

**Temporal Geographies and the Urgency of Space¹ in
Chicana/Chicano/Chicanx Literature
ENGL 3310/CRN 27179
M/W 9-10.20am
Hudspeth Hall 300**

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Course description:

In this course we will read from a wide range of genres - memoirs, novels, short stories, poems, and plays - created by a diverse set of Chicana/o/x authors with close connections to our border region in general, and the sister cities of El Paso and Ciudad Juárez in particular. Inspired by the work of Chicana theorist Mary Pat Brady on space and temporality, we are clustering our conversations around the broad themes of “history”, “family”, “citizenship”, “gender”, and “environment(al injustice)” – all areas which directly affect our lives on the border as well as the creative imaginary of writers working in our region. Furthermore, we will also engage some of the most pressing and exciting debates in the field of Chicanx Studies today, including the powerful strength and the potential dangers of family structure, gaps between official historiographies and the often oral recollections of marginalized communities, the overlaps and tensions between indigenous, African diasporic, and Chicanx identities, the role of the arts in effecting social change in, for instance, immigration legislation and environmental justice, and the promises and limits of narrative representation, especially of border regions.

In addition to the assigned longer primary texts (mostly novels, memoirs and plays), we will also read and think about the role of poetry in writing about natural and inner spaces; each unit will begin with a poem by a current or former Chicanx poet laureate. In this class we will ask exciting questions such as: What are the origins, possibilities, and limitations of the terms Chicano/a/x? What are the tensions between the Chicano movement and feminist and queer interventions? How can literary narratives challenge, amend, and correct false historiographies in the Southwest? What, if any, is the responsibility of Chicanx writers to their communities? How do border practices such as translanguaging impact American literature at large? What makes literature produced in our borderlands uniquely suited to comment on larger debates on spatiality, temporality, and political and social change? How can we apply theories of space and temporality to our border region and literature in productive and innovative ways?

We will contextualize our conversations in class within relevant historical debates, practice the art of close reading of literary texts, engage relevant critical theories, and apply them to our readings and discussions. I consider you fellow literary and cultural scholars on a shared journey of intellectual inquiry, and expect everyone to come to class prepared, curious, and full of questions. I foster curiosity and encourage an open and informed discussion and hope to also draw on your existing knowledge about our region and its culture.

Required primary texts (all titles available at the UTEP bookstore):

Please note that I **require you to use paper copies** of all assigned novels. Ebooks usually do not have page numbers and therefore make focused in-class discussion and documentation of your close readings difficult if not 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, so we are literally “on the same page” when we read and discuss the novels in class. For some texts I have a few extra copies available if you wish to borrow them from me in case you are facing financial hardship.

¹ This phrase is shamelessly borrowed from the title of Mary Pat Brady’s monograph *Extinct Lands, Temporal Geographies*.

Emma Perez. *Forgetting the Alamo, or Blood Memory*
Alicia Gaspar de Alba. *Calligraphy of the Witch*
Arturo Islas. *The Rain God*
Yasmín Ramirez. *¡Ándale, Prieta!: A Memoir*
Tim Z Hernández. *All They Will Call You*
Benjamin Alire Saenz. *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*
Alessandra Narváez-Varela. *Thirty Talks Weird Love*
Gris Muñoz. *Coatlilcue Girl*
Yxta Maya Murray. *God Went Like That*
Note 1: I will provide a pdf of Jesús I. Valles' play *UnDocuments*

Note 2: Texts marked with an asterisk (*) in the syllabus are additional primary texts such as poems or secondary texts, such as scholarly articles, available on JSTOR or MLA Ebsco on the UTEP Library website (<https://www-jstor-org.utep.idm.oclc.org/action/showAdvancedSearch>). 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 will cancel these (expensive) subscriptions, which will make future scholarly research very challenging. I will therefore only post book chapters or other sources not readily available of these databases and 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 research skills.

Course Requirements:

Full disclosure: This is a reading, writing, viewing, and thinking intensive course. Our class is a safe space in which everyone is encouraged to freely express their informed opinion and ask questions in a respectful and sensitive manner. Students are expected to do all the required readings before the class in which they are due and bring the discussed text and paper copies or electronic versions of any assigned secondary sources (articles, reviews, etc.) to class. A fair warning: Be prepared to read between 200-250 pages a week; this includes primary texts as well as scholarship. If you cannot make a significant time commitment, this may not be the right class for you; however, I promise it will be worth your time.

1. Attendance and participation

30%

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion (f2f and online) are essential to your success in this course. By active participation I mean coming to each class on time, with your books and notes on the films you watched, as well as printouts or digital copies of additional assigned texts in hand. I expect you to ask concrete questions or offer specific comments about the assigned readings and films, volunteer questions and responses to both me and your classmates in discussion, engage in group work, and be active listeners to my mini-lectures and to your classmates' comments. You can earn up to 100 points over the course of the semester for active and meaningful participation in class discussion and group work.

As part of your participation, you are expected to **submit 2 questions and 3 responses** (to my or your peers' questions) over the course of the semester to the **discussion board** on Blackboard (BB). It is important that you **spread your questions and responses out over four units**, rather than submit all questions and all responses on the same unit. You will be assessed not only based on the quantity but the quality of your contributions to class discussion. This gives you a lot of choice and control over your interests and time management—it also helps us keep up class discussion if we should have to move online.

Responses: Every Wednesday afternoon I will post a question on the texts or films assigned for the following Monday on blackboard (BB). Over the course of the semester, you must respond either to 2 of my questions OR you can choose to respond to 2 of your peers' questions – or one of mine and one of your peers – this is up to you. These responses to your peers' or my questions must be submitted online via blackboard **by 8am the following Monday**, so I have time to read your responses prior to our class to have a better understanding of what your thoughts on these texts are. Like the questions, your responses need to be articulated in a concise (**250-300 words**) but thoughtful way and I expect you to always **incorporate at least one direct citation** from the assigned primary or secondary texts via parenthetical documentation. Again, it is important that you spread these answers out over several units, so you actively engage with each unit. You can earn up to 100 points for each successful and complete response.

Questions: Your questions on the texts or films assigned for Monday need to be posted on BB **by noon on Sunday**, to give your peers enough time to read and think about your question before articulating a response. Your questions must be formulated in a concise (**250-300 words**), but thoughtful, way and I expect you to always **incorporate at least one direct citation** from the assigned primary or secondary texts via parenthetical documentation. You can earn up to 100 points for each question.

Please do not submit these assignments as an attachment but copy and paste your work in the provided space on BB. The quality and number of these questions and responses factor into your participation grade, prepare you for class discussion, and encourage a conversation between you and your peers beyond the classroom (which may become even more important if we should have to go online at any given moment in the semester).

No late submissions will be accepted - the idea is that you engage with the assigned materials **before** we meet in class.

Note: You may of course always submit your questions and responses early if you want or need to keep your weekends work-free. Responses and questions must not be submitted retroactively and are always due before we discuss the assigned section on which you articulate your question.

Attendance:

I am aware that students (or your instructor) may fall ill, may have to take care of sick family members, or have obligations outside of school during the semester. Every student may **miss three classes** without giving me an explanation and without suffering any repercussions (i.e. I do not need to know why you were not able to come to class – you are all adults and I trust you make smart decisions). Be sure to choose your freebies wisely, and plan ahead for your semester; it might be a good idea not to use up all freebies in the first three weeks, since emergencies with health, family, or cars may happen later in the semester. It is your responsibility to catch up on missed work and turn in assignments, such as questions and responses, on time, even and especially after you missed a class. If you fall ill, or if you anticipate any emergencies during any point of the semester that will force you to miss more than 3 classes, make sure to set up an appointment with me as soon as possible, so we can find a workable solution.

2. Quizzes:

10%

Because I believe in continuous rather than singular assessment, I will administer 4 short quizzes over the course of the semester instead of a midterm and a final exam at the end of the semester. Each quiz will ask questions to ensure you have read or viewed and understood the assigned materials from the previous unit. Each quiz can give you up to 50 points. You cannot make up a missed quiz, but I will offer opportunities for extra credit.

3. Auto(bio)ethnography

20 %

Since our class focuses specifically on space, temporality, and the larger El Paso/Ciudad Juarez border region, I ask you to engage in what Norma Elia Cantú has called an “autobioethnography” and write about your own experiences living in El Paso, either as a native El Pasoan or as a migrant to our border city. This assignment can be based on an interview with an El Paso based Chicana author, artist or musician not on our syllabus, or on an interview with an older family member about their experiences growing up in El Paso, or on a conversation with a member of a local immigrant rights or grassroots organization or inspired by an exhibition in one of the local museums or galleries or an event on campus. I will provide a list of suggestions in the third week of classes but encourage you to come up with your own ideas. This is an opportunity for you to be creative not only in your writing but also by using photography, sound/music, etc. I will offer a minilecture on the term “autobioethnography” in the second week of classes **will provide a list of suggestions and samples in the third week of classes** but encourage you to come up with your own ideas. The deadline for your auto(bio)ethnography will be the Monday that follows the last week in which we discuss the primary text that most inspires your autoethnography. It is a good idea to use your auto(bio)ethnography as a starting point for your final project to streamline the research process. Feel free to contact me early with your ideas!

4. Project proposal and annotated bibliography **10%**

Your submission consists of two parts, to be submitted as one document:

first, a project proposal, consisting of 2-3 paragraphs and a creative title, in which you offer an original tentative thesis on one or more of the assigned texts, and clearly showcase how your essay will contribute to existing scholarly conversations about the text of your choice and literary representations of space and temporality in Chicana literature. Ideally, focus on one of the key terms and/or key debates and offer an innovative, different and/or dissenting view; second, an annotated bibliography featuring at least 4 scholarly articles taken from JSTOR and/or MLA/EBSCO only. Only one of these 4 articles may be taken from the syllabus. I will post a sample project proposal and annotated bibliography on BB 3 weeks before the deadline.

By 6pm on **Monday, April 22**, I ask you to send me a short, informal email letting me know your primary text(s) and your research question. Your project proposal and annotated bibliography are due as one word.docx attachment on **BB by 6pm on Tuesday, April 30**. I also ask you to bring 2-3 hardcopies of your proposal to our last class on Wednesday, May 3, so we can workshop your work with your peers in an effective manner. The purpose of this exercise is to increase accountability and responsibility for your scholarly 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.

5. Research Paper **30%**

Your final project in this class is a research paper or a creative piece plus scholarly reflection on one (or possibly more) of the primary texts and films assigned in this class in which you articulate an original argument that engages current theories and debates of literary representations of spatiality/the border/the desert and temporality in Chicana literature. 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 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, you will offer a critical intervention in existing scholarly debates on the text, using your close readings and a clearly outlined theoretical and historical framework relevant to space and Chicana studies. I will share ideas for research projects with you throughout the semester. If it is productive for your thesis, and of interest to you, you are encouraged to connect your essay to current events. The body of your paper needs to be double-spaced throughout and use Times New Roman font size 12, and feature 2000-2500 words, excluding the works cited list that forms the last page of your document. More details will be posted on BB about 3 weeks before the deadline. The firm deadline, as a word.docx attachment on BB, is **6pm on Monday, May 6**.

Note: If you organize yourself in a smart way, you won't leave the bulk of the work until the end of the semester, but consistently submit your questions and responses on BB throughout the semester, submit your film review early, and use your research for the film review for your project proposal to streamline your research process.

Grade breakdown:

Attendance and Participation: 600 points
Quizzes: 200 points
Auto(bio)ethnography: 400 points
Project Proposal and Annotated Bib: 200 points
Research paper: 600 points
Total: 2000 points

A= 1800-2000 (90-100%)
B= 1600-1799 (80-89.9%)
C= 1400-1599 (70-79.9%)
D = 1200-1399 (60-69.9%)
F = 0-1199 (0-59.9%)

Accommodations policy:

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. 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. Students who become pregnant may also request reasonable accommodations, in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy. Accommodations that constitute undue hardship are not reasonable. To make a request, please register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS).

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

Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY

Fax: (915) 747-8712

I am happy to make any reasonable accommodations for students with challenges and limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities, pregnancy, etc. Please see me before or after class 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. Thank you.

Title IX:

Please note that accordance with state and federal laws and regulations and University policy I am obligated to report any instance or suspicion of sexual harassment or abuse to the university's title IX office. If you experience or witness such an event and choose to confide in me, be aware that I am by law not allowed to keep this information confidential.

Scholastic Integrity and Plagiarism:

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOOP). It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. 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, please visit [HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

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 I 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 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 quotes and paraphrasing. The same rules that apply to print sources also apply to web-based sources. 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 for further information: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/2/>.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of AI technologies or automated tools, particularly generative AI such as [ChatGPT](#) or [DALL-E](#), is **not allowed** for assignments in this class. Each student is expected to use critical and creative thinking skills to complete tasks and not rely on computer-generated ideas. Any direct use of AI-generated materials submitted as your own work will be treated as plagiarism and reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR).

Email:

It is your responsibility to activate your UTEP webmail and blackboard accounts within the first week of classes. It is generally a good idea to check your email once a day; this is even more crucial if we should have to move our class online at any moment during the semester. If you do not have internet access at home, plan and check your blackboard when on campus. Responding to emails sent by your professor in a timely manner (usually within 24 hours during the week) is good professional practice and will be part of your participation grade. When sending an email, remember to always put a relevant subject 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. This is a professional setting, and I expect everyone to act and write accordingly. Please note that **I do not read or respond to emails on the weekend**. I will also only send emails during the weekend in case of an emergency. Thank you!

Extra Credit:

Students may submit up to three extra credit assignments on BB. Each assignment can earn a maximum of 20 points and needs to be submitted on BB up to a week after the relevant event (i.e. lecture, film screening, gallery opening, etc.) took place. I will offer a plethora of opportunities for extra credit over the course of the semester, both on and off campus.

Syllabus²

Monday, January 22	Introduction to the course Course expectations, learning goals, assignments, syllabus, etc. *Pat Mora. "University Avenue" *Ray González. "El Paso"
Wednesday, January 24	Writing Place and some key terminology *Norma Elia Cantú. "Autobioethnography" *from Gloria Anzaldúa. <i>Borderlands-La Frontera</i> *from Mary Pat Brady. <i>Extinct Lands, Spatial Geographies</i>
UNIT ONE:	History
Monday, January 29	<i>Forgetting the Alamo</i> *Queering the Borderlands
Wednesday, January 31	<i>Forgetting the Alamo</i> *Pierra Nora. "Between Memory and History"
Monday, February 5	<i>Forgetting the Alamo</i> *from <i>The Decolonial Imaginary</i> Zoom with historian and novelist Emma Perez
Wednesday, February 7	<i>Calligraphy of the Witch</i>
Friday, February 9	Meeting and conversation with scholar and novelist Alicia Gaspar de Alba 11am-12pm, location TBA
Monday, February 12	<i>Calligraphy of the Witch</i> *Irene Lara. "Bruja Positionalities"
Wednesday, February 14	<i>Calligraphy of the Witch</i> *from <i>Spiritual Mestizaje</i>
UNIT TWO:	Family
Monday, February 19	<i>The Rain God</i> Quiz #1

² The Syllabus is subject to change, depending on changing circumstances.

Wednesday, February 21	<i>The Rain God</i> *Ricardo Ortíz. “Arturo Islas and the Phantom Rectum”
Monday, February 26	¡ <i>Ándale Prieta!</i> *from Richard T. Rodriguez. <i>Next of Kin</i>
Wednesday, February 28	¡ <i>Ándale Prieta!</i> Author Yasmín Ramírez visits our class
Monday, March 4	Debate on the politics of representation *from Ralph E. Rodriguez. <i>Latinx Literature Unbound</i>
UNIT THREE: Wednesday, March 6	Citizenship <i>All They Will Call You</i> *article on documentary novel TBA
March 11-17	Spring Break
Monday, March 18	<i>All They Will Call You</i> Quiz #2
Wednesday, March 20	<i>All They Will Call You</i> . Author Tim Z Hernandez visits our class
Monday, March 25	<i>UnDocuments</i> *from Mary Pat Brady. <i>Scales of Captivity</i>
Wednesday, March 27	<i>UnDocuments</i> . Zoom with playwright Jesús I. Valles
UNIT THREE: Monday, April 1	Gender <i>Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe</i> Quiz #3
Wednesday, April 3	<i>Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe</i> *from Cristina Herrera and Trevor Boffone. <i>Nerds, Goths, Geeks, and Freaks: Outsiders in Chicana and Latinx Young Adult Literature</i>
Monday, April 8	<i>Thirty Talks Weird Love</i> *from <i>Making a Killing</i>
Wednesday, April 10	<i>Thirty Talks Weird Love</i> . Author Alessandra Narváez-Varela visits our class
Monday, April 15	<i>Coatlícue Girl</i> *article on Xicana Indigeneity TBA
Wednesday, April 17	<i>Coatlícue Girl</i> . Author and artist Gris Muñoz visits our class
UNIT FOUR: Wednesday, April 24	Environment(al Injustice) <i>God Went Like That</i>
Monday, April 29	<i>God Went Like That</i> *excerpts from ...y no se lo tragó la tierra and <i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i>
Wednesday, May 1	Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography are due by 6pm. Review Workshopping Project Proposals and Annotated Bibliography
Friday, May 3	Dead Day
Wednesday, May 8	Final Papers are due as word.docx on BB by 6pm
Wednesday, May 15	Grades are due