

Chicano Movement

Chc/Lat 166 and PP&D 177

Instructor: Rodolfo D. Torres

Winter 2016

Lecture Hall: HG 1800

Monday 7-9:50pm

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"I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will."

Antonio Gramsci--Prison Notebooks

Course Description:

The tumultuous 1960's and early 70's produced changes in how Mexicans in the United States saw themselves and expected others to see them. The Chicano movement marked an important development in recent United States history. Many date the modern Chicano movement to the 1968 student walkouts in East Los Angeles nearly 50 years ago.

On the first evening we will screen the award-winning documentary film *The Black Power Mixtape 1967-1975* to offer students an overview of the Black Power Movement—a movement that had a political and cultural impact on el movimiento. In the following weeks the course examines the Chicano Movement(s) with its ideological, regional, generational, and class differences in both its dominant male-centered form and its feminist challenge. The course will devote most of its attention to the period from 1968 to the mid-late 1970's. Although the course will focus on Mexican Americans, we will have a comparative component with attention paid to the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican liberation youth group formed in Spanish Harlem in the late 60's. A new book on the Young Lords (2015) has been assigned for this part of the class. The class will conclude with a focus on the contemporary movimiento---prospects for change in the 21st century. The final question the Instructor will ask at the end of the term: Is it possible to build a new and better society beyond the failed systems of the past and present? Instructor will screen several films/documentaries. These films are an integral part of the class and are meant not to be considered entertainment. The films are to be intellectually engaged as if they were scholarly written material. No

more –no less! Final exam will cover material in films. Films will be screened nearly every night.

Many critical scholars have posited that liberal and mainstream notions of the politics and power drove the “movement(s)” leadership with its focus on electoral politics and school reform to ignore the structural nature of problems in the wider political economy facing the Chicano and Chicana population(s). However, there were a small number of competing socialist organizations that appeared on the political scene to challenge the mainstream leadership and ideology of the movement. Students will be introduced to selected radical and socialist organizations through the reading of original documents produced by these groups.

Another unique aspect of the course is that it will be taught by a Chicano Movement veteran of the late 60’s and early 70’s. Torres attended Lincoln High School, one of the schools of the famous and celebrated “high school walkouts” of 1968. Torres dropped out of high school three months before the blowouts and reluctantly joined the Army at the age of 17. As soon as he was discharged in the summer of 1970 he became active in the anti-war movement and later a member of the UC Irvine’s MEChA chapter (Movimiento Estudiantial Chicano de Aztlan) in the early 70’s, Torres was also a member of the East Los Angeles (City Terrace) chapter of La Raza Unida Party (RUP) in Los Angeles. Torres remains active in local, national and global social and economic justice movements.

Required Readings:

1. *Rethinking the Chicano Movement* by Marc S. Rodriguez (Routledge, 2015)
2. *The New York Young Lords and the Struggle for Liberation* by Darrel Wanzer-Serrano (Temple University Press, 2015)
3. *Man of Fire Selected Writings Ernesto Galarza* edited by Aramano Ibarra and Rodolfo D. Torres (University of Illinois, 2013)
4. *Social Justice Journal: Elizabeth “Betita” Sutherland Martinez: A life in Struggle (Vol.39.No.2-3 (issues 128-129) 2013 (selected articles will be on website) Not to be purchased.*

Optional Readings On Library Reserve:

1. *The Struggle in Black and Brown* Edited by Brian Behnken (University of Nebraska, 2011)
2. *The Chicano Movement* edited by Mario Garcia (Routledge, 2014) Excellent collection of writings by young scholars
3. *Making Aztlan: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977* by Juan Gomez-Quinones and Irene Vasquez (University of New Mexico

Press, 2014)

4. *Chicana Power!: Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* by Maylei Blackwell (University of Texas Press, 2011)

5. *Quixote's Solders: A Local History of the Chicano Movement, 1966-1981* by David Montejano (University of Texas Press, 2010)

6. *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun: Lessons from the Chicano Movement, 1965-1975* (University of New Mexico Press, 2005) One of my favorite movement books

Among the primary documents to be read include the following:

The Struggle for Chicano Liberation by the League of Revolutionary Struggle
(Forward, No.2 August 1979)

Toward Chicano Liberation by the Communist Party USA (CPUSA)

Communist League/Communist Labor Party (CLP) Regional Regional Autonomy
for the Southwest

Fan the Flames document produced by August 29th Movement (ATM)

Requirements:

With nearly 25 years of teaching, grading is still a struggle for me. Why? Because I do not believe in the conventional system of grading. In an upper-division class of more than 100, I find grading an extremely aggravating task. I want the sessions and discussions to be a stimulating and exciting as possible, with a collegial and supportive atmosphere, and yet in the end I have to evaluate your work and assign a grade. This reinforces the ultimate power that is lurking behind the social relations of the class. Social relations that instructors cannot alter without a structural change of the university and wider society. The instructor will do everything in his power to demystify the social relations of the classroom. Unlike traditional disciplines Chicana/o studies grew out of a movement for social and economic change. This course will provide only an overview of this movement. The UC Irvine Department of Chicano and Latino Studies offers many courses on a range of topics and the instructor urges students to take additional courses in the Department. The faculty members are award-winning authors and top scholars in their respective fields of study.

1. Final (multiple choice questions)

2. Weekly interrogations:

The idea for the so-called interrogations is not to write elaborate reading notes, but to interrogate the central issues or strands of the assigned readings and if pertinent relate to readings, discussions and films. The expectation is that you will write no more than 2 pages per assigned chapter/essay. Again, this is not meant to be an arduous task—it's designed to move our discussion along in a structured and

timely manner. The assignment can be met with a narrative or just a list of talking points. The assignment will be assessed as a pass or fail. Missing “interrogations” will be considered in the final grade. No extensions will be allowed unless previously approved.

A Friendly Reminder:

Is it o.k. to come to class when you are sick and sneezing (beyond the snuffle)? The Winter quarter is usually the season of serious colds coughs. So far as the ethics go and my policy and practice: Students (this applies to instructor and TA’s too) ought to take reasonable measures to keep from passing on infections to classmates and instructor, and staying home is a good way of doing that. After my cold is gone I always keep hand sanitizer in my backpack for a few days.

Course Outline: (Outline and Assigned Readings are Subject to Change)

January 4 Introduction

Film: The Black Power Mixtape: 1967-1975 (only portion of film)

Film: El Teatro Compesino (only portion of Film)

January 11 Required Reading:

Introduction *Rethinking the Chicano Movement*

Introduction *New York Young Lords*

Film: Yo Soy Chicano (only part of film)

Film: Young Lords

January 18 Required Reading:

Campus Closed: MLK Day

January 25 Required Reading:

Arizona Firestorm by O’Leary et al

Arizona Revised Statutes 15-112

Tucson Students Confront Loss of their Chicano Studies Class by Stephen Ceasar

Huppenthal Statement of Findings

Chapter 1-2 *Rethinking the Chicano Movement*

A Chicana Icon on the Left by Carlos Munoz (Social Justice special issue)

Guest Speaker: Richard M. Martinez (Tucson Attorney) and Sean Arce (Former Director of TUSD MAS)

February 1 Required Reading

Chapter 3 *Rethinking the Chicano Movement*
Guest Speaker: Bobby Verdugo (Student leader of 68' Walkouts)

February 8 Required Reading

Chapters 4-5 *Rethinking the Chicano Movement*
The Heart Just Insists by Tony Platt (Social Justice Issue)

February 15 Required Reading

Another campus holiday? Washington Birthday ☺

February 22 Required Reading

Introduction and Parts 2-3 *Man of Fire*

February 29 Required Reading

Chapters 1-3 *The New York Young Lords*
Toward Chicano Liberation by the Communist Party USA (CPUSA)
Community Labor Party (CLP) literature on the Chicano Movement
Fan the Flames document produced by August 29th Movement (ATM)
Film: *Young Lords*

March 7 Required Reading

Conclusion *Rethinking the Chicano Movement*
Conclusion *The New York Young Lords*
A twenty-first Century Activist for Peace (Social Justice)
(distribute Study Guide)

March 14 Yikes! Final