

**Chicano Cinema: Cross-listed as CHIC 3302 (CRN: 22368) and FILM (CRN: 22369)**

Spring 2018	Office phone: 915.747.6287
Dr. Frank G. Pérez	Office hours: Mondays from 12:00 – 2:00 p.m. and by appt.
Office: Quinn Hall, Room 207	Email: <a href="mailto:fperez1@utep.edu">fperez1@utep.edu</a>
Class location: Education 202	Class sessions: T/R 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.

**Required Readings:**

The class requires NO textbook. All readings will be posted in PDF format on our Blackboard shell.

**Class Description:**

This course examines the representation of Chicanos/Mexican Americans in mainstream Hollywood films, “B-movies”, and documentaries. The Chicano experience is centered in struggles for social justice and a complicated negotiation of identity politics (Are we Mexican? American? Neither? Both? Chicana/o or Chicana/x?). Our goal will be to critically examine Chicano and Chicano-related films to identify the latent and manifest issues of identity and social critique (e.g., poverty, racism, sexism, homophobia, social marginalization). We will consider the role film plays in forming individual and societal perceptions of Chicanas/os. One way the film industry has impacted Chicanas/os is via their frequent casting of Mexican Americans as drug addicts, drug dealers, gang members, greasers, Latin lovers, and such. The other key impact stems from Hollywood’s consistent exclusion of Mexican Americans from U.S. cinema. Only recently has Hollywood (in some limited contexts) begun to suggest that Brown people may be portrayed positively; however, such characters often have some type of fatal flaw.

The film industry tends to negatively stereotype those social segments whose members cannot invest heavily in movie tickets. The poor, regardless of race, are often the target of negative stereotyping in mainstream media culture. Mexicans/Mexican Americans/Chicanos (and African Americans) are among its biggest victims. Yet, today, Latinas/os attend films with much greater frequency than the average person in the US. They also spend more during each visit to the theater than the average filmgoer and purchase more “tie-ins” than the average filmgoer. Ironically, they remain all but absent from English-language films and television although, again, this trend is slightly improving. They remain overrepresented as undesirable members of society. This racist framing stems from the perception that Spanish-dominant Chicanas/os will be served by Spanish-language media, and that English-competent/-dominant Chicanas/os will consume Hollywood fare, ignoring or looking past its racist representations. Film socializes people to behave in very particular ways, does it teach others how to interact with or fear Chicanas/os? Perhaps most importantly, film reveals who in society has power and who does not. We will explore such issues during our time together. Latinas/os are the largest ethnic minority in the US (17.6% of the population) and Mexican origin people constitute 64% of the Latino population. Film teaches us who we are, what to purchase, and to what lifestyle we should aspire. Despite decades of limited social progress, we remain a social category lacking in power.

**Course Objectives:**

1. To learn about and understand the major themes explored in Chicana/o Cinema.
2. To understand how to critically read mass mediated information to resist its hegemonic influence, particularly when it presents Chicanas/os as the "Other" in society.
3. To learn to think and write critically on social issues. How one sees the world and how one communicates such views is vital to being a successful professional and a valuable member of society.

**Course Assignments:**

- |  |                  |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Identity essay (Due: February 13)                             | 15 points        |
| 2. Midterm Exam (March 8)  | 25 points        |
| 3. Film Critique (April 12)                                      | 20 points        |
| 4. Attendance (taken daily via a sign-in sheet after first week) | 10 points        |
| 5. Final Exam  | <u>30 points</u> |

**Total Points:** **100 points**

**INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ALTER THE CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Instructor's Message about Learning:** Learning can be challenging and this class will expose you to ideas that may contest your worldview. The purpose of an education is to push you to think in ways that may be new or different. If you disagree with all or any part of a film, lecture, or reading, please understand that you do not have to concur with the idea(s) advocated by the filmmaker, instructor, presenter, or author. You do, however, need to contemplate what is being said, understanding that doing so will either reinforce what you already believe or allow you to think in a new way. **You are here voluntarily and my job is to help you grow intellectually.** Doing so requires that you engage the class with an open mind. If you cannot handle views that stand in opposition to your own, perhaps you are not ready for university-level study.

Again, I do not ask you to agree, simply to consider how others see the world. If something is anathema/abhorrent to you, ask yourself why and, if you like, share your thoughts during class discussions and in your assignments. We are here to learn from one another. Please participate in class by showing others the respect you ask that they give you. The grading criteria are designed to let you express your views. Good grades require a cogent argument, solid writing, and a deep contemplation of the course materials. No one will pass or fail because of their comments or views. In terms of grading, I do not care what your view is, I am concerned with how well you present, develop, and defend your views.

### **Class Policies:**

**Academic Honesty:** Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Students caught in acts of academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with UT El Paso policy. You will at a minimum fail the assignment with a grade of zero.

**Disabilities:** Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure that their needs are met in a timely manner. Please also register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS), UTEP Union East, Room 106. You may reach them via telephone (915) 747-5148 or email [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). If you need any accommodation, CASS registration will protect you and will help to ensure you receive the accommodation(s) you need to excel in your studies. I am always glad to help in any way I can. However, CASS staff members are the only individuals who can validate and authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

**Excessive Absences:** Students may miss four classes without penalty. Any student who accumulates 5 absences will lose 5 points from his/her final grade. Six absences will result in the student losing 10 points from his/her final grade. **Anyone with seven or more absences will either be dropped from the class or receive an "F" if the seventh absence is after the final instructor drop date.**

**Final Grades:** I do NOT provide students with final grades via email or telephone. Final grades are posted on Goldmine once they are officially recorded by the Registrar's Office. I am confident that you can wait an additional day or so to learn how you did in class. Please do NOT contact me for grades prior to their official posting on Goldmine. It is against UT System policy for me to release grades by phone or email.

If you have a concern regarding your final grade contact me at your earliest convenience at the start of the next semester, and I will be glad to work with you to explore the situation. I do not change grades often but will do so if an error was made in calculating your final grade.

**Graduate Credit for this Course:** In order to obtain graduate credit for this course, you must satisfactorily complete a graduate level project with a topic and within parameters approved beforehand by the course instructor. See me as soon as possible if you are a graduate student.

**Late Assignments:** I do NOT accept late papers, unless there are extenuating circumstances that you can document.

**Lecture Notes:** Lecture notes and other course-related items will be posted on the course's Blackboard shell after the lecture has been delivered and/or the topic has been covered in class.

**Letters of Recommendation/Professional Reference:** I provide letters of recommendation ONLY for students who have completed at least two classes with me, one of which must be an upper-division class. Furthermore, you must have earned an "A" in at least one of the classes. Finally, you must give me at least two weeks to complete the

letter and/or any recommendation forms. If you would like to cite me as a professional reference for employment or something similar, please do so only after discussing this possibility with me. I will usually say yes; however, you must notify me PRIOR to providing my information to a potential employer.

**Missed Exams:** I do not allow people to take missed exams AFTER the exam has been administered. However, if you have a university-authorized absence or legitimate and documented reason for being out on an exam day, I will allow you to complete a take home, essay version or other alternate form of the exam that will be due PRIOR to your absence. Written tests must be completed in APA format, typically using multiple academic sources.

**Related Issues:** I only accept hardcopies of work turned in during class and stapled, unless you have made arrangements with me otherwise. I do NOT accept “attached” copies of work via email but you can send me copies this way if you need to miss class on a due date because of an emergency. **Do not place any assignments in a binder or folder. Please turn off your phones and other electronic devices (e.g., iPods, tablets, etc.) before class begins. If your phone must be on due to work or family issues, please let me know at your earliest convenience.**

**Time:** The class runs on my phone’s clock (it will be the same as everyone else’s phone). If people are frequently late to class there will be attendance quizzes at the start of class. Quizzes are due immediately when called for and cannot be turned in after they are picked up by your professor. If people are late, I may close the doors and ask those who are late to wait outside until the quiz is completed and turned in.

If there is no quiz going on, please join us if you are running late. It always breaks my heart to hear students say, “I sat outside because you had started class and I did not want to interrupt.”

**Final Note:** Despite the rather lengthy syllabus rules and procedures, we will have fun in this class. There will be group work, in-class activities, some Blackboard materials/videos for us to explore. After 17 years of teaching at UTEP, my syllabus has evolved into a lengthy contract, my apologies. Still, I anticipate our journey to be one that runs smoothly, allows each of us to learn from one another, and to be filled with memorable moments of learning.

#### Schedule of Class Sessions

(Instructor reserves the right to alter the class readings and/or assignments)

#### Week 1 – January 16 and 18

#### Topic/Readings

<b>Tues</b>	<p><b>What is a Chicana/o? Course Overview</b> Syllabus review, introductions, In-class Chicana/o quiz (not for credit) <b>Lecture:</b> History of Chicanos in Hollywood, <b>Film(s):</b> <i>Billy Broncho and the Greaser</i> (1914) and/or <i>The Head of Joaquin Murrieta</i> (2015). <b>Read this for Thursday, January 18:</b> David E. Stannard, Chapter 1 in <i>American Holocaust</i> (1992). A weblink is provided on Blackboard. You can also find it using Google Scholar.</p>
<b>Thurs</b>	<p><b>Racial Struggle: Then and Now</b> <b>Lecture:</b> Some Background on the Creation of Mestiza/o and Chicana/o Identity <b>Video:</b> <i>The Head of Joaquin Murrieta</i> (2016) – continued, if need be. <b>Read this for Tuesday, September 5:</b> Rosalinda Fregoso (1993): “Intertextuality and Cultural Identity in <i>Zoot Suit</i> (1981) and <i>La Bamba</i> (1987)” from <i>The Bronze Screen</i>. Also, Luis Alvarez (2009), “Race and Political Economy” from <i>The Power of the Zoot</i> (2009)</p>

**Week 2 – January 23 and 25**

- Tues           **Lecture:** Chicanos and the US Homefront During WWII  
**Film:** *Zoot Suit* (1981)
- Thurs           **FILM:** *Zoot Suit* continued  
**Read for September 12 and 14:** Pérez and Ortega (2008) on Oñate in El Paso

**Week 3 – January 30 and February 1**

- Tues           **Lecture:** Juan de Oñate in El Paso and the Fantasy Heritage: A Study in Neocolonial Violence. Begin *The Last Conquistador* (2008), if possible.  
**Read for Thursday, February 1:** McWilliams (1948/2016) on Fantasy Heritage
- Thurs           **Film:** *The Last Conquistador* (2008)

**Week 4 – February 6 and 8**

- Tues           **Lecture:** Fantasy Heritage and Internal Colonization  
**Film:** *Las Marthas* (2014)  
**Read for Thursday, February 8:** Rosales on Fighting the Peace at Home (American GI Bill)
- Thurs           **Lecture:** Chicano Soldiers: Valiant and Ignored  
**Film:** *The Longoria Affair* (2010)  
**No readings –enjoy your weekend!**

**Week 5 – February 13 and 15**

- Tues           **Film:** *Chicanos in Viet Nam* (2003)  
**Read for October 3 and 5:** Balderrama and Rodriguez's chapter on Repatriation from *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (2006)

**Week 6 – February 20 and 22**

- Tues           **Lecture:** Repatriation and U.S. Amnesia about Unlawful Exclusion  
**Film:** *My Family/Mi familia* (1995)  
**Read for February 22 through March 1:** Lorrence on the Suppression of *Salt of the Earth* and Perales (2010) on Smelertown
- Thurs           *My Family/Mi familia* (1995) continued  
**Lecture:** *Salt of the Earth* and Its El Paso Parallels  
**Reading continued for Thursday, March 1:** Lorrence on the Suppression of *Salt of the Earth* and Perales (2010) on Smelertown

**Week 7 –February 27 and March 1**

- Tues           **Film:** *Salt of the Earth* (1953)
- Thurs           **Continue** *Salt of the Earth* (1953)

**Week 8 – March 6 and 8**

Tues	Midterm Exam Review <b>Read for Tuesday, March 20:</b> Blackboard PDF Reading: Giles, Linz, Bonilla, & Gómez,
	“Police Stops of and Interactions with Latino and White (Non-Latino) Drivers: Extensive Policing and Communication Accomodation” (2012)
Thurs	Midterm Exam – Bring a Number 2 pencil, a green Scantron, and a good eraser

**Week 9 – March 13 and 15**

Tues	Spring Break
Thurs	Spring Break

**Week 10 – March 20 and 22      STOPPED HERE**

Tues	<b>Chicanos in/and Law Enforcement</b> <b>FILM:</b> <i>End of Watch</i> (2012) <b>Read for Mar 28 and 30:</b> Moreman and McIntosh on Latina Drag Queens
Tues	Exploring Chicana/o Homophobia <b>Film:</b> <i>La Mission</i> (2006)
Thurs	<i>La Misson</i> continued <b>Read for November 7 and 9:</b> Cabrera on Borderlands

**Week 11 – November 7 and 9**

Tues	<b>Film:</b> <i>Cartel Land</i> (2015)
Thurs	<i>Cartel Land</i> continued <b>Read for November 14 and 16:</b> Cepeda, Valdez, & Nowotny (2016) on Childhood Trauma and Gang Membership

**Week 12 – November 14 and 16**

Tues	<b>Chicanos and Mexicanos Living the War on Drugs on Both Sides of the Border</b> <b>Film:</b> <i>Narco Cultura</i> (2013)
Thurs	<b>Chicanos and Mexicanos Living the War on Drugs on Both Sides of the Law</b> <b>Video:</b> Episode from <i>Border Security</i> TV Show <b>Readings for November 21 and 28 TBD</b>

**Week 13 – November 21 and 23**

Tues	Complicating the Chicano Gang Member Stereotype: <i>Champion</i> (2005)
------	---

Thurs Happy Thanksgiving

**Week 14 – November 28 and 30**

Tues **Lecture:** Chicanos and Gangs  
**Film:** *Boulevard Nights* (1979)

Thurs *Boulevard Nights* continued

**Week 15 – December 5 and 7**

Tues Chicanos in the Contemporary Mainstream: *McFarland USA* (2015)

Thurs *McFarland USA* continued and **Final Exam Review**

**Final Exam:** Thursday, December 14 from 4:00 – 6:45 p.m. – same classroom