Chicano Cinema

FILM 3302 / CHIC 3302 **T/Th 10:30 – 11:50 am** **Educ. Bldg. #203**
CRN: 10757 / 17541

Fall Semester – 2026

Instructor: Roberto Avant-Mier, Ph.D.
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Phone: (915) 747.6588
Office Hours: Tue. & Thur. 8:30 am – 10:30 am (or by appointment), or Virtual (by appt)
Email: ***ravantmier@utep.edu***

Required Texts:

REQUIRED Book: ***Cine-Mexicans: An Introduction to Chicano Cinema***
Author: **R. Avant-Mier & M. Lechuga** Year: **2018** Publisher: **Kendall Hunt**

Course Description:

Chicano Cinema is an examination of the U.S. film industry with respect to the Chicano's role — historically and culturally— in the media genre. A series of films, including mainstream Hollywood (commercial) and other Chicano-made (independent) films will be screened, as well as documentary films, as part of an analysis of Chicano images and their impact on U.S. popular culture. This is an interdisciplinary course that employs analytical constructs and techniques used in cultural anthropology, sociology, film criticism, and history. This course will also review basic tenets of Chicano history, culture, politics, and identity, and apply this knowledge in understanding film/cinema as meaning-making cultural practice and for understanding the impact of mass-mediated representations of Chicano/as & "Mexicans."

Course Objectives: In this course you should,

- Develop media literacy skills for better understanding popular culture and mass media.
- Become familiar with Chicano/a Studies and develop a working vocabulary of terms and concepts that relate to Chicano/a history, identity, politics, and "The Chicano/a experience."
- Be exposed to Chicano/a culture and Chicano film as an art form, become aware of movies & films being made by and/or about Chicano/a culture, and understand and track the evolution of Chicano/a filmic expressions.
- Understand and discuss various social issues as expressed within and/or through Chicano film.
- Recognize the nuances, complexities, and influences of mainstream popular culture on Chicana/o popular culture (and possibly, vice versa).
- Discover some of the various interdisciplinary theories in studying film/cinema as a popular medium of communication.

Course Policies & Details:

1. ATTENDANCE:

In accordance with the Dept. of Communication Attendance Policy, **ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED** as a condition of successful completion of all courses in the department. **Second, after missing any class session, a student is responsible for finding out about assignments**, due dates, announcements, handouts, and so forth that were covered during the missed session, and for making up any missed work. The student is also responsible for obtaining class notes from a classmate (not the professor) for the session, and for learning material from that session for any relevant exams or quizzes.

Third, the equivalent of 1 week of absence from any course will reduce a student's course grade by percentage points on their eventual "Attendance & Participation" grade. However, absence from a combined total of 3 weeks of class meetings will result in automatic failure of the course. Thus, if the class meets once a week, 3 missed sessions means automatic failure. If a course meets twice a week, 8 missed sessions will result in failure of the course, and a combined total of 9 missed class sessions will result in automatic failure of a course that meets 3 times per week. There are no exceptions to this rule.

Fourth, absences for any reason, including illness, personal crises, athletics or other extra-curricular activities are included in this total. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss 3 or more weeks of a particular course, then that student should not enroll in the course. If a student is involved in any activity that might require that student to miss an exam or quiz, then that student should not enroll in the course.

Next, it is important to note that tardies (arriving late to class) will also be marked and counted, and a simple class rule is that excessive tardies/lates will result in the reduction of the student's final grade. More specifically, for "Attendance & Participation" purposes two tardies will be considered the same as one absence (for final grading). [*i.e.*, 2 tardies/lates = 1 absence]

Naturally, students are required to keep track of their own absences, and therefore should not expect the instructor to regularly report absences or notify students in case of attendance issues or problems (unless as a courtesy by the instructor, determined by the instructor's discretion).

Finally, students using their phones in class will be counted absent for that day. Students cannot earn credit for attendance & participation when there is an obvious lack of attention and/or participation in class, and displaying disruptive behavior.

2. DATES/DEADLINES:

All assignments and exams/quizzes will be scheduled far in advance, and due dates for exams and assignments are announced in this syllabus. **Therefore, you must plan your work and personal schedule far in advance to accommodate these deadlines and policies**. Because the attendance policy dictates that you will (for the most part) be present in class, make-ups and late work are therefore largely irrelevant. Otherwise, for a few special cases at the discretion of your instructor, late work will be docked one letter grade for each day late (each calendar day, not each day of class).

3. EXAMS:

Make-up tests will not be given, except for emergencies. If a student misses an exam or quiz because of a documented emergency or situation, he/she will be required to fulfill an alternative assignment. Only in extreme circumstances will your instructor make arrangements with you to complete your coursework through alternative assignments.

4. ADA STATEMENT (Re: The *Americans with Disabilities Act*):

The University of Texas at El Paso seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the instructor and to the Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) to make arrangements for accommodations in advance.

5. CASS POLICY (Center for Accommodations & Support Services):

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations & Support Services (CASS) at (915) 747.5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu. Or visit their office located in the UTEP Union – East, Room #106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

6. PHONES / ELECTRONIC DEVICES:

Cell phones or other personal electronic communication devices are NOT permitted during class, **so phones should be turned off AND put away during class**. Laptops for note-taking are permitted, only with (a.) instructor permission and (b.) as long as the student sits in the front rows of the classroom. [In other words, students cannot sit in the back rows when they are using laptops.]

7. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence, and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. **Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline**. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

For all quizzes and exams in this course, these assessments are “closed-book” assessments. This means no books, no notes, no open browsers, no language translators, no collaboration with others, no copy & pasting of answers whatsoever, etc. In other words, there cannot be and should not be any outside aids or help during the quizzes and exams. Absolutely no collaboration or cheating is allowed, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any suspicion will be reported to the Dean of Students of the university, and any violation will result in automatic failure of the course with no exceptions.

8. NOTE ON USAGE OF **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** (or, “AI”)**:**

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted in this course must be your own original work and completed in accordance with the **UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures Chapter 1 Section 1.2.3.** AI generated submissions that use ChatGPT, Grammarly, Chegg or other AI composition software is strictly prohibited, and will be treated as cheating and reported to the Dean of Students (with absolutely no exceptions).

Otherwise, for further details regarding using AI in this course, please see point #7 above regarding quizzes and exams.

9. COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT:

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 that Miners can take care of Miners 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.

10. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING SCALES:

Assignments

* Attendance & Participation	30 %
Mid-Term Exam:	20 %
Final Exam:	20 %
Quizzes (2 total / 15% each)	30 %

***** Attendance & Participation Points Earned

0-1 absences = 90-100% for attendance grade
2-3 absences = 80-89% for attendance grade
4-5 absences = 70-79% for attendance grade
6-7 absences = automatic "D" for final grade
8 or more = automatic failure of course / "F" or "W"

NOTE:

2 Tardies = 1 Absence

Numeric Scale – Letter Grade Achieved

A = 90 – 100
B = 80 – 89
C = 70 – 79
D = 60 – 69
F = below 60

11. COURSE SCHEDULE:

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE — Fall 2026

Week	Date	Topic	Be ready to do/discuss this:
1	T 8/25	Introductions, syllabus & course overview	a. Log in to Blackboard System b. Review syllabus, "Meet the Class"
	Th 8/27	a. Chicano/a History & Politics b. *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (1981)	* Article by C. Ortega: "Introduction"
2	T 9/ 1	a. *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez* (1981) b. "The Ballad of G.C.: A Cinematic Corrido"	* Ramírez Berg: "Ballad of G.C."
	Th 9/ 3	a. What does "Chicano" mean?	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **1**
3	T 9/ 8	a. Stereotyping & Early Activism b. *Salt of the Earth* (1954)	* J.E. Limón: "Stereotyping…" *Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **2**
	Th 9/ 10	*Zoot Suit* (1981)	* Ramírez Berg: "Latino Imagery"
4	T 9/15	Hollywood's Latino Imagery	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **3**
	Th 9/17	a. *Zoot Suit* (1981) [continued] b. Cinematic Mexicans	* Fregoso: "Zoot Suit & La Bamba"
5	T 9/22	**QUIZ #1**	
	Th 9/24	b. Introducing "The Matrix"	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **4**
6	T 9/29	*A Class Apart* (2010) [documentary film]	
	Th 10/ 1	a. "Proto-Chicano" Films? b. *Touch of Evil* (1958)	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **5**
7	T 10/ 6	a. A "Touch of Evil" vs. A "Giant" b. The Chicano Movement in Film(s)	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **6**
	Th 10/ 8	a. Periodizing Chicano Cinema (The 4 Eras) b. "An Interlude": Rats & Fritos, etc.	a. * Bernal: "Grassroots…" and b. * Guajardo: "The Impact of…"
8	T 10/13	*Latinos Beyond Reel* (2013) [documentary film]	
	Th 10/15	**MID-TERM EXAM**	

9	T 10/20	a. *Yo Soy Joaquín / I Am Joaquín* (1969) b. *Please Don't Bury Me Alive!* (1976)	* Del Castillo: "Chicano Movement"
	Th 10/22	a. "Chicano" Activism & Filmmaking b. *Walkout* (2006)	a. *Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **7** b. * del Bosque: "Return of a Pioneer"
10	T 10/27	a. Historical Notes b. *El Norte* (1983)	* C. Noriega: "Imagined Borders"
	Th 10/29	a. *El Norte* (1983) [cont'd] b. Chicano Filmmaking in the 70s/80s	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **7**
11	T 11/ 3	a. Stoners, Cheech, and *Born in East L.A.* b. *Born in East L.A.* (1987)	* C. Noriega: "Born in East LA"
	Th 11/ 5	a. The 4 Eras of Chicano/a Film b. Features of the "Classic Period"	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **8**
12	T 11/ 10	a. Limitations of the "Classic Period" b. *Luminarias* (2000)	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **9**
	Th 11/12	*Luminarias* (2000) [cont'd]	* A. García: "Chicana Discourse"
13	T 11/17	**QUIZ #2**	
	Th 11/19	a. Evolving Chicano/a Identity(ies) b. *La Mission* (2009)	*Cine-Mexicans:* **Appendix B – H**
14	Th 11/24	a. *La Mission* (2009) [cont'd] b. Chicano Cinema in the 2000s	*Cine-Mexicans:* **Appendix B – H**
	T 11/26	**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY** **[no classes]**	
15	T 12/ 1	a. ChicanX Futurism b. *Sleep Dealer* (2009)	*Cine-Mexicans* Ch. **10**
	Th 12/ 3	a. Chicano Monsters b. *Book of Life* (2014) vs. *Coco* (2017)	a. * Lechuga & Avant-Mier: "ChicanX Monsters…" b. *Cine-Mexicans:* **Appendix I**
16	Thurs. Dec. 10th	**FINAL EXAM**	**(as per university schedule)**

*** 12/ 15 FINAL GRADES DUE

Further Reading Suggestions:

- ***Tex(t)-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the 'Mexican' in America***, by William Anthony Nericcio (2007, University of Texas Press)
- ***Latin Looks: Images of Latinas and Latinos in the U.S. Media,*** Edited by Clara E. Rodríguez (1997, Westview Press)
- ***Chicano Images: Refiguring Ethnicity in Mainstream Film***, by Christine List (1996, Garland Publishing, Inc.)
- ***The Chicano/Hispanic Image in American Film***, by Frank Javier García Berumen (1995, Vantage Press)
- ***The Bronze Screen: Chicana and Chicano Film Culture***, by Rosa Linda Fregoso (1993, University of Minnesota Press)
- ***Chicanos and Film: Essays on Chicano Representation and Resistance,*** Edited by Chon A. Noriega (1992, Garland Publishing, Inc.)
- ***Latino Images in Film: Stereotypes, Subversion, & Resistance,*** by Charles Ramírez Berg (2002, University of Texas Press)
- ***Shot in America: Television, the State, and the Rise of Chicano Cinema,*** by Chon A. Noriega (2000, University of Minnesota Press)
- ***Visible Nations: Latin American Cinema and Video,*** Edited by Chon A. Noriega (2000, University of Minnesota Press)
- ***Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews, Resources***, Edited by Gary D. Keller (1993, Bilingual Review Press)
- ***Chicano Studies: Survey and Analysis***, Dennis Bixler-Márquez, Carlos F. Ortega, and Rosalía Solórzano Torres (2007, Kendall/Hunt Publishing)
- ***Robert Rodriguez: Interviews***, by Zachary Ingle (2012, University Press of Mississippi)