Music, Culture, and Society: Music of the Americas at the Fringes of Modernity  
The University of Texas at El Paso  
MUSL 2321 Spring, 2023  
Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00-1:20 pm, Fox Fine Arts Center M402

Instructor: Juan David Rubio Restrepo, Ph.D. (he/him)  
jrubiorest@utep.edu

Office hours: Thursdays 2:30pm-4:30pm, FFA M231 or over Zoom

Course description
This survey course introduces students to a wide variety of music practices and expressive cultures throughout the American continent. The course spans the 20th to the 21st century and focuses on case studies in Latin America, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and the Caribbean. Understanding “modernity” as a complex and polysemic idea, we will use this concept as a connective thread to query the relation between sound, technology, power, and identity. We will consider the idea of modernity in different registers; namely, the rise and widespread access to telecommunication and sound reproduction technologies, the emergence of the “modern” nation-state and how it relates to music practices, and the unequal Global North-Global South relation constitutive of “modern” geopolitics and the transnational flows of music that emerge from it, among others. We will cover musics that go from the “folkloric” to the “popular,” the local to the transnational, and from south to north of the continent. Along the way, we will delve into historically- and site-specific issues of race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, migration, capital, and power.

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

Course materials
Reading, video, and/or listening materials will be assigned for every lecture, these should be made beforehand. All the materials are accessible online. The quizzes will cover the readings and lectures. The midterm and final exam will be based primarily on the listening materials. For the exams, students should be able to identify each of the assigned tracks (title, performer, place of origin) and relevant musical and contextual information covered in the readings and during lecture.

Listening: The tracks are provided in the form of YouTube hyperlinks included in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus (below). If you find a link that is not working, email the instructor.
Readings and videos: 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. These 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)

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<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening quizzes (3)</td>
<td>12% (4% each)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take-home pop quizzes (3)</td>
<td>12% (4% each)</td>
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<td>Concert report</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>First writing assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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Grading scale

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>D</td>
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Course assignments

Pop quizzes: Three (3) take-home pop-quizzes will be assigned during the semester. The quizzes will cover the readings, videos, and/or lectures of that particular class. Quizzes will be announced during lecture and posted on Blackboard. They will be active for 24 hours. You will get two (2) attempts to complete each quiz.

Listening quizzes: Three listening quizzes will take place during class on the dates specified on the class schedule below. Listening quizzes are non-cumulative. Students will be asked to identify performers, name of the song, place of origin, and relevant musical and contextual aspects related to each track.

Midterm and final exam: The midterm will take place on March 21 during regular class time. The final exam will take place on May 9 at 1:00pm. Both of them will be primarily based on listening identification and follow-up questions.

Writing assignments: A separate handout on both writing assignments will be uploaded to Blackboard.

Course policies

Attendance and Participation: Attendance and participation are key in this course. These items constitute 15% 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 must be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR)](https://www.utep.edu/studentconduct) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](https://www.utep.edu/studentconduct).

**Discussion guidelines and classroom etiquette:** This course touches on sensitive issues related to 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, are our main point of one-on-one communication. Feel free to reach out to me with questions or suggestions via email, during 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](https://www.library.utep.edu) 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. You can access a wide range of databases through the library site. Be sure to be connected via VPN if you are doing so off-campus. [This link](https://www.minerquest.utep.edu) offers a good introduction to using the MinerQuest search engine.

**Writing Center:** The [University Writing Center](https://www.utep.edu/writing) is a great resource. Students can submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help, and explore 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)](https://www.utep.edu/accommodations). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148,
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, 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. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org)

**CLASS SCHEDULE**
(subject to change)

**January 17**, Greetings and introduction to the course

**January 19**, Sonic modernities; a few theoretical approaches (DISCUSSION SESSION)

*Read:*

1. **Music and media in the modern nation-state**

**January 24**, NO CLASS

**January 26**, Tango, media, and nationalism in Argentina: The rise of the Latin American media industry

*Read:*
Listen:
Carlos Gardel: “Mi Noche Triste”
Libertad Lamarque: “Caminito”
Francisco Canaro y su Orquesta Típica: “La Cumparsita”

January 31, Samba and the Brazilian imagination
Read:

Listen:
Pixinguinha et al.: “Pelo Telefone”
Francisco Alves: “Aquarela do Brasil”
Carmen Miranda: “Disseram Que Voltei Americanizada”

February 2, Mariachi and the construction of Mexicanidad
Read:

Listen:
Jorge Negrete: “Yo Soy Mexicano”
Lola Beltrán: “Cucurrucucú Paloma”
Luis Miguel: “La Bikina”

February 7, Calypso: Audible entanglements of nation and difference in Trinidad
Read:

Listen:
Lord Kitchener: “Margie”
Ras Shorty I: “Indranj”
Machel Montano: “Big Truck”
II. Listening to the Black Atlantic

**February 9, Theorizing the Black Atlantic (DISCUSSION SESSION)**

*Read:*

**February 14, Cumbia I: Race and whitening in Colombia**

*Read:*

*Listen:*
- Totó La Momposina: “El Pescador”
- “Lucho” Bermúdez: “Tolú”

**February 16, Cumbia II: The sound of a continent**

*Listen:*
- Los Destellos: “A Patricia”
- Damas Gratis: “Quiero Vitamina”

**February 21, LISTENING QUIZ #1**

**February 23, Haiti: Music, blackness, and resistance**

*Watch:*
When the Drum is Beating (Dir. Whitney Dow)

*Listen:*
- Louis Lahens and his Gais Troubadours: “Moin Pas Ni Chance”
- Jazz Des Jeunes: “Coté Moune Yo”
- Orchestre Septentrional: “Ti Fi A”

**February 28, Afro-Peruvian music: (Re)Inventing a tradition**

*Read:*
Listen:
Nicomedes Santa Cruz and Cumanana: “Samba Malató”
Chabuca Granda: “Landó”
Susana Baca: “Maria Landó”

March 2, Blackness and erasure in Mexico
Read:

Watch:
Gertrudis Blues

III. Scattered histories of sound, technology, and resistance: Sound-system cultures

March 7, Sound technologies and modernities otherwise (DISCUSSION SESSION)
Read:

March 9, Jamaican sound-systems: The rise of the DJ
Read:

Listen:
Count Machuki: “Movements”
King Stitt: “Fire Corner”

March 13-17, SPRING BREAK

March 21, MIDTERM

March 23, Pan-African connections: Picó and champeta in the Colombian Caribbean
Watch:
“Picó: El Documental”
Listen:
Elio Boom: “El Gol”
El Sayayín: “La Suegra Voladora”
Charles King: “Bicarbonato” (live)

March 28, Mexican sonideros: Cumbia sonidera and cumbia rebajada
Read:

Listen:
Andrés Landero: “Mara del Carmen” (rebajada)
Sonido Condor: “La Cumbia del Piropo” (sonidera)

IV. American transnationalisms

March 30, Mass-media and the matter of hegemony (DISCUSSION SESSION)
Read:

April 4, Mambo: Transnational stories of music and race
Read:

Listen:
Orquesta Arcaño y sus Maravillas: “Mambo”
Tito Puente: “Ran Kan Kan”
Dámaso Pérez Prado: “Mambo No. 5”

April 6, LISTENING QUIZ #2

April 11, Salsa: Barrio music to the world
Watch:
Latin Music USA, Hour 2: The Salsa Revolution
Listen:
Pete Rodriguez: “I Like It Like That”
Willie Colón and Héctor Lavoe: “Juanito Alimaña”
Celia Cruz and Willie Colón: “Usted Abusó”
Rubén Blades: “Plantación Adentro”

April 13, Cuban timba at the fringes of politics
Read:

Listen:
NG La Banda: “Picadillo de Soya”
Manolito y Su Trabuco: “Llegó la Música Cubana”
La Charanga Habanera: “Ricky Ricón”

April 18, Reggaetón and the “hurbano” boom
Read:


Listen:
El General: “Te Ves Buena”
Tego Calderón: “Métele Sazón”
Ivy Queen: “Yo Quiero Bailar”
Daddy Yankee: “Gasolina”
Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee feat. Justin Bieber: “Despacito”

V. Border soundings

April 20, Thinking across borders and difference (DISCUSSION SESSION)
Read:
April 25, Norteña and narcocorridos

Read:


Listen:
Jenni Rivera: “La Chacalosa”
Los Tigres del Norte: “La Jaula de Oro”

April 27, Conjunto music, masculinity, and ethnicity

Read:

Listen:
Eva Ybarra y Su Conjunto: “Dicha Eterna”
Eva Ybarra y Su Conjunto: “La Ricachona”

May 2, Music, identity, gender, and migration

Read:

Listen:
Selena: “Baila Esta Cumbia”
Selena: “Amor Prohibido”

May 4, LISTENING QUIZ #3

May 9, 1:00pm, FINAL EXAM