

**ENGL 3310/CRN 28371: Chicana/o/x Literature**  
**"Outsiders/Descartados and Newcomers in the Chicax Canon"**  
**Thursdays 9-10.20am on zoom, asynchronous online**  
**Dr. Marion Christina Rohrleitner**  
**Spring 2021**

Instructor: Dr. Marion Christina Rohrleitner

Virtual office hours (on email or zoom): Thursday, 10.30am-12.30pm, and by appointment

Email: [mcrohrleitner@utep.edu](mailto:mcrohrleitner@utep.edu)

In this class, we will read a total of **eleven primary texts** - four novels (one of them a YA novel), one collection of short stories, two memoirs, one play, and sections from three collections of poetry; many of these texts are fairly short, so no need to panic :). A few of the authors on our syllabus are first generation immigrants themselves, many are children of recent immigrants from Mexico, and others are descended from Mexican American families who have been living in the US-Mexico borderlands for centuries and never crossed the border; instead the border, in the shape of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, crossed them in 1848. Some of our authors embrace the activist term Chicano or Chicana, others proudly identify as Chicax, a few claim indigenous or African diasporic identities in addition or instead, and at least one author actively rejects the label. Some authors were born and raised on the border, either in the El Paso/Ciudad Juárez borderlands or in the Rio Grande Valley; others were born in the US but grew up in Mexico; yet others grew up in the Midwest but visited relatives in Mexico every summer. Several authors are bilingual and/or claim Spanglish or Caló as their mother tongue; others write exclusively in English, and yet again others produce most of their work in Spanish and often use Nahuatl and other indigenous languages in their writing. Some of our authors hold MFAs in Creative Writing and are established full-time authors; others are newcomers and work as teachers, administrators, public servants, or editors. All assigned texts are contemporary works that were published between 1982 and 2020, after the height of the Chicano Civil Rights movement.

What connects this diverse set of authors is either their status as **outsiders, or "descartados"**, not only in mainstream US-American literature but also within the canon of Chicana/o/x literature itself, or their direct engagement with constantly being considered **"strangers in their own land"** (David Gómez uses this phrase, among others) and/or outsiders in the communities they come from. Their position as outsiders manifests in this class in four ways:

1. The marginalization of LGBTQI+ stories, protagonists, and writers
2. The silencing or trivialization of children's experiences
3. The exclusion of stories, protagonists and protagonists who are undocumented and don't meet the idealized standard of the academically successful, and socially conforming DACA recipient
4. The challenges stories, protagonists and writers face who reject the label Chicax and the specific history of a racialized working class and social justice movement it invokes, either because they reject any ethnic label or because they privilege (or are assigned) another ethnic or racial identity.

**Course goals:**

- Define and trace the evolution of the terms Chicano, Chicana, and Chicax and articulate differences in origin and connotations of "Chicana/o/x", "Mexican American", "Latina/o/x", and "Hispanic"
- Identify Chicax theorists and their ideas and participate in key debates in the field of Chicax literature
- Become more competent close readers of Chicax literature in shifting historical and cultural contexts

- Familiarize yourself with canonical and emerging contemporary Chicana writers
- Become conversant in some key aspects of Chicana theory as well as critical race, feminist, and queer theories
- Participate in scholarly debates on the complex relationship between the Chicano movement(s) and Chicana lit
- Become aware of and intervene in the tensions between feminist and queer Chicana writers and the movement
- Understand the various modes and significance of reappropriations of La Llorona, la Virgen and la Malinche
- Contribute to conversations about undocumented immigration, DACA, and a politics of respectability
- Produce different genres of writing on Chicana literature, such as mini-auto(ethno)biographies, personal reflections, family histories and myths, recipes, film reviews and scholarly essays.

**Course delivery:**

This is an online course that combines asynchronous and synchronous instruction. We will meet at the designated course time every Thursday, from 9-10.20am on zoom. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays we engage in conversations on the discussion board, following up on or preparing for our zoom meetings on Thursday.

**Required texts (available at the UTEP bookstore):**

Please note that I require you to **use hardcopies** of all assigned novels. E-books usually do not have page numbers and therefore make focused in-class discussion and documentation of your close readings impossible. You do not have to purchase your books at the UTEP bookstore if you can find more affordable copies online or in local bookstores, but please make sure to purchase the **assigned edition** whenever possible, so we are literally “on the same page” when we read and discuss the novels. To this end I added the correct ISBN numbers to the reading list below, in the order in which we will read the texts. All texts except for the play, which I will provide as pdf document, are available for purchase or rent at the UTEP bookstore; of course you are also welcome to buy the books in a local bookstore or online. Just make sure you have access to each book at least one week before we discuss it in class. In the attachment, please find the **required book list with the relevant ISBN numbers**. It is crucial that you get the correct edition so you can follow along in our discussion. I require everyone to purchase or rent a hardcopy, **not** an ebook. Ebooks often don't have page numbers and make it impossible to have a focused discussion and use proper documentation. Thank you!

Richard Rodriguez. *Hunger for Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez*. 978-0553272932

Rigoberto Gonzalez. *Autobiography of My Hungers*. 978-0299292546

Felicia Luna Lemus. *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties*. 978-1580051262

Myriam Gurba. *Painting Their Portraits in Winter*. 978-1933149905

Benjamin Alire Sáenz. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*. 978-1442408937

Maceo Montoya. *The Deportation of Wopper Barraza*. 978-0826354365

Mario Alberto Zambrano. *Loteria: A Novel*. 978-0062268556

Gris Muñoz. *Coatlícué Girl*. 978-1733809245

Ire'ne Lara Silva. *Cuicacalli/House of Song*. 978-1732952119

Ariana Brown. *Sana Sana*. 978-1732498686

**NOTE:** Texts marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (\*) are scholarly articles, available on JSTOR or MLA Ebsco. It is paramount that we, as members of the College of Liberal Arts, frequently use the databases that contain these scholarly articles; **if we do not access them, the university might cancel these (fairly expensive) subscriptions**, which will make future scholarly research all but impossible. I will therefore only post sources not readily available on these databases but will ask you to access the assigned scholarly articles yourselves. This will ensure that we will both keep our subscriptions and that you will hone your own research skills.

## Course Requirements:

### Attendance and participation

40%

A word of fair "warning": This is a reading, writing, and thinking intensive course. Students are expected to do all the required readings before and during the week in which they are due. Active participation in the discussion board, in response paragraphs, and by posting short videos at the beginning and end of class is **essential** to your success in this course. By active participation I mean acquiring all of the required books in time, doing all of the assigned readings, coming to each of our zoom meetings on time and with specific questions and hand, and making contributions to the discussion board (see more specific guidelines below). Since this is a junior level class, I expect every one of you to ask concrete questions and offer specific comments on the assigned readings, volunteer questions and responses to both me and your classmates in discussion, actively engage in group work, and be active listeners to my mini-lectures and to your classmates' comments. You will be assessed not only the quantity but the **quality** of your contributions to class discussions. **Your attendance and participation grade consists of written and oral components:**

#### 1. **Written participation on the discussion board**

- submit a total of **4 (1 for each unit) "quibbles" (a question or a critical comment)** over the course of the semester on one of the passages assigned in the novel and/or on the assigned scholarly article assigned for that Tuesday on the discussion board on **Tuesday by 10am**. Each question/comment should be 150-200 words (excluding quotations) and raise a specific question/critical comment about to a clearly identified passage in the assigned novel and/or scholarly article. Be sure to incorporate the passage you are referencing via parenthetical documentation (will come in handy when you draft your research paper).
- submit a total of **4 responses (1 for each unit)** to your peers' questions or "quibbles" on the discussion board **by 5pm on Wednesday** over the course of the semester. Each response should be 150-200 words (excluding quotations), engage directly with your peers' questions or comments, and push all of our thinking further. Feel free to respond right after your peers submit on Tuesday morning (during "class") for a more immediate exchange.
- Each question and each response can earn you **up to 50 points**, and will be graded on intellectual merit, originality of thought, and the quality and accuracy of your writing. You can therefore earn up to 400 points total for your 4 questions and 4 responses. These online conversations should demonstrate your sincere engagement with the primary and secondary sources and showcase your critical thinking and writing skills. They are also intended to help prepare you for our conversations on zoom the following Tuesday and for developing your ideas for the research paper.

#### 2. **Oral participation: weekly zoom meetings and 2 short videos**

- submit 2 short (3-10 minutes) **videos** on BB: one introducing yourself and your interest in World Literature in the first week of classes, and one during exam week based on a letter you write to your "younger" self on the most important lessons you are taking away from the course. The final video replaces a final exam and should therefore be specific in your review of the course. Your first video can earn you 25 points, the final video up to 75 points, for a total of 100 points. Specific guidelines will follow.
- attend and actively participate in at least **12 our 15 zoom meetings on Thursdays from 9-10.20am**. By active participation I mean coming to class with your book and concrete questions and comments in hand, offering to read specific passages, responding to my and your peers' questions, contributing to and

leading an active conversation in breakout rooms. If you only attend and do not actively participate you will earn 10 points per zoom meeting. If you participate with meaningful comments you can earn up to 25 points per zoom session. In order to be counted as present you must **turn on your video**; feel free to use any background of your choosing. You may miss up to three zoom meetings without repercussions – this is intended to give you some flexibility in this online class. If you attend and participate in all 15 meetings, you can get extra credit for up to 75 points (25 points each).

**Review OR interview.**

**20%**

For this assignment you have a choice; you can either do a **professional review** (of a Chicax book, film, music, art exhibition etc) and relate it to one of the texts on our syllabus **or** conduct and transcribe an **interview** with a family member, friend, or mentor about an artefact or cultural practice (i.e. a specific recipe or mode of cooking, a piece of furniture or clothing, a photograph, a family memory, a folktale you were told etc.) connected to the content of one of our texts. Make this connection explicit in your review or your interview.

**Review:** Based on a list of Chicax feature films, documentaries, TV shows, music or exhibition of visual art I will provide in the second week of classes, you are asked to write a professional journalistic review, modeled in style, tone, and length after an existing publication that focuses on American cultural production, such as *The Atlantic*, *The Nation*, or *The New Yorker*. I will provide you with a list of suggestions and some successful samples in the second week of classes; note that this assignment requires you to engage in detail with an additional visual text. In your review/interview you are also asked to connect the Chicax film, art, or music.

**Interview:** Conduct and transcribe an interview with a family member, friend, or mentor about an artefact, recipe, or family history of your choice and connect it to one of the texts on our syllabus in a meaningful way. For example, you could do an interview with a relative about a favorite family myth and connect it to the grandmother's story at the end of *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties*.

The deadline for your review **will be the last Friday of the week we discuss the novel that is relevant to your creative source**, i.e. if you choose to write a review of homophobia in the feature film *La Mission*, you could connect it to the tense father/son relationship homophobia in *Ari and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*, hence your review will be due on Friday, February 26, the Friday of the last week in which we discuss *Ari and Dante*. If you choose to interview a family member about a family history you could connect it to the ending of *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties*, hence the interview would be due on Friday, March 5. Your **review or interview** need to feature a **minimum of 1000 words**, excluding title and apparatus. It is a good idea to use your presentation or review as a starting point for your final project to streamline the research process, and to contact me early on with ideas. I look forward to discussing these ideas with you!

**Research Paper or Creative Final Project**

**30%**

Your final project in this class is either a **research paper** on one (or possibly more) of the texts assigned in this class **or a creative project, accompanied by a scholarly reflection**, related to the texts and conversations we have on Chicax cultural production in class.

In your **Research Paper** you will articulate an original argument that engages current theories and debates on contemporary Chicax literature especially in terms of the outsider status of LGBTQI+ narratives, non-conforming undocumented immigrants and those who reject the label Chicana/o/x for various reasons. Ideally, you will build on your work for your film review. Because this is a junior level class, there will be several students who wish to apply for graduate school in the following year; to do so, they need a writing sample – the work produced in a research paper for this class can be used as the beginning of such an important document that is evidence of your ability to do independent research, engage current scholarship, and show your familiarity with

scholarly writing in our academic discipline. In your research papers, students will offer a critical intervention in existing scholarly debates on the text, using your close readings and a clearly outlined theoretical framework. If productive and of interest to you, you are encouraged to connect our texts to current events. Your paper will be 10-12 pages long (Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced), excluding the works cited list, which forms the last page of your document. Feel free to draw on your research for your film review and/or your work in response paragraphs. More details will be posted 3 weeks on BB before the deadline.

In your **Creative Project**, you will use a creative mode of expression to make an original contribution to the debates listed above. You could write a personal essay or photo essay for a blog that engages the conflicts in one or more of the texts we read, or write a short story based on our readings, or produce a long poem or 2 shorter poems, write a screenplay adapting a passage from one of our assigned texts, or write a different ending to one of our texts, or retell one of our texts from a different character's perspective, or curate a playlist or a series of visual images that tell a story directly connected to our conversations in class etc. Your creative project should be between 5 and 8 pages and **must be accompanied by 3-4 pages of scholarly reflection** in which you trace the evolution of your creative project and directly connect it to one or more of the assigned primary and scholarly texts and conversations assigned in this class. Your scholarly reflection needs to engage at least two scholarly sources on Chicana literature and culture not on our syllabus. Be sure to meet with me on zoom early on to discuss your ideas

The firm deadline for your final projects, as a word.docx attachment on BB, is **5pm on Thursday, May 13.**

**Project proposal and annotated bibliography for final project:**

**10%**

This submission is the first step towards a successful final project. It consists of two parts:

1. a **proposal**, consisting of 2-3 paragraphs, in which you offer an original tentative thesis on one or more of the assigned texts, and clearly showcase how your research paper *or* your creative project will contribute to existing scholarly conversations in Chicana literature about the text/debate/conflict of your choice. Ideally, focus on one of the key terms and/or key debates and offer a different and/or dissenting view.
2. an **annotated bibliography** featuring at least 3 scholarly articles taken from JSTOR and/or MLA/EBSCO only (NO Explicator please!). Only one of these 3 articles may be taken from the syllabus. I will post a sample project proposal and annotated bibliography on BB 2 weeks before the deadline. One week before your submission (**by noon on Friday, April 30**), you need to send me an informal email letting me know your primary text(s) and your research question or your creative project and which contribution to existing conversations on Chicana literature it will make. Also explain why your specific creative piece is an effective tool to convey your ideas and critical intervention.

Your project proposal and annotated bibliography are due as ONE word.docx attachment on BB by 5pm on **Wednesday, May 5**. The purpose of this exercise is to increase accountability and responsibility for your scholarly and creative work and to share your work with and receive feedback from a larger and well-informed public of peers. I strongly encourage you to come by for office hours to discuss your ideas and sources with me prior to submitting your proposal to maximize effectiveness. I will provide constructive feedback as quickly as possible. We will workshop your proposals in productive groups on **Zoom on Thursday, May 4**, at 9am.

### Grade breakdown

Attendance and Participation: 800 points	A= 1800-2000 90-100%
Review or interview: 400 points	B= 1600-1799 80-89.9%
Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 200 points	C= 1400-1599 70-79.9%
<u>Final project: 600 points</u>	D = 1200-1399 60-69.9%
Total: 2000 points	F = 0-1199 0-59.9%

### Students with special needs:

If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will first need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in the East Union Bldg., Room 106, within the first two weeks of classes. The Center for Accommodations and Support Services can be reached in the following ways:

Web: <http://www.utep.edu/cass>

E-Mail: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)

Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY

Fax: (915) 747-8712

I am very happy to make any reasonable accommodations for students with challenges and limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally in the first two weeks, or make an appointment, to discuss any special needs you might have so that I may assist you in the best way possible. This is especially important in an online class. Thank you.

### A word on blackboard and email netiquette:

Please check blackboard (BB) and your webmail **every day**, especially if I announce to class that I will send you an email with an update. If you have any problems accessing blackboard, contact the IT help desk first. Inaction is not an acceptable response to technical difficulties. Please contact me on webmail ([mcrohrleitner@utep.edu](mailto:mcrohrleitner@utep.edu)) if you have any urgent questions regarding assignments or course content. Responding to emails sent by your professor in a timely manner (usually within 24 hours during the week and 48-72 hours on the weekend and during holidays) is good professional practice and will be part of your participation grade. When sending me an email, remember to always put your course title in the subject line, to address me in an appropriate way, and to sign your emails with your full name, so I know who you are and in which context you are writing me. Do not send emails without proper address, signature, or messages that sound like a text message. This is a professional setting, and I expect everyone to act and write accordingly. **Note that I will not read or respond to emails on the weekend.**

**Thank you!**

### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is an offense against academic honesty and any instance of plagiarism will immediately be handed over to the Dean of Students without exception, who will decide on your penalty. Be aware that we take all instances of plagiarism very seriously. Each plagiarized assignment will automatically receive 0 points. I do not accept revisions or late submissions, or assignments that do not meet the minimum length requirement of original work, therefore you will fail each even partially plagiarized assignment. Every time you use someone else's ideas or words in your papers you must reference the source - this is true for **both** direct quotations and paraphrasing. The same rules that apply to print sources also apply to web-based sources. You may safely assume that if you find a source on the Internet, so will I. If you have any questions or uncertainties, contact me well before your paper is due. I also strongly encourage you to consult the following useful website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/2/>

## Syllabus

### Week One: January 19-24

- Thursday, January 21 Zoom meeting #1: Introductions of students, professor, and course  
Course expectations, goals, assignments, syllabus, etc.  
\*Perez, Emma. "Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the  
Invisible and Unheard." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 24, no. 2/3,  
2003. pp. 122-131.  
\* Perez, Domino Renee. "Essays: Interludes and Encounters, La Llorona Redux."  
*Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 110-115.

### Week Two: January 25- 31

- Monday, January 25 **Introductory video due** via email or on BB (Yuja or you tube link) by 5pm.
- Tuesday, January 26 Discussion board: submit one "quibble" (a specific question or critical comment)  
on one of the assigned articles on Chicana literature  
All articles are available on BB and as pdf attachments on email.

### UNIT ONE: Call and Response: Homophobia and the "fear of going home"

- Thursday, January 28 *Hunger of Memory* (1-78)  
Zoom meeting #2  
Discuss questions on syllabus, responses to last week's articles, databases, etc.

### Week Three: February 1-7

- Tuesday, February 2 *Hunger of Memory* (81-149)  
\*Tomás Rivera." Rodriguez' *Hunger of Memory* as Humanistic Antithesis." *MELUS*,  
vol.11, no. 4, 1984, pp. 5-13.
- Thursday, February 4 *Hunger of Memory* (153-212)  
\*Richard Rodriguez. "Late Victorians." I will provide a pdf of this source on BB.  
Zoom meeting #3

### Week Four: February 8-14

- Tuesday, February 9 *Autobiography of My Hungers* (3-41)  
\*from *Gloria Anzaldúa. Borderlands-La Frontera: The New Mestiza*  
I will provide a pdf of this source on BB.
- Thursday, February 11 *Autobiography of My Hungers* (45-111)  
Zoom meeting #4

### Week Five: February 15-21

- Tuesday, February 16 *Ari and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (TBA)
- Thursday, February 18 *Ari and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (TBA)  
Zoom meeting #5

**Week Six: February 22-28**

- Tuesday, February 23 *Ari and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* (TBA)  
\*Ralph J. Poole. "Boys Kissing in the Desert: Benjamin Alire Sáenz's *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*." *Explicator*, vol. 74, no. 2, 2016, pp. 125-128.

**UNIT TWO: La Llorona, La Malinche, La Virgen – Redux**

- Thursday, February 25 *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* (3-79)  
Zoom meeting #6

**Week Seven: March 1-7**

- Tuesday, March 2 *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* (80-167)  
\*Mercado-López, Larissa. "From Lost Woman to Third Space Mestiza Maternal Subject: La Llorona as a Metaphor of Transformation." I will provide a pdf of this source on BB.
- Thursday, March 4 *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties* (168-247)  
\*Yarbro-Bejarano, Yvonne. "Queer Storytelling and Temporality in *Trace Elements of Random Tea Parties*." *Aztlán* vol.22, no.1, 2013, pp. 73-94.  
I will provide a pdf of this source on BB.  
Zoom meeting #7

**Week Eight: March 8-14**

- Tuesday, March 9 *Painting Their Portraits in Winter* (1-53)  
\*Carmen Tafolla. "Yo Soy La Malinche"
- Thursday, March 11 *Painting Their Portraits in Winter* (54-158)  
\*Lara, Irene. "Bruja Positionalities, Toward a Chicana/Latina Spiritual Activism." *Chicana/Latina Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, pp. 10-45. Available on Jstor.  
Zoom meeting #8

**SPRING BREAK: March 15-21**

**Week Nine: March 22-28**

- Tuesday, March 23 *Lotería* (v-100)  
<https://www.npr.org/2013/07/06/199362739/loteria-a-fortune-told-by-mexican-bingo>  
\*Sandra Cisneros. "Eleven." I will provide a pdf of this source on BB.
- Thursday, March 25 *Lotería* (103-210)  
Zoom meeting #9



**Week Ten: March 29-April 4**

Tuesday, March 30      *Lotería* (213-270)

**UNIT THREE: DACA Revisited**

Thursday, April 1      \**Undocuments*. (I will make this play available as a pdf on BB.)  
Zoom meeting #10

**Week Eleven: April 4-11**

Tuesday, April 6      *The Deportation of Wopper Barranza* (3-71)

Thursday, April 8      *The Deportation of Wopper Barranza* (72-144)  
Zoom meeting #11

**Week Twelve: April 12-18**

Tuesday, April 13      *The Deportation of Wopper Barranza* (145-215)  
\*Caminero, Marta. "Documenting the Undocumented: Life Narratives of  
Unauthorized Immigrants." *Biography*, vol. 35, no.3, 2012, pp. 449-471.  
Available on Jstor.

**UNIT FOUR: NEW CHICANX VOICES AND DEFINING CHICANX ANEW**

Thursday, April 15      *Coatlícué Girl*  
Zoom meeting #12  
Guest: Gris Muñoz

**Week Thirteen: April 19-25**

Tuesday, April 20      *Coatlícué Girl*  
\*From *Postcolonial Love Poem*. I will provide a pdf of this source on BB.  
\*Carrillo Rowe, Aimee. "Settler Xicana: Postcolonial and Decolonial  
Reflections on Incommensurability." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 43, no. 3,  
2017, pp. 525-536. Available on Jstor.

Thursday, April 22      *Cuicacalli: House of Song*  
Zoom meeting #13  
Guest: Ire'ne Lara Silva

**Week Fourteen: April 26-May 2**

Tuesday, April 27      *Cuicacalli*,  
*Sana, Sana*  
*Ortega, Mariana*. "Photographic Representation of Racialized Bodies: Afro-Mexicans,  
the Visible and the Invisible." *Critical Philosophy of Race*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2013,  
pp. 163-189. Available on Jstor.

Thursday, April 29      *Sana, Sana*  
Zoom meeting #14  
Guest: Ariana Brown  
Friday, April 30      send email on final project (focus, primary text, tentative thesis) via email by noon

**Week Fifteen: May 3-9**

Tuesday, May 4      Work on Project Proposals and annotated bibliography  
Wednesday, May 5      Submit final project proposal and annotated bibliography on BB by 5pm  
Thursday, May 6      Zoom Meeting #15  
Workshopping final project proposals and annotated bibliographies

**Week Sixteen: May 10-14**

Thursday, May 13      Final project/research paper due by 5pm  
Friday, May 14      Submit final videos by 5pm (in lieu of a final exam)

**Fin**