**Course Description**

This reading and lecture course—a cultural diversity flagged course—surveys the history of the Mexican community in the United States since 1848, with an emphasis on the period between 1900 and the present. Its primary purpose is to explain the incorporation of the Mexican community as a national minority and bottom segment of the U.S. working class, all along making note of time and place specific variations in this process. One of my central concerns is to make note of two inter-related historical trends in this incorporation, steady upward mobility and unrelenting social marginalization, especially after the Great Depression. I emphasize work experiences, race thinking, social relations, trans-border relations, social causes and larger themes in U.S. history such as wars, sectional differences, industrialization, reform, labor and civil rights struggles, and the development of a modern urbanized society. I also incorporate relevant aspects of the history of Latinos, African Americans, and Mexico.

Course materials, including a copy of my resume, this syllabus, lecture notes, and notes on interviewing techniques, will be available on Blackboard, UT’s course management site. Call the ITS help desk (475-9400) if you have questions about Blackboard. Students with disabilities can seek academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259. Also, consult the Department of History’s policy on plagiarism: http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/history/about/academic-integrity.php.

**Course Requirements**

Your course grade will be based on a mid-term examination (25%), a final examination (25%), a research paper (30%), two chapter reports (10%) and a film report (10%). Your final grade will be computed cumulatively. The final examination will cover the material from the middle to the end of the semester. I will discuss the requirements more fully in class.

*Mid-Term Examination.* The examination will be administered on October 13, and will include identification and essay questions. I will post a review sheet and devote most of the class meeting prior to the examination—October 11—to a discussion of the review sheet.
**Final Examination.** The final examination will also include identification and essay questions on the material covered in the course since the mid-term examination. I will post a review sheet for the final examination and devote part of our last class on December 1 to a discussion of the review sheet.

**Family History Project.** You will be expected to write a 12-page history of your family based on at least two interviews and two overarching themes (e.g., immigration, work experiences, identity) spanning three generations or more. The paper is due on November 29. I will provide instructions on interviewing and the writing of the paper. I am willing to provide an optional research assignment if students are unable to prepare a family history paper.

**Chapter Reports.** Select two assigned chapters (from the following: Gonzales—Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7; Zamora—Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5) and prepare ½ page reports for each that address the following questions: What is the issue or point that the author is explaining or arguing? How does he/she go about doing this? How effective is his/her explanation or argument? Each report will be worth 5 points and will be due on the meeting after the chapter is assigned. If you chose to write a report on Gonzalez’ Chapter 4, for instance, submit it on September 13.

**Film Reports.** Students can earn a maximum of 10 points by preparing a 2-page report on two films: *A Class Apart* and *Taking Back the Schools*. The report should minimally address the following: the overall purpose of the film, the supportive arguments and techniques that the film maker uses, and the relevance of the film to the course content. The report will be due at the end of the class meeting after the showing of the film that you will have selected. The report for *A Class Apart* is due on September 27 and the report for *Taking Back the Schools* is due on November 17. No report will be required for *Border Bandits*, although it is a required viewing.

**Attendance.** More than three unexcused absences will result in a five-point deduction on the final grade, and one more point deduction for every class missed after the three unexcused absences. Also, you are expected to be on time for class and to remain in the classroom for the duration of the class. Teaching assistants will be checking attendance and I will reward students who attend regularly (with an allowance of two unexcused absence) with one or two points if this can help them reach the next higher letter grade for the course. If you have an excuse for a class that you missed or expect to miss, let us know as soon as possible.

**Grading**

I will use the following grading scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
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<td>D-</td>
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Required Readings


Emilio Zamora, *Claiming Rights and Righting Wrongs in Texas, Mexican Workers and Job Politics during WWII* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009). A copy of the book is available on a two-hour reserve basis at the PCL.


Emilio Zamora, “Occupational Table, 1930-1970.”

Recommended Readings (Postings)


Luis Urrieta, “Las Identidades También Lloran, Identities/ Also Cry; Exploring the Human Side Indigenous Latina/o Identities,” *Educational Studies*, 34, Number 2 (2003). I will make this essay available through Blackboard.

Films

*Border Bandits*
*A Class Apart*
*Taking Back the Schools*

Schedule

I will initiate the classes with general remarks or lectures. Outlined notes corresponding to each class meeting will be posted on Blackboard. The reading assignments require that you come to the next class meeting prepared to discuss them. The assignment that I note for September 15 (Chapter 5 from Gonzales’ book), for instance, means that you should have done the reading and be prepared to discuss it by the subsequent class meeting, on September 20. Remember that you are only required to submit two book reports, but are expected to read all the assigned chapters.

Part I. Introduction

8-25 *Introduction*
I will discuss the texts, course schedule, requirements, expectations, terms, and concepts in our study of Mexican American history. Special attention will be given to the assigned family history paper.

8-30

*Mexican American History*

My focus will be on the history of Mexicans in the United States as a subject of study (since the late 1960s) and as the long-standing historical experience of a people (since pre-Colombian times). Mexican American history, in other words, is at once a socio-historical experience and a series of interpretations. This is an important lesson for any student of history.

**Assignment:**

- Urrutia, “Las Identidades También Lloran” (Recommended)
- Valenzuela, “The Drought of Understanding and the Hummingbird Spirit.”

9-1

*Family History Project*

My objective will be to discuss the assigned project with a focus on selected oral history techniques and theoretical issues. The handout addresses practical considerations in conducting the interviews and writing the paper while the essays by Urrutia and Valenzuela underscore the different ways of knowing of our family pasts and presents.

**Part II. The Conquest Generation, 1848-1900**

9-6

*Pre-20th Century Review: Independent Mexico, U.S. Expansionism, and Wars, I*

An expansionist United States reached the current Southwest as Spanish colonial rule was waning (1821-48) and Mexico was achieving its independence (1921). The result included wars (Texas insurrection, 1835-36; Mexico-U.S. war 1846-48), Mexico’s loss of more than one-half of its territory, the absorption of the “Mexican cession” into a politically charged environment in the United States, and the incorporation of Mexicans as a territorial minority. I will also address different interpretations in Mexican American history with works by Carey McWilliams (*North From Mexico*), Juan Gómez-Quiñones (*Roots of Chicano Politics*), and Mario García (*Mexican Americans*).

9-8

*The Territorial, Political, and Economic Incorporation of the Annexed Territories*

We will continue the discussion initiated during the previous class meetings, paying closer attention to the consequences of the wars to selected regions and communities. I will use Albert Camarillo’s study of Santa Barbara (*Chicanos in a Changing Society*) to illustrate how military occupation, racial conflict, and the arrival of Anglo newcomers introduced important social and political changes. I will use his concepts of proletarianization and barrioization to explain social marginalization and community building.

**Assignment:** Gonzales, Chapter 4, The American Southwest, 1848-1900

9-13

*The Mexican Social Structure Collapses*
We will discuss Gonzales’ treatment of the last half of the nineteenth century and expand Camarillo’s local and regional analysis into New Mexico and Texas with studies by Sara Deutsch (No Separate Refuge) and David Montejano (Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas).

**Part III. The Mexicanist Generation, 1900-1930s**

**9-15 New Social Relations Emerge at the Turn of the Century**
Unequal and racialized social relations emerged with the more advanced economic incorporation of the Southwest. The industrialization of the southwestern economy included the development of railroads, mining, agriculture (ranching and farming), urban based industries like construction, and a demand for low-wage Mexican labor. The racial ideas that emerged “naturally” from this unique form of economic development joined with imported antipathies directed against the “other” as well as negative ideas associated with the wars (1835-36, 1846-48) and the undeclared “low intensity” fighting of the late nineteenth century. Studies by Montejano, Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, and Anoldo De León, They Called Them Greasers, will help us understand the role that racial ideas played in justifying and reinforcing inequality.

**Assignment: Gonzales, Chapter 5**

**9-20 Work, Migration, and Community Building**
Immigration is a central theme during the early 1900s because they help us understand Mexicans as a reserve army of labor, including labor controls that are used to regulate its movement and social movements as responses to their marginalization. Immigration also allows us to understand the unequal relations between Mexico and the United States and the emerging differences and divisions in the Mexican community. I will use works by Carey McWilliams (North From Mexico) and Emilio Zamora (The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas).

**9-22 Film: Border Bandits**

**9-27 Film Discussion**
Submit Film Report

**9-29 Mexico, Self-organizing, and a Moralist Mexican Political Culture**
Organizations, especially mutual aid societies, reflected and reinforced a popular collectivist value of mutualism. Sara Estela Ramirez, a teacher, poet, and early supporter of an anarchist-syndicalist exiled group, was a major exponent of the cultural value and her writings explain how intellectuals promoted mutualism, reciprocity, and even altruism to sustain different social causes. An important book by Gómez-Quiñones (Sembradores) and Zamora’s previously noted work as points of reference.

**10-4 Americanization, Political Divisions and a New Ethnic Ethos**
I will refer to three important political leaders—Clemente Idar, Emilio Flores, and José de la Luz Saenz—to illustrate how class and political differences led to divisions over identity, immigration, and radical political ideas during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The armed revolt of 1915 in South Texas and the emergence of the moderate League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in 1929 reflect the political distance between Mexican activists. I will use Zamora’s previously noted study of Mexican workers in Texas to address the subject of political divisions.

**Assignment: Gonzalez, Chapter 6**

10-6  *The Depression Years: Hard Times, Survival, and Activism*

Mexicans were especially hard hit during the Depression. Hard times, however, also reinforced mutualism and unity, and energized the Mexican social movement, especially the cause for workers’ rights. The recent study by Zaragosa Vargas (*Labor Rights and Civil Rights*) will help us address the hard times of the Depression and the continuing Mexican social movement.

10-11  **Review for Mid Term Examination**

10-13  **Mid Term Examination**

**Assignment: Gonzales, Chapter 7, and Zamora, Chapter 2**

**Part IV. The Mexican Americanist Generation, 1940s-1960s**

10-18  *War, Recovery, and Unequal Opportunities, I*

Mexicans, like the rest of the nation, recovered from the hard times of the Depression when the wartime demand on the economy provided them more better-paying jobs, especially in urban areas. Mexicans, however, did not benefit from wartime opportunities to the same extent as Anglos and Blacks. I will also make reference to works by Walter Fogel (*Mexican Americans in Southwest Labor Markets*) and Mario Barrera (*Race and Class in the Southwest*), Alonso Perales (*Are We Good Neighbors?*) and Pauline Kibbe (*Latin Americans in Texas*).

**Assignment: Zamora, Chapter 3; Occupational Table, 1930-70**

10-20  *The Cause for Equal Rights and Mexico*

Drawing primarily from Chapter 3, I will argue that Mexico’s decision to intervene on behalf of Mexican rights in the United States encouraged the State Department “to bring the Good Neighbor Policy home” and elevated racial discrimination to a point of major importance in relations between Mexico and the United States.

**Assignment: Zamora, Chapter 4**

10-25  **Energizing the Cause for Equal Rights**
Texas became a key site in testing the importance of discrimination in racialized politics and in explaining the emergence of LULAC as the principal Mexican civil rights organization in the country.

Assignment: Zamora, Chapter 5

10-27 The Mexican Cause for Civil and Labor Rights in Texas
The work of the Fair Employment Practice Committee offers a way to measure the influence of the Good Neighbor Policy in the cause for equal rights.

11-1 Film: A Class Apart

11-3 Film Discussion
Submit Film Report
Assignment: Gonzales, Chapter 8

Part V. The Recent Generation, 1960s-Present

11-8 The 1950s, New Strategies during the Post-War Period
Demographic changes, urbanization, and an optimism that drew inspiration from the nation’s foundational documents encouraged unionization, electoral politics, and legal challenges against discrimination and segregation.
Assignment: Gonzales, Chapter 9

11-10 The “Movement” of the 1960s and 1970s
I use a participant/observer perspective to address a major Mexican social upheaval and cultural renaissance which was both a self-defining social movement and a protest against persistent inequality. This movement paralleled other social movements that benefitted from a more activist state. I will focus on four distinct movements within the larger Mexican American cause.

11-15 Film: Taking Back the Schools

11-17 Film Discussion
Submit Film Report

11-22 The Movement and Cultural “Renaissance”
Political action was accompanied by a cultural renaissance that included increased artistic and intellectual activity mostly among the youth, including women and members of the middle class.

11-24 Major Advances and Continuing Inequality, The Last Decades of the Twentieth Century
The double-sided trend of significant upward mobility and persistent inequality became an established feature of Mexican life. Internal differences became increasingly
important and often deepened political divisions. An examination of educational change will underscore this observation.

11-29 *Latinos Reshapes America and America Remakes Latinos*
My principal aim is to provide a demographic profile of the Mexican-origin population in Texas and address the changing relationship between Latinos and American society. I will draw on the anthology by Marcelo Suárez-Orozco, *Latinos: Remaking America* and a travelogue by Hector Tobar, *Translation Nation*.

**Submit Research Papers**

12-1 **Review for Final Examination**
The date for the final examination will be announced early in the semester, once it is posted by the Registrar’s office.