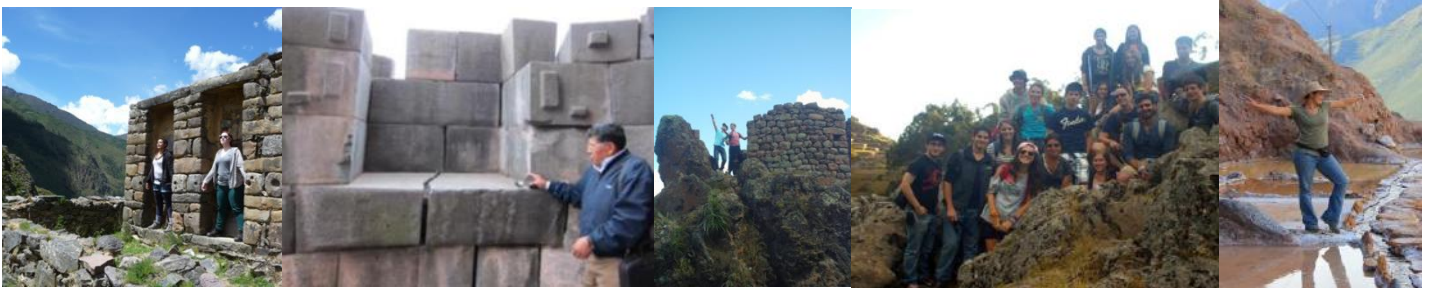


High Andean communities hold much hidden knowledge. People are farmers, shepherds and weavers, therefore, the community members' lifestyle and activities are very traditional, and complemented by beautiful panoramic landscapes and absolute tranquility.

The communities' best and most famous weavers teach our students. In addition to sharing the community members' lifestyle and aspects such as weaving and farming techniques, it also is an unforgettable intercultural experience for our participants. Activities:

- Weaving lessons.
- Visit to the community's weavers' centers and/or associations.

Apulaya – Tours: Archaeo-Astronomy and Landscape Architecture



A trip to Inca sanctuaries is a journey to the cosmos, nature and inside oneself. It will be explored archaeological complexes in and around Cusco as well as in the Sacred Valley of the Incas, the planning and construction based on astronomy combining data from historical chronicles with present-day indigenous cosmology. In this way harmony among the Cosmos, human beings and nature is visualized and experienced in a holistic way.

Festive Ceremonial Calendar of the Andes



Ritual battles and combat rites of fertility propitiation, Andean Easter celebration, Festivities of the Cross and pilgrimages to holy places, among others, are part of the ritual calendar in the Andes. There are many celebrations throughout the year, which allows us to combine them with our study programs. As we participate and analyze these unique and impressive celebrations, we gain insight into the Andean soul.

Natural dyeing Workshops



Flowers, leaves, roots, cactus fleas (cochineal) and minerals are all part of the art of dyeing techniques that are an age-old ancestral art in the Andes. Students will learn a processes of threads, and techniques used to fi