

Chicano Cinema

CHIC:3302 CRN:27426

ONLINE

Spring Semester – 2026

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Required Textbook: This class requires NO textbook. All readings will be posted in Blackboard.

Course Description:

Chicano Cinema is an examination of the U.S. film industry with respect to the evolution of the Chicano's role and representation—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.

Special Acknowledgements: Thank you to Dr. Roberto Avant-Mier, PhD and Haydee Alonso, MFA for originally creating this course and curating the film selections and readings. I look forward to building upon this work into the future.

Course Policies & Details:

1. ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, & WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:

Attendance in this course is determined by participation in the learning activities, Blackboard discussion opportunities and Writing Assignments of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. Participation is determined by the completion of the following activities:

- Reading and viewing all required course materials (PDFs, links, and films)
- Posing at least **one (1) question** for online discussion on Blackboard
- Engaging with peer questions in at least **two (2)** online discussion sections for Blackboard
- Completing all **five (5) Writing Assignments** by the deadline
- Completing all **two (2) Exams** by the deadline

Participation will be counted via students posting at least **one question** for **Blackboard Discussion** related to their film of choice throughout the semester and responding to at least **two questions** by other peers.

(5) Total Writing Assignments will be part of this course. The instructor will post a prompt on Thursdays and students must submit their Writing Assignment before Sundays at 11:59 PM MST. Assignments that engage directly with the readings and film will score higher on a scale of 1-10. Writing Assignments will be no more than 250 words each.

2. DATES/DEADLINES:

All assignments and exams will be scheduled far in advance, and due dates for exams and writing assignments are announced in this syllabus. **Therefore, you must plan your work and personal schedule far in advance to accommodate these deadlines and policies.** For a few special cases, at the discretion of your instructor, Writing Assignments will be docked two points for each day late (each calendar day, not each day of class).

3. EXAMS:

There will be one (1) Midterm Exam and one (1) Final Exam. Make-up tests will not be given, except for emergencies or requested under CASS accommodation. If a student misses an exam 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. 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.

7. 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 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).

8. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING SCALES:

Assignments

Attendance & Participation	20 %	Midterm Exam	20 %
Writing Assignments	30%	Final Exam	30 %

Extra Credit: Extra credit may be available at the discretion of your instructor.

Numeric Scale – Letter Grade Achieved

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

10. ADVISORY / “HEADS-UP” / WARNING [especially for possible triggers]:

One final thing to note for taking this class is that we will be watching movies and films, but it is important to note beforehand that sometimes films can be upsetting or offensive. Sometimes films have foul language, drug use, nudity, sex, violence, sexual assault or physical assault, etc. While this type of content is not gratuitous and always has a specific point (see readings), it is important to note that such content might appear in films. Thus, students who might have major issues with potentially seeing such things on-screen are advised not to take this class.

COURSE CALENDER & READINGS:

INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO ALTER THE COURSE SCHEDULE

*This includes a recommended breakdown for pacing through the readings and films.
You can review them according to whatever schedule works best for you as long as assignments
and exams are completed by the deadlines.*

Week	Day	Date	Film / Topic	Length	Readings
1	Tues	1/20	Introductions, Syllabus & Course Overview Alonso's Lecture Notes: "What is a Chicana/o/x and Chicana/os in U.S. Cinema"		Guerra Tezcatlipoca. "Gripe: We're Chicanos – Not Latinos or Hispanics." Ramirez Berg. "A Crash Course on Hollywood's Latino Imagery."
	Thurs	1/22	Bronco Billy. "Bronco Billy and the Greaser" (1914) Siqueiros. "Pozole" (2019)	Shorts	Roth and Hoffer "Broncho Billy." Aguilar. "Director Jessica Mendez Siqueiros 'Pozole' is a Dark Comedy about Being Chicana and Vegan."
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE SUNDAY, 1/25 BY 11:59 PM MST					
2	Tues	1/27	Biberman. "Salt of the Earth" (1954)	1h 43m	Lorence. "The Suppression of Salt of the Earth in Midwest America."
	Thurs	1/29	Valdez. "Zoot Suit" (1981)	1h 34m	Fregoso. "Intertextuality and Cultura Identity in Zoot Suit"
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE SUNDAY, 2/1 BY 11:59 PM MST					
3	Tues	2/1	Young. "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez" (1982)	1h 46m	NPR. "The Hero's Journey."
	Thurs	2/5	Nava. "Selena" (1997)	2h 7m	<i>Reading TBD</i>
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE SUNDAY, 2/8 BY 11:59 PM MST					
4	Tues	2/10	Anders. "Mi Vida Loca" (1994)	1h 32m	Mora. "Abjection and the Cinematic Cholo." Pitman. "Policing the borders of Chicano cinema."
	Thurs	2/12	MIDTERM EXAM		N/A
NO WRITING ASSIGNMENT DUE					
5	Tues	2/17	Ripoll. "Tortilla Soup" (2001)	1h 33m	Garcia. "The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse."
	Thurs	2/19	Cardoso. "Real Women Have Curves" (2002)	1h 43m	Aguilar. "The Filmmakers Behind 'Real Women Have Curves' Share the Struggles of Getting Their Body-Positive Film Made."
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE SUNDAY, 2/22 BY 11:59 PM MST					
6	Tues	2/24	N/A		<i>Reading TBD</i>
	Thurs	2/26	Riggen. "Under the Same Moon" (2007)	1h 46m	Mejias-Rentas "'La misma luna' box office sparkles."
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE SUNDAY, 3/1 BY 11:59 PM MST					
7	Tues	3/3	PBS: <i>Chicano! Taking Back the Schools</i>	51m	<i>Reading TBD</i>
	Thurs	3/5	Quintana. "The Long Game" (2023)	1h 52m	D'Alessandro. "Dennis Quaid & Jay Hernandez SWSW Wining Golf Drama 'The Long Game' Sets Theatrical Release with Mucho Mas Media. Leydon. "'The Long Game' Review: Young Latinos Aim to Earn Respect and Victory on the Golf Course in Uplifting Period Drama."
REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM					
FINAL EXAM DATE TBC					

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)