Regional Mexican Music
The University of Texas at El Paso
CHIC 4350/MUSL 3329 Fall, 2021
Mondays and Wednesdays 10:30-11:50 am, Psychology Building 115

Instructor: Juan David Rubio Restrepo, Ph.D. (he/him/his)
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Office hours: Mondays 2:00-4:00 pm (place TBA) or over Zoom.

Course description
This course considers a wide variety of music practices and expressive cultures emanating/taking place in Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Designed to engage students in the Chicano Studies Program, the Department of Music, and across the Humanities and Social Sciences, this course is decidedly interdisciplinary. We will critically engage with issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, media, and trans/nationalism by focusing on specific music practices and artists. We will cross the border often and cover musics that go from the “folkloric” to the “popular,” the nationalistic and the “regional,” and the local to the transnational. Student participation is expected. We will make an emphasis on developing critical reading and writing skills via weekly readings and semi-weekly writing assignments. The structure for the final assignment may be modeled after the student’s interests and it could take the form of a piece of scholarly writing or a podcast project.

Course Objectives
At the end of this course, students will:
  o Have a holistic view of the wide range of musics emanating/taking place in Mexico and the U.S.-Mexico region
  o Develop basic listening skills in regards to these musics
  o Understand the sociopolitical dynamics that shape these music practices
  o Critically approach the role music practices play in processes of subjectivation, interpolation, and resistance
  o Think critically and interdisciplinarily through expressive cultures
  o Be able to articulate these ideas in writing and other audio/visual media

Course materials
No text book is required for this course. Instead, we will read from different authors working from a wide range of disciplines. While texts constitute the backbone of the course materials, audiovisual content will also be assigned. All the materials are accessible online. They are either posted on the “File/Readings” section on Blackboard or are accessible via Electronic Reserves. Hyperlinks for the latter are included on the Class Schedule section of this syllabus (below). In order to access these off-campus, VPN connection is required. Instructions on how to set up
VPN can be found here. If you need technical assistance, email IT Service Desk. Do not email your instructor on tech-related questions.

**Assessment (3 credits)**

- Attendance and participation 15%
- Response papers (4) 15% (3.75% each)
- Presentation 15%
- Pop quizzes (4) 15% (3.75% each)
- Project proposal 5%
- Final project 15%
- Midterm 10%
- Final Exam 10%

**Grad students taking the course for grad credit**

Two more reading responses (total of 6) are required. Additionally, the final project should be more substantial in regards to research, overall development, and length (at least by 50%) than the guidelines stated below. Reach out to me for details.

**Grading scale**

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<tr>
<th>Score</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>80-89</td>
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<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>59-below</td>
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**Course assignments**

- **Response papers**: Each student is responsible for writing 4 response papers. You will do so on an assigned reading of your choosing. Two (2) responses are due before the midterm, and two (2) after the midterm. The paper should be uploaded to the respective “Assignment” on Blackboard before the class for which the reading was assigned to starts (i.e., if you choose a reading assigned for August 25, the response should be uploaded by August 25, 10:30 am). The response must be 500 to 800 words, 12 font, and double-spaced. More than a summary of the reading, you should engage critically with it. I expect you to provide salient points, expand on issues you find interesting, problematize some of them if you wish, and put them in dialogue with your own ideas/experiences. The prose of the paper should be fluid and cohesive. Full paragraphs must be used. Bullet points are not acceptable. Use proper formatting (Chicago or MLA are acceptable) and citation etiquette.

- **Pop quizzes**: A total of four (4) pop-quizzes will be announced during lecture. They will be posted on Blackboard. The open/close date and further details will be provided in lecture.
The pop-quizzes will cover the lecture material and readings due for the class on which they are announced.

**Final Project/Paper:** The final assignment can take the form of 1) a paper, or 2) a podcast. These can be done individually or in couples. If you choose to work in groups, I expect to see this reflected in the quality and length of the final product and that I will take this into consideration in the grading rubric. While the specifics of the final assignment will be discussed as the class progresses, keep in mind the basic guidelines below. The final project will focus on an artist/scene/movement of your choosing that resounds with the geopolitical spaces and overall topics of this course (broadly speaking, musics/expressive cultures taking place in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands). Focusing on artists *not* covered on the course materials is encouraged. As you pick the subject of your research, consider the availability of sources (academic, ethnographic, and otherwise). You may also focus on an artist discussed in-class. If you do so, I expect to you to contribute to the sources and ideas presented in lecture and the assigned materials. Whatever the format, the final assignment is due on Blackboard December 4th by the end of the day.

**Academic Paper:** It should be 5 to 8 double-spaced pages if written individually and 10 to 14 if done collaboratively. An additional works cited page is required for both cases. The tone, style, and format of the paper should follow basic academic standards; that is, a clear topic, argument, and analysis to support it. You are required to use at least 5 academic sources. Two of these sources can come from the course’s reading list. Three sources should come from your own research. I expect you to engage critically with these materials. Use pertinent quotes, proper formatting, and citation etiquette (Chicago or MLA are acceptable) in order to elaborate, problematize, or controvert the ideas in your sources through the topic you are discussing. The paper is due on Blackboard December 4th by the end of the day.

**Podcast:** Audio or video formats are acceptable. The length should be 15-25 min. if done individually and 25-40 min. if done collaboratively. Creative liberties may be taken but the overall tone should be formal, informative, and clear. While you may use additional audiovisual materials in the podcast (i.e. short video clips, music tracks, recordings, etc.), keep in mind that these must serve a clear purpose. “Fillers” won’t be tolerated and will impact your final grade. On top of the podcast itself, you must turn-in a script. The script doesn’t have to be a word-by-word transcription but it should clearly outline the narrative structure of the podcast (there are plenty of examples online). We will take some time in class to discuss the technical aspects of podcasting as well as how to build its content. I am also available to advise you during office hours. The podcast is due on Blackboard December 4th by the end of the day. Upload the podcast to an online platform of your choosing (i.e., YouTube, Vimeo, Spotify, SoundCloud, etc.) and provide the hyperlink to
access it at the top of the script. In order to meet the deadline, keep in mind the time uploading may take.

**Presentation:** By the end of week 7, and after the midterm, students should be zeroing in into the topic of their final project/paper. In the meetings of weeks 8 to 15, students will give a 15 min. presentation. The presentation should present your final project *in its early stages*. This includes the subject you will focusing on, issues that interest you and that you are planning to engage with, broad research questions, preliminary conclusions, paths where you see the project/research going, and specific materials you will be using. Slides are required. These should include audiovisual examples in the form of audios, videos, pictures, or similar materials that are illustrative of your working project. If you chose to work in groups, I expect you to clearly outline the responsibilities of each group member in the presentation. I encourage you to book an early date. The point of this assignment is to provide you with feedback from me and your classmates on your working project. The sooner you get it, the more helpful it will be. I will set up an online sign-up sheet by the end of week 6 and presentation spots will be reserved on a first come first serve basis.

**Paper/project proposal:** Students are required to turn-in a paper/project proposal. In 2 to 4 double-spaced paragraphs (around 500 words), outline your final project/paper as clearly as possible. For those writing academic papers, the proposal should follow the form of an academic abstract. For students doing podcasts, provide the main topic, production timeline, materials you plan to use, technical/technological aspects, and any other details that allow me to understand your plan, intention, and challenges so I can provide you with feedback as needed. Be as specific as possible. The proposal is due on Blackboard October 8 by the end of the day.

**Course policies**

**Attendance and Participation:** Attendance and participation are key in this course. These items constitute an important portion of your final grade. Our point of departure will be the assigned materials. You should read/watch/listen these before lecture. I expect you to come with questions, critiques, and insights to foster discussion.

**Academic integrity:** Academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarizing, cheating, etc. won’t be tolerated. UTEP takes these violations seriously and they could lead to academic and administrative sanctions. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

**Discussion guidelines and classroom etiquette:** This course touches on sensitive issues of race, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity, among others. Students are cautioned that some of the assigned materials may contain offensive vocabulary. We will discuss/unpack them in a productive and respectful way. Refrain from using offensive or triggering language, even
when referring to specific examples. Discriminatory vocabulary/attitudes of any kind are not tolerated in my classroom. This is a safe space to discuss, debate, and disagree.

Contact and communication: Email and regular office hours, both included at the top of the syllabus, will be our main point of one-on-one communication. Feel free to reach out to me with question or suggestions via email, office hours, or after class. I do my best to reply to emails in a timely fashion. Note that I don’t check my work email during non-working hours. If you email me Friday night, I won’t see it until the next Monday.

(N)Etiquette: I use my full name (Juan David Rubio Restrepo) in UTEP documents. I understand this can be confusing for some. If you wish to address me by last name, you may do so using both of my last names (Prof./Dr. Rubio Restrepo) or just the first part (Prof./Dr. Rubio).

Late assignments: Assignments should be handed-in on time. 5% of the grade will be deducted for each day late.

Student resources

Academic materials: UTEP’s Library is your primary source of information. Get familiar with its website and search engine. The website has several tutorial videos on how to find materials as well as contact information for staff that can advise/help you. Through the library site, you can access a wide range of data bases. Be sure to be connected via VPN if you are doing so off-campus. This link offers a nice introduction to using the MinerQuest search engine.

Writing Center: The University Writing Center is a great resource. Students can submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help, and explore other writing strategies.

Students with disabilities: Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal. Students are advised to take care of this as soon as possible.

UTEP Food Pantry: Click here.

UTEP Counseling and Psychological Services: Click here.

UTEP Technology Support: Click here.

COVID-19 precautions

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way to take care of each other is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

CLASS SCHEDULE
(subject to change)

**August 23, Greetings and introduction to the course**

**August 25, Thinking music, space, and power.**

I. **Music, media, and (trans)nationalisms**

**August 30, Mariachi music and the construction of national identity**

**September 1, Identity and media in the northern border**

**September 6, NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)**

**September 8, Bolero, cosmopolitanisms, and the media industry**

**September 13**, Sonideros, migration, and audiotopias  
*Read:*  

II. Music, identity, and the nation-state

**September 15**, Son Jarocho across the border  
*Read:*  

**September 20**, Blackness and erasure  
*Read:*  

**September 22**, Conjunto music and nationalism(s)  
*Read:*  

**September 27**, “La colombia de Monterrey”  
*Read:*  

*Watch:*  
I’m Not Longer Here/Ya No Estoy Aquí (Dir. Fernando Frías). Available on Netflix.
September 29, MIDTERM OPENS ON BLACKBOARD, DUE OCTOBER 6, 5:00 pm

III. Critical interventions: Gender, sexuality, and music across the border

October 11, Queering the accordion
Read:

Watch:
Chulas Fronteras (Dir. Les Blank). Accessible via Kanopy in [this link](#) (VPN required)

October 13, Student presentations 1

October 18, Joteria: Unsettling masculinity
Read:

October 20, Student Presentations 2

October 25, Selena and the representation of the Latina body
Read:

October 27, Student presentations 3

November 1, Banda interventions: Jenni Rivera
Guest speaker: Dr. Yessica Garcia Hernandez, Assistant Professor of Latina/Latino Studies, San Francisco State University.

Read:
TBA

November 3, Student presentations 4
IV. (Re)Performing the “regional”

November 8, Class, nation, and the Grupero Boom
Read:

November 10, Student presentations 5

November 15, Norteña and narcocorridos I
Read:

November 17, Student presentation 6

November 22, Norteña and narcocorridos II
Read:

November 24, Student presentations 7

November 29, From the regional to the cosmopolitan
Read:

December 1, Wrap-up

December 6, FINAL EXAM OPENS ON BLACKBOARD, CLOSES DECEMBER 10, 5:00 pm