

Chicano/Latino Studies 62  
Intro to Chicano Latino Studies II  
Tue-Thurs 3:30-4:50 pm  
SSL 290

Assoc. Prof. Héctor Tobar  
Social Sciences Tower 365

[htobar@uci.edu](mailto:htobar@uci.edu)

office hours:  
Tue-Thurs 2:30-3:15 pm  
Tue 5-6:30 pm  
Wed 5-6:30 pm  
And by appointment

### Course summary

This class will serve as an introductory survey of the wide sweep of cultural production by people today called “Latina,” “Latino,” and “Latinx.” We will discuss works of fiction, poetry, theater, film, memoir, painting, performance art, and cultural criticism by artists and thinkers of varied backgrounds, during many different centuries; from pre-contact works of indigenous cosmology to contemporary voices born of the many diasporas of the peoples who now call themselves “Latino.” Much if not most of the class will be dedicated to the efforts of Latinx artists and thinkers to make sense of the experiences of the twentieth century, when people of Latin American descent reshaped and defined the cultural and social history of the United States of America, especially in the U.S. Southwest and large U.S. cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and Miami. The goal of this class is to add to your Latino “cultural literacy” and perhaps to illuminate a bit more about the time and place in which you live and study—California in the early decades of the twenty-first century. In addition, this course will serve as an introduction to certain concepts of cultural criticism and cultural creation; as one of its requirements, you will craft an argument of comparative cultural criticism; and as another you will craft a creative narrative work of art based on the contemporary Latinx experience.

### Course requirements

There will be **two books as required reading**: *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, a novel by Junot Díaz; and *The Distance Between Us*, a memoir, by Reyna Grande. Both should be available at the campus bookstore; the book is also sold by many, many independent bookstores, on-line vendors, and are also available as e-book. In addition, there will be **other, shorter required readings** as listed below; these readings will be available on **Canvas**.

There will be **two quizzes** on the readings and on the lectures. (each will count toward 20 percent of your grade for the course).

The **first written assignment**, the work of cultural criticism and/or comparison, will be due **Feb 16**. It should be about **750 words** long (or about three, double-spaced typed pages). You will receive a letter grade for this work. (20 percent of grade)

The **second written assignment**, the creative/investigative work, will be due in **two stages**: A **first draft** of about **600 words** due on **March 12**; and a **second draft** of about **900 words** due on **March 19**. The first draft will be graded pass-fail; the second draft will be given a letter grade. (This will count toward 30 percent of your grade).

Your participation in discussion sections will count as 10 percent of your grade.

Course outline (subject to change, with notice).

Week 1, January 9-11.

*Course introduction. What is culture? The many Latinx identities.* National origins and mythologies. Required reading: **Popol Vuh, Part One**. Recommended reading: "I Am Joaquín." Cinematic interlude #1: *"The Ring,"* 1952.

Week 2, January 16-18.

*Early representations. Conquest. Colonialism.* Alta California, early Los Angeles and the Californios. Required readings: **Cabeza de Vaca and Eulalia Perez, "An Old Woman Remembers."** Cinematic interlude #2: *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortes*.

Week 3, January 23-25

*Imperialism, dictatorship and the Latin American/Caribbean novel.* García Márquez. Oscar Hijuelos. Julia Alvarez. Cinematic interlude #3: *"Westside Story."* Required reading: **Junot Díaz, Oscar Wao, intro and chapters 1 and 2.**

Week 4, January 30-February 1

*Voice, dialects, and expression.* Required reading: **Junot Díaz, Oscar Wao, chapters 3, 4, and 5.** Chicano English. Cinematic interlude #4: Michael Peña in *"Ant Man."* *Love and Rockets*. Lalo Alcaraz. Chicano Art. The ASCO art movement.

Week 5, February 6-8. **Quiz 1, Feb. 8**

*Fate, stereotypes and rebellion.* Required readings: **Junot Díaz, Oscar Wao, chapter 6 and 7; and Cherrie Moraga, "Loving in the War Years."** Oscar Zeta Acosta. Cinematic interlude #5. Benicio Del Toro in *"Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas."*

Week 6, February 13-15

Identities, borders and languages. Stereotypes. Cinematic interlude #6, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre* and *Breaking Bad*. Anthony Quinn. Required readings: **Gloria Anzaldúa, selection from Borderlands: La Frontera; Richard Rodriguez, selection from Hunger for Memory; Sandra Cisneros, "Tepeyac" and "Never Marry a Mexican," from Woman Hollering Creek.** Creative interlude #1: How to write a short story.

Week 7, February 20-22

Characters, performance, drama. **Required reading: Zoot Suit, Act 1, excerpts.** El Teatro Campesino. Feb. 22, *Theater presentation, in class: "Plumas Negras,"* by Juliette Carrillo.

Week 8, February 27-March 1

Migration, family, the village and the city: Part One. Required reading: **Reyna Grande, Chapters 1-10; 11-19.**

Week 9, March 6-8. **Quiz 2, March 8.**

Migration, family. The village and the city. Part Two. Cinematic interlude #7: *Alambrista*. Required reading: **Reyna Grande, Chapter 20-to end.**

Week 10, March 13-15.

Poetry and beyond identity. Juan Felipe Herrera. Daniel Alarcón. Recommended reading: Victor Valle's "Recipe of Memory" and Diana Kennedy's "The Art of Mexican Cooking." Required reading: **Manuel Gonzales, "One-Horned and Wild-Eyed."**

### Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the scope and variety of Latino cultural expression through space and time.
- Articulate how various elements of Latino and Latin American history have shaped Latino cultural expression.
- Understand the relationship between cultural observation, cultural criticism and cultural creation.
- Articulate and understand how Latino cultural identity has been formed through history, and how that process of cultural formation is similar to, and different from, other American cultural identities.
- Make a strong analysis and comparison between various forms of cultural expression.

### Ethics, student conduct

**Plagiarism** in student work is unacceptable. Don't cut-and-paste information into your paper. If you copy more than a name, you run the risk of plagiarism. Also, you should be aware, that your instructor has an eagle eye for prose; he will not only be able to tell when something you are writing is not in your voice, he also will likely be able (thanks to Google) to find where it came from.

### And finally

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this course are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Center at (949) 824-7494 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.