Rodolfo D. Torres is professor of Planning and Public Policy and adjunct member of the Department of Chicano Studies. He has been teaching for nearly 35 years (yikes) and plans to retire in 2-3 years. He is author of eight books and editor over fifteen books and nearly 100 articles and book chapters. He is a third generation Mexican American/Chicano. Born in Boyle Heights (on East 1st Street in East LA) and raised in the ‘loco zones’ of the Ramona Gardens public housing project. Torres remains active in labor and social justice movements in Southern California. Torres attended Lincoln High School. Torres is a graduate of UC Irvine (class of 74) and Claremont Graduate School (PhD in Public Policy, 1984). He has taught at Amherst College, UC Berkeley, Hampshire College, Stanford University, California State University, Long Beach and UC Irvine (20 years). He is a proud father of a 20-year-old son who is currently attending Sonoma State University. He is an education and environmental studies major with the goal of teaching environmental justice in high school.

Course Description:

The course will explore across generations the process of Mexican American urbanization, particularly in the context of the changing political economy of Southern California. We will begin with the displacement of Mexican American neighborhoods of Chavez Ravine in the late 40’s and early 50’s. Followed up with the economic restructuring of the Southern California region with attention paid to Latino labor and gentrification. Class will conclude with exploring urban policy alternatives that advance economic justice in Latino communities and beyond. Documentaries will be screened every class session related to topic and readings. The films are central to the class are not meant to entertain. The films have scholarly merit.

Required Book:

Additional readings will be available on Canvas or sent via email. Please check your email for assigned readings.

Course Requirement:
Final Exam (multiple choice) 40-50 questions

Course Outline:

Oct 3  Introduction and Expectations
Film: East LA Interchange

Oct 10  Displacement and the Red Scare in the 50's
Read: The Latino Question: Introduction
Assigned readings/links below were sent via email on October 2
https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/chavezravine/cr.html

https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/10/31/561246946/remembering-the-communities-buried-under-center-field

http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/05/local/la-me-adv-chavez-ravine-20120405

October 17  Immigrant City
Read:
The Latino Question: Chapter 1

October 24th  Inequality and alternatives
Read:
The Latino Question: Chapters 2 and 4
Guest Speaker: Alfredo Carlos
Department of Political Science, CSULB

October 31st  Gentrification I
Readings to be assigned

November 7  Gentrification II
Readings to be assigned

November 14  The Housing Question
Read:
“Ain’t No Apartment Small Enough: Informal Housing in the Latino Metropolis”
Guest Talk: Deyanira Nevarez Martinez, UC Irvine PhD student, Urban Planning
November 21  No Class (Thanksgiving Eve)

November 28  Urban Alternatives
Read:
The Latino question  Chapter 7 and Conclusion

December 5  Review and Study Guide distributed
December 12  Final at 7pm