MASC 2301.00 – Spring 2018
Introduction to Mexican American Studies
Mexican American Studies Program

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Class Meetings: MW 8:00 am – 9:15 am
Office Hours: By Appointment: M – 10:45-1:00 & by Appointment
Class Location: ELABS 179

Course Description
This course provides an overview of the historical and contemporary experiences of Mexican American communities in the United States. It will also serve as an introduction to the central topics and debates in the field of Mexican American Studies. With an emphasis on the humanities, we will explore how Mexican American writers, musicians, visual artists, and critics create cultural texts that through their own hybridity, negotiate the tensions of being simultaneously within and on the margins of both U.S. and Mexican national boundaries. We will begin by situating the historical context of the Mexican American and then move on to address questions concerning labels, nationalism, border issues, labor, migration, and memory. We will also focus on the construction and transformation of ethnic and national identities among Mexican Americans. Throughout the semester we will be considering the ways in which race, ethnicity, geography, language, gender, and sexuality underline the material we will be analyzing. The course content will be drawn from various texts/media including, novels, autobiographies, short stories, poetry, histories, murals, paintings, films, and music.

Course Learning Objectives
- Define, Compare and Contrast Conquest versus Colonization
- Understand the ramifications and residual effects of colonization for Chicanxs today
- Identify ways in which Chicanxs have resisted colonization and attempts of decolonization
- Identify ways in which social identities are (re)constructed and negotiated and how the roles of race, ethnicity, geography, nationalism, language, gender, and sexuality influence these identities.
- Have a basic understanding of the historical presence and experiences of Chicanxs in the U.S.
- Understand various labels and their origins to identify Chicanxs
Suggested Text
Anzaldúa, Gloria. Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza. San Francisco

Textbook and/or Resource Material
Weekly readings can be found in full by following the Google Drive link below. Readings for the assigned class day must be completed before coming to class.

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1U8xxxF1jJMn_HazKSZdG9m9w9IpADaMn

Course Requirements
12.5% – Attendance
12.5% – Participation
10.0% – Critical Reflection I
10.0% – Yo Soy/I Am Poem
10.0% – Oral History
35.0% – Testimonio
10.0% – Critical Reflection II

100.00% – Total

* ~ Major Requirements, Demonstration of Mastery and Evaluation ~ *

Assignments and Assessments
This course is comprised of several components and assignments. All assignments should be posted as attachments through Blackboard. Attendance for this course is mandatory. Students should miss no more than three (3) classes. Any absences beyond the three days will ultimately impact the semester grade. The participation component for this course will be fielded through daily participation in both individual and group efforts.

ATTENDANCE [12.5%]
Attendance is a graded component of the course and is essential to the successful completion of the course. Since this class is structured around group discussions, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material. There will be many opportunities to participate not only in discussions, but also in readings and working groups. It is essential to cooperate in these activities. Attendance is most measured through punctual physical presence and participation in class.

PARTICIPATION [12.5%]
Participation is a graded component of the course. It is composed of actively participating in class discussions, attending class with prepared questions, analysis, and engagement with the class.

**CRITICAL REFLECTION [10% x 2]**
The Critical Reflection consists on a single written paper which is weighted for 10% of your total grade. The Critical Reflection is meant for you to engage meaningfully with the course discussions, readings, content, and ideas. *For this assignment, there should be absolutely no quotes or citations outside of contextual exceptions!* These exceptions should be limited and not lengthy, but be used specifically to position yourself, your argument, or contextualize what you are about to say. The goal for this assignment is to ensure that you have engaged in critical reflection of the readings and discussions within the class, thus, you are welcome to reflect using any model similar to the following: how have the texts/discussions/ideas affected you, what aspects of the texts specifically resonated with your lived experience, what examples of the texts do you connect to the outside world and why is that so, how do you agree/disagree/contest/challenge/expand/interpret the information from class discussions, have you found the readings/discussions/content to be liberating/decolonizing/effective or not, etc. This is by no means an exhaustive list – we will review this in class and discuss several template examples to flesh out your arguments, reflections, thoughts, and ideas. The final critical reflection must be 800-1000 words in length.

**YO SOY / I AM POEM [10%]**
Create your own personalized “Yo Soy/I Am” poem. We will discuss more details on this during class.

**ORAL HISTORY [10%]**
Please view the following oral history:

Oral history is a field of study and methodology for investigating, archiving, analyzing, and honoring the voices and memories of individuals, communities, and participants in past events. Using both audio and video, each student will conduct an oral history with an elder, community member, or person of personal interest in the community. A complete oral history project should consist of the following: one video interview with audio, and one 300-400 word reflection on the process, content, and experience of documenting an oral history. This will be discussed thoroughly in class and resources will be provided to ensure a strong interview.

**TESTIMONIO [35%]**
This is the capstone project for our course. It is mandatory in order to pass the class. This project should reflect your personal story and thus there is no “right” or “wrong” way to tell this story.
This should be told through multiple lenses of analysis to explore how your present identity has been shaped with relation to our discussions and content in class. All of your experiences will vary in content, thus, such points of analysis may include education, work, language, gender, ethnicity, etc. and how one/each of these has affected your identity, your perception of the world and your experiences within it. This project should last anywhere between THREE to FOUR minutes in total and must be uploaded to YouTube in order to present on the day of class. In order to create accountability and ease concerns with project we will follow various due dates for particular pieces of content necessary for the successful completion of this project. The content is as follows: 1) 20-30 pictures*, 2) selection of an piece of music (instrumental preferred) to accompany your project, 3) a draft of your script for the digital story and 4) a revised draft of your script prior to recording your audio. We will review this twice in class and make time to visit the computer lab for assembly of the complete project. For examples of completed projects please visit: https://www.youtube.com/user/MASUTPA/videos

*pictures can be either childhood/family/present photographs, images from the internet, video clips, art pieces, designs, etc. etc.

ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES

02/04 – Participation Points
02/04 – Identification of Oral History Interviewee

02/18 – Pictures, Song & Draft for Digital Story/Testimonio

03/04 – Critical Reflection I

03/18 – I am / Yo Soy Poem

04/08 – Draft of Digital Story/Testimonio Script

04/23 – Digital Story/Testimonio I
04/25 – Digital Story/Testimonio II

05/06 – Oral History

05/13 – Critical Reflection II
CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES
Tentative Course Topics, Calendar of Activities, Assignments and Important Dates

Week 1:
W 01/17: CLASS CANCELLED

Week 2:
M 01/22: Syllabus, Introductions, What is Mexican American Studies
W 01/24: FILM: Precious Knowledge
● In Class Film

Week 3:
● Discussion on Precious Knowledge
● Have Read:
  ○ Barrio Pedagogy: Praxis Within the Tucson Social Justice Education Semester
  ○ Construir y no Destruir (Build and do not Destroy): Tucson Resisting
  ○ Robb: If a bigot bans ethnic studies, the law is unconstitutional?
  ○ Banning Mexican-American Studies in Arizona Was Racist, Judge Rules
W 01/31: Discussion on Borderlands/La Frontera
● Have Read:
  ○ Ch. 1: The Homeland, Aztlán/El Otro México

Week 4:
M 02/05: Colonization & Becoming Mexican
● Have Read
  ○ Cortés, Hernan - “What Greater Grandeur”
  ○ Díaz del Castillo - “Greater than Constantinople & Rome”
  ○ Video: Tenochtitlán (The Impossible City) YouTube
W 02/07: Colonization & Becoming Mexican
● Have Read
  ○ Las Casas, Bartolomé de - “Another Spaniard’s View of the Conquest” & Drawings
Las Casas, Bartolomé de - “A Brief Account of the Destruction of the Indies
○ Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Week 5:
M 02/12: Discovering Rio Grande Valley
● Have Read:
○ Inventing the ‘Magic Valley’ of South Texas
○ Agricultural History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley
○ Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

W 02/14: Becoming Chicanx
● Have Read:
○ Borderlands/La Frontera - Ch. 2: Movimientos de Rebeldía y las Culturas que Traicionan

Week 6:
M 02/19: Farmworkers & Student Protests
● Have Read:
○ Braceros, Mexicans, Americans
○ Sons of Zapata

W 02/21: Farmworkers & Student Protests, Cont.
● Have Read:
○ El Plan de Santa Barbara
○ El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán
○ The Philosophy of MEChA
○ Edcouch Elsa Walkouts

Week 7:
M 02/26: Farmworkers & Student Protests, Cont.
● Have Read
○ Pharr Riots
○ I am Joaquin

W 02/28: Nepantla
● Have Read
Week 8:

M      03/05: Mujeres Confront Machismo
      ● Have Read
      ○ Intersectionality
      ○ The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House

W      03/07: Mujeres Confront Machismo, Cont
      ● Have Read
      ○ bell hooks – Feminism is for EVERYBODY
         ■ Ch. 1, 4 & 10

*~Week 9: SPRING BREAK~*

M      03/12: No Class

W      03/14: No Class

Week 10:

M      03/19: Chicanxs on Stage
      ● Theatre: Zoot Suit

W      03/21: Chicanxs on Stage, Cont.
      ● Theatre: Zoot Suit
      ○ Discussion

Week 11:

M      03/26: Race, Language & Education
      ● Have Read
      ○ Are Prisons Obsolete?
      ○ Manifesto for Abolition

W      03/28: Race, Language & Education, Cont.
      ● Have Read
      ○ Borderlands/La Frontera - Ch. 5: How to Tame a Wild Tongue
Week 12:
M 04/02: Short Stories
   ● Have Read
   ○ Chango, Oscar Casares
   ○ She Flies, David Rice

W 04/04: Short Stories, Cont.
   ● Have Read
   ○ Woman Hollering Creek, Sandra Cisneros
   ○ You’ll Hit it Over Anzaldúa’s Bridge, Robert Moriea

Week 13:
M 04/09: Hate, Healing & Transformation
   ● Have Read
   ○ Column of the Americas
   ○ From Intergenerational Trauma to Intergenerational Healing

W 04/11: Border Thinking
   ● Have Read
   ○ Geopolitics of Sensing and Knowing
   ○ Borderlands/La Frontera - Ch. 7: La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness

Week 14:
M 04/16: Assignments, Presentations, Etc.
   ● WORK DAY!!!

W 04/18: Zapatismo
   ● Have Read
   ○ Dismantling Neoliberal Education: A Lesson from the Zapatistas
   ○ Why We Still Love the Zapatistas

Week 15:
M 04/23: Digital Story Presentations I

W 04/25: Digital Story Presentations II
Week 16:
M 04/30: Undercommoning Within, Against and Beyond the University-as-Such
   ● Have Read
      ○ Undercommoning within, against and beyond the university-as-such
      ○ Back to Academia, in Struggle

W 05/02: Keepers of the Circle
   ● The Fifth Element

Week 17: Final Exam
M 05/07: On Site Learning – Location TBA

W 05/09: On Site Learning – Location TBA