1. Course Description

Chicano Cinema examines dimensions of the film industry with respect to the Chicano’s place - historically and culturally - within the genre. Since film has become a genre with cultural implications, methods have emerged enabling the student to “read” the messages shaped by those images as well as the manner in which the story is told. It is within this framework that this course is based. Questions proposed for this examination include: What area the images of Chicanos in commercial Hollywood films and how have they changed as a result of historical developments? What impact did these images have, not only on the viewing public, but on Chicanos themselves? This, however, is only one part of the story.

Because of historical social movements taking place in the 1960s and 70s, Chicanos themselves began the process of reclaiming their own films, their own images, a counter-cinema, if you will. In the last thirty years an emergence of Chicano film has developed with an eye for telling stories from the perspective of this community. Chicano cinema is an interdisciplinary course that makes use of fields of cultural anthropology, sociology, film criticism, and history in order to conduct its review of how and why Chicanos have been depicted as they have. These methodologies will be used to examine how Chicanos responded to these images and in the process contributed to their self-determination and popular culture.

Objectives

A. Engage students in an interdisciplinary study of subjects and issues central to consideration, aesthetically and culturally, of Chicano films. This will be accomplished through the screening of diverse films covering topics such as history, stereotyping, the role of the woman, forms of cultural expression such as the documentary, short narrative and feature, immigration, colonias, education, and border issues, just to name a few.

B. Contribute to the comparative, critical and analytical study of Chicano film as an art form through examination of Hollywood and Chicano film. Discussions will be used to examine differences in the two film forms.

C. Expand the student’s horizons of Chicano film. Moreover, the course will serve to counterbalance stereotypes, ethnocentrism, racism, and sexism by examining images of Chicanos (and Latinos) in Hollywood and Chicano film.
D. This course will promote critical written and oral communication skills as a response to Chicano film. This will be achieved through the preparation of critical film reviews, a critical essay where the student will develop a definition of Chicano film based on their viewing and readings from the class. It is hoped that the student will come away from the class with a more critical eye towards the film industry.

2. Course Format

This course will consist of lecture, screening of films in class, discussion of both films and reading materials. Students will be engaged in written work consisting of short critical reviews of film, a midterm and take home final. Students may be asked to make oral presentations based on their reviews for purposes of initiating discussion.

3. Readings

Chicano Cinema Reader is on Blackboard

Handouts will also be distributed to complement screenings

4. Methods of Evaluation

Final grades will be based on a point system and is broken down as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100 - 91</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 - 81</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 - 71</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 - 61</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 - 51</td>
<td>F</td>
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Evaluation will be based on the following criteria: 1) a final – 40 points; 2) a midterm – 30 points; 3) one film critique – 15 points; and 4) regular attendance – 15 points. Please be informed that unexcused absences will mean losing credit (three points deducted for each absence). In addition, excessive tardiness may result in student being dropped from the class. Finally, late papers will be deducted 2 points each day.
Course Outline

July (Week 1)

11 Overview of course, requirements, etc.

Part 1: Stereotypes

12 Overview on Stereotypes and Images (Lecture)


13 Early Film Stereotypes
Screen: Martyrs of the Alamo (1915, d./w Christy Cabanne)

(Week 2)

17 Hollywood and Revolution
Screen: Viva Villa (1934, d. Jack Conway)

18 Screen: Walk Proud (1979, d. Robert Collins)

Part 2: Chicano Cinema

19 The Emergence of Chicano Cinema (Lecture)
Reading: Treviño, Jesus. “Form and Technique in Chicano Cinema” (1985)

20 Counter-Cinema: Redefining Images
Screen: Salt of the Earth (1954, d. Herbert Biberman)
Reading: James J. Lorence “What Kind of Film Was This?” (1999)

Review for Midterm
(Week 3)

24 Midterm

NOTE: select one of the following two films to write your critique; due August 1st.

25 Chicano Feature Film: First Steps
   Screen: Please Don’t Bury Me Alive (1976, d. Efrain Gutierrez)

26 Pachucos in the 1940s (lecture/prep for Zoot Suit)

27 Chicano Cinema in Hollywood: The First Step
   Screen: Zoot Suit (1981, d. Luis Valdez)

(Week 4)

31 Chicano Literature into Film
   Screen: The Longoria Affair (2011, d. John Valadez)

August

1   Hispanic Hollywood and Chicano Films
   Screen: Born in East LA (1987, d. Cheech Marin)

2   A Magical Journey
   Screen: Bless Me, Ultima (2013, d. Carl Franklin)
   Reading: Truthout. “Bless Me, Ultima”: Movie Revisits Controversy, Succeeds After 40 Years.” (2013)

3   Closing Remarks
   NOTE: Review for final

4/7 Final exam.