About the Instructor:
Rodolfo D. Torres is a Professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Public Policy. He has been teaching courses on Mexican Americans for nearly 35 years. He was born on East First Street in Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles. He has written 10 books and edited 15 volumes and nearly 100 articles and book chapters on topics ranging from Mexican American politics, urban theory, theories of the State to Mexican American labor, Marxist inspired political economy and urban studies. His most recent book is The Latino Question: Politics, Laboring Classes, and the Next Left (coauthored with Armando Ibarra and Alfredo Carlos) published by Pluto Press in London. He has also devoted many hours to community and labor organizing in the Southern California region. Torres attended UC Irvine as an undergraduate and obtained his PhD in political economy and policy studies from Claremont Graduate School.

Course Description:
This class examines the major problems and issues in Mexican-American politics since World War II. An emphasis will be placed on the ways in which class, racialized relations, and culture shaped by the wider political economy have structured politics of Mexican origin people in the United States. Regrettably, due to the short summer term the class will devote little attention to the other Latino
populations in the US. However, Mexican Americans and Mexican origin populations represent nearly 70% of the total “Latino” population in the United States.

The instructor will not assign a text book for this class. Students will not have to pay for books for this summer class. I generally try to spare students the high cost of books, so I will provide all of your readings through class email list.

Professor Torres will use the class email list to either send you a pdf of an article or the link to direct students to the assign readings. The course readings will not be very difficult (instructor avoids assigning articles written by French theorists). The instructor does ask that students do the readings to contribute to discussions. The class will be devoted to discussion, lecture, and a film or documentary related to the topic to be discussed in every session. It nearly impossible to condense a quarter to 11 class meetings with two sessions a week. The expectation is that we will devote more time in the interrogation of the selected topics in five weeks than the n-week quarter. Thus, we will not cover as many topics as the instructor would like to, but, dang it’s summer. With the combination of lectures, class discussion, and films the intellectual integrity of the course will remain intact.

Requirements:
1. One-page outline of each reading assigned for the date to be discussed. This assignment is not meant to be an arduous task. There is no specific style for the outlines. What is important is this one-page or maybe two pages in some cases will cover the main strands of the reading. Assessment: Pass/fail
2. Mid-term 20 multiple choice questions (Study Guide will be distributed)
3. Final exam 25-30 multiple choice questions (Study Guide will be distributed)
4. No extra credit.
5. Attendance will be taken at every class session. If you are more than 30 minutes late you will be penalized. After one class absence students will be penalized ½ grade from A to B+ after the second-class absence (one week, 6 hours), students’ grade will be reduced one complete grade.
6. The instructor considers the above requirements to be fair. The mid-term will be allocated one hour to complete and the final two hours. Unless students have a documented accommodation from the Disability Office. I am a strong supporter of the work of the Disability Office and will without hesitation comply with students’ requests for accommodations. I got your back!

Grade Distribution:
Mid-term 40%
Final 40%
Outlines: 20%

Course Outline:

Session 1
August 7 
Introduction

Session 2
August 9
Mexican American Generation: Politics, Racism and the Zoot Suit Riots
Film: Zoot Suit
Assigned Reading:
1. “Sleepy Lagoon: Communists, the CIO, and Civil Rights in Radicals in the Barrio by Justin Akers Chacon (Verso, 2018)

Session 3
August 14

Politics of the Mexican American Civil Rights Generation
Assigned Reading:
Film:
A Class Apart: A Mexican American Civil Rights Story

Session 4
August 16
Chicano Politics and the 60’s and 70’s
Required Reading:
Chicano Movement by Carlos Munoz Jr.
Film: Dolores

Session 5
August 21
Chicano Politics: More on the 60’s and 70’s
Required Reading:
Film: The Brown Buffalo
Film:
Note: Mid-term (includes the above assigned readings)

Session 6
August 23 *
Politics of Race: Where do Latinos fit in the Racial Classification Debate
Assigned Reading:
1. “The Great Race Melodrama” By Victor Valle and Rodolfo Torres (LA Times,
2. “Are Latinos a Racial Minority” By Mario Barrera in Sociological Perspectives, 2008 (Very important article)
Film: On Race: Stuart Hall

Session 7
August 23 Chicano Political Resistance: Political Economy of Gentrification and Displacement
Required Reading:
1. TBA
Film: Boyle Heights
https://www.fallingforangels.com/episode-one-boyle-heights/ (30 mins)
ELA Interchange (60 mins)

Session 8
August 28. The Mexican American Left in the 20th Century
Required Readings:

Session 9
August 30. Latino Inequality in the US

Session 10
September 4th. Political Economy of Mexican Migration

Session 11
September 6th. Alternative Futures: Towards a New Mexican American and Latino Politics?

Session 12
September 11th. Final

Note:
The above readings are taken from the following sources:

Radicals in the Barrio by Justin Akers Chacon (Verso, 2018)
San Diego Historical Society Quarterly Summer 1997
Journal of San Diego History
Crucible of Struggle: by Zaragosa Vargas (Oxford UP, 2017)
Sociological Perspectives, 2008
Chicana Movidas: New Narratives of Activism and Feminism in the Movement Era Edited by Dionne Esponoza, Maria Eugenia Cotera, and Maylei Blackwell (University of Texas, 2018)