

TOPICS IN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND CULTURE

*Marginal Masculinities:*

**Russian and Mexican Men in Popular Culture**

REE 325 (43020), CL 323 (34045), MAS 374 (40060), WGS 340 (45085)

**COURSE SYLLABUS**



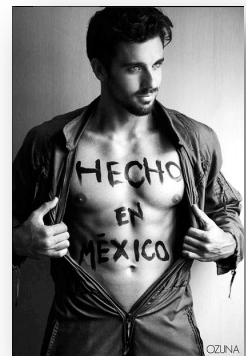
Instructor: Prof. Thomas. J. Garza  
Offices: Burdine BUR 458 (mailbox in BUR 452)  
Phones: 512-471-3607 or 512-232-9126  
Email: [tjgarza@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:tjgarza@austin.utexas.edu)  
Office hours: T 1-2:30; W 11-12:30 in BUR 458, and by appt.  
Class time: MW 4-5:30 pm in PAR 1  
TA: Alexandra (Lexi) Jovanovic  
Email: [atjovanovic@utexas.edu](mailto:atjovanovic@utexas.edu)

**Required text:** [available at the UT Co-op]

- *Constructing Masculinity*, (abbr. CM in syllabus), M. Berger, B. Wallis, and S. Watson, eds., Routledge: New York, 1995.

**Optional texts:** [all available at the UT Co-op]

- *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, R. Adams and D. Savran, eds., Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.
- *Hombres y Machos: Masculinity and Latino Culture*, Alfredo Mirandé, Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997.
- *Men in Contemporary Russia: The Fallen Heroes of Post-Soviet Change?* Rebecca Kay, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishers, 2006.



**I. GENERAL**

**ma•chis•mo:** \mä-'chēz-mō\ (Spanish, n.), an attitude, quality or way of behaving that agrees with traditional ideas about men being very strong and aggressive.

After establishing several theoretical parameters to discuss contemporary marginal masculinities, the course examines products of popular culture (film, music, television) to provide exemplars in both Mexico and Russia. First in the 1990s, and then in the 2000s, each cultural text illustrates and interrogates the performances of

masculinity for popular consumption. Comparisons of film, television, and musical performance from both periods and in both cultures demonstrate the affinities between Russian and Mexican portrayals of the New Macho.

The course suggests connections between the violent social and political environments of Russia and Mexico during the 1990s may have led to the original depiction of urban, middle-class men in popular culture as hyper-masculine, often violent and emotionless, images of *machismo*. By the 2000s, however, in spite of the continuation of violence and/or corruption in both countries, popular culture offered Russians and Mexicans both a respite from the exclusively violent images of macho men portrayed in real life situations, as well as an alternative masculinity: a feminized *macho* that, while no less attractive and strong, presents men as capable of feeling and displaying emotion and preferring the company of another person to living a solitary life in isolation. These two decades of narrative masculinities are the subject of our inquiry together.

The course is conducted in English with all source material that is in Russian and Spanish subtitled in English. No knowledge of Russian or Spanish is required, though readings in both languages are available for majors and minors in these related fields from the instructor on request.



## II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**Attendance and Participation:** You are expected to attend class meetings regularly, participate *actively* in discussions, do all assigned readings and film viewings, and prepare written assignments. HOWEVER, regular attendance alone does *not* fulfill the participation portion of this requirement. Critical analysis, synthesis and cogent argumentation are essential to the success of the course; precise articulation – orally and in writing -- of your understanding of the texts we consider this term is essential to your own success. [REE or MAS/MAL majors in this course are encouraged to work with a substantial portion of the texts in the original Russian and/or Spanish.]

**Response Paper:** Each participant will submit a brief response paper (no fewer than 3, no more than 4 pages) to one of a series of statements taken directly from the course material presented in class. The paper is to be uploaded on Canvas by 4:00pm on Wednesday, **February 26**.

**Position Paper:** A short (no fewer than 3, no more than 4 pages) paper with a working definition of masculinity as depicted in a visual image – Russian or Mexican – chosen by the student. This essay is to be uploaded on Canvas by 4:00pm on Wednesday, **April 8**.

**Course Project:** Class participants, working in groups of three to four, are required to present in **the last two weeks of class**, a ten (10) minute creative, exciting, and provocative treatment of any of the filmic, musical, print, or other texts covered during the semester, or a text chosen by the participants not on the syllabus with the approval of the instructor. Focusing on defining “The New Machismo,” sample treatments will be suggested and discussed well in advance of the due date. Groups are required to communicate with the instructor about the treatments well in advance of the due date, as well as to turn in a brief, one paragraph prospectus justifying the choice of text(s) before beginning the course project.

**Special Accommodations:** Any student with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259. Any necessary accommodations should be presented to the instructor in written form from the SSD **at the beginning of the course**, unless the need for special accommodations becomes necessary during the course.



### III. GRADING

There are four components of the final course grade. These components and their relative weights are:

Response Paper (3-4 pp.)	20%
Position Paper (3-4 pp.)	20%
Course Project	40%
Active enthusiastic participation	20%

All grades for this course will be assigned using the plus/minus system based on the UT Registrar's scale and posted in a timely manner on the class Canvas site:

94 – 100	=	A	74 – 76	=	C
90 – 93	=	A-	70 – 73	=	C-
87 – 89	=	B+	67 – 69	=	D+
84 – 86	=	B	64 – 66	=	D
80 – 83	=	B-	60 – 63	=	D-
77 – 79	=	C+	59 or less	=	F

For assistance with the writing assignments in the course, in addition to working with me, your instructor, I strongly encourage you to use the University Writing Center, PCL 2.330, 471-6222, [uwc.utexas.edu](http://uwc.utexas.edu)). The University Writing Center offers free, individualized help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. This service is not just for writing with "problems." Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. The UWC consultants are trained to work with you on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work and help you become a stronger, more independent writer.



### IV. UT HONOR CODE

The University of Texas Honor Codes reads:

"The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness and respect toward peers and community."

Each class participant is expected to adhere to these principles throughout the course, in interacting with the course instructor, TA, fellow students, and in completing all written assignments for the course. Your instructor and TA will do the same.



## V. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when an alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. For other important Emergency Information, go to:

<http://www.utexas.edu/safety/preparedness/>

## Daily Assignments

### Wednesday, January 22      **Introduction to REE 325** **Overview of syllabus and course structure**

- What to expect, what we expect
- Course, products, assessment
- Questioning *Machismo*: The Village People (1980)

For next meeting, read "Gosh, Boy George, You Must Be Awfully Secure in Your Masculinity!" pp. 11-20 in CM, and Connell's 'Social Organization of Masculinity,' on Canvas.



### Monday, January 27      **On Masculinity: Towards a New Definition**

- What makes a man masculine?
- Parameters of masculinity

For next meeting, read Delgado and Stefancic's "Minority Men, Misery and the Marketplace of Ideas" pp. 211-220 in CM, Mirandé's "Latino Men and Masculinity: An Overview" and Kay's "Studying Men in Russia: Historical Perspectives and International Contexts" on Canvas.



Pachucos

Wednesday, January 29     **Masculinity Studies and Regional Studies**

- Why use the marginal cities of Mexico and Russia?
- Delineation of regions: "Russia" as urban, middle class
- "Mexico" as both Mexico and Borderlands (Tejano/Chicano)

For the next meeting, read Fung's "Burdens of Representation, Burdens of Responsibility" pp. 291-298 and Aronowitz' "My Masculinity" pp. 307-320 in CM, and Reeser's "Sexing Masculinity," and Connell's "The History of Masculinity" on Canvas.

Monday, February 3     **On machismo: Macho as Transnational**

- Masculine v. Macho v. Male
- Defining Marginality
- How did we get to portraits such as Russia's *It's Hard to Be Macho* (2008) and Mexican border's *Machete* (2010)

For next meeting, read Mirandé's "'Macho': Contemporary Conceptions," Ramírez Berg's "A Crash Course on Hollywood's Latino Imagery" and Limón's "Tex-Sex-Mex: Dirty Mexican Men, Aztec Gods, Good Ole Boys, and New Texas Women" on Canvas.

Wednesday, February 5     **The 1990s: Redefining *El macho* in Mexican Culture**

- ¡Matalo! Bandidos and Desperados in Mexican Culture
- Pancho Villa and the Creation of the "Latin Lover"
- The Rise and Fall of Henry Cisneros

For next meeting, read "'Masculinity,' 'The Rule of Law,' and Other Legal Fictions" pp. 227-237 in CM, and Ramírez Berg's "Ethnic Ingenuity and Mainstream Cinema" on Canvas.



Frito Bandito

Monday, February 10     **How Mexican/Macho is *El Mariachi*?**

- Boys and Their Macho "Toys"
- View scenes from *El Mariachi* (1992) and *Desperado* (1995)

For next meeting, read Greene's "Mexploitation: Horror, Mexican Style," Díaz Barriga's "*Vergüenza* and Changing Chicano/a Narratives," and de la Mora's "Mexico's Third-Wave New Cinema and Cultural Politics of Film" on Canvas.



Wednesday, February 12      **Playing the Mexican “Other”**

- Are Vampires Macho??
- Mexican Men, Money, and Masculinity
- View scenes from *Cronos* (1992) and *Sexo, Pudor, i Lágrimas* [Sex, Shame, and Tears] (1999)

For next meeting, read “The Education of the Will” and Menashe’s “Buttons, Buttons, Who’s Got the Workers?” on Canvas.



*Cronos* (1992)



*Muzhik* with Balalaika

Monday, February 17      **The 1990s: Redefining the *Muzhik* in Russian Culture**

- The Russian Macho Archetype
- 1990s and the Cult of Physicality
- View scenes from *Bakenbardy* [Sideburns] (1990) and *Luna Park* (1991)

For next meeting, read Solomon-Godeau’s “Male Trouble” in CM pp. 69-76, and Remnick’s “Yeltsin’s Vietnam” on Canvas.

Wednesday, February 19      **Boris Yeltsyn and the New Russian *Muzhik***

- Making Russia’s President Macho: Yeltsyn
- Lebed: Soldier as Macho

For next meeting, read Ehrenreich’s “The Decline of Patriarchy” in CM pp. 284-290, Kay’s “Military Service,” and Zimmerman’s “War without Peace” on Canvas.

Monday, February 24      **The Russian Bandit as Latin Lover in ‘90s Film**

- Post-Soviet *Homo sovieticus* as Bandit and Lover
- View scenes from *Vor* [The Thief] (1997), *Kavkazskii plennik* [Prisoner of the Caucasus] (1994), and *Brat* [The Brother] (1997)

**Response Paper is due on Wednesday!**

For the next meeting, read Borenstein’s “To Be Continued,” and Olcott’s “Defining the Genre” on Canvas.

Wednesday, February 26      **Performing ‘90s Russian *Macho* on TV: The Police**

- Street Crime as Pop Culture: “*Dorozhnyj patrol*” [“Street Beat”]
- Television Cops –n- Robbers: “*Ulitzy razbitykh fonarei*” [“Streets of Broken Lamps”] and “*Banditskii Peterburg*” [“Criminal Petersburg”]
- **Response Paper due today**

For the next meeting, read Taussig’s “Schopenhauer’s Beard” in CM pp. 107-114, Hutchinson’s “Class, Community, and Culture,” and MacFadyen’s “Pop Music Today” on Canvas.

Monday, March 2

**Livin' La Vida Loca: '90s Pop Music in Russian and Mexican Cultures I**

- Performing Marginal Masculinities through Pop Music
- The Rise of the Boy Bands

For next meeting, read Wald's "New Generation," Grillo's "El Narco," and Hufen's "Back to the Future" on Canvas.



Narcocorridos

Wednesday, March 5

**Livin' La Vida Loca: '90s Pop Music in Russian and Mexican Cultures II**

- *Narcocorridos* [Mexican Music of Narco-trafficking]
- *Shanson* [Russian Music of the Macho Underworld]

For next meeting, read English/Russian lyrics to songs by Zemfira and Lolita on Canvas.

Monday, March 9

**Livin' La Vida Loca: '90s Pop Music in Russian and Mexican Cultures III**

- Women Perform Macho in Mexico and Russia
- What Kind of Men do Women Want??

For next meeting, read Menzel's "Russian Discourse on Glamour" on Canvas.

Wednesday, March 11

**The Dandy and the Rise of the Metrosexual**

- Beau Brummel Reimagined
- Is It Hard to be *Macho*?

For next meeting, read Southar's "*Amores Perros*" on Canvas.

*Happy Spring Break!!*



Gael García Bernal

Monday, March 23

**Mexico's New Macho**

- "El Presidente" Vicente Fox: Bush Meets His Match
- Gael García Bernal and the Macho Intellectual
- Views scenes from *Amores Perros* [*Love's a Bitch*] (2000), *Y Tu Mamá También* [*And Your Mother, Too*], and *Babel* (2006)

For next meeting, read Ramirez's "The *Chifladas* of Engineering," and Torres and Fergus' "Social Mobility and the Complex Status of Latino Males" on Canvas.

Wednesday, March 25 **New Mexican Macho in Comedy and Horror**

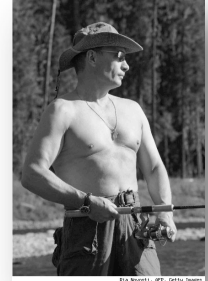
- Alternative Genres for Alternative Masculinities
- View scenes from *7 Mujeres, 1 Homosexual, y Carlos* [7 Women, 1 Homosexual, and Carlos] (2004) and *El Espinazo del Diablo* [The Devil's Backbone] (2001)

For next meeting, read Goscilo's "Putin's Performance of Masculinity," Sperling's "Who's Macho, Who's Gay?" Anemone's "About Killers, Freaks, and Real Men," Gorham's "Taking the Offensive," and Cameron's "Performing Gender Identity" on Canvas.

Monday, March 30 **Machismo and the New Russian Man of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

- Vladimir Putin: Russia's #1 Macho Man
- It's Cool to Be a Thug
- View scenes from "Brat 2" [The Brother 2] (2000) and "Brigada" ["The Brigade"] (2004)

For next meeting, read Kay's "A Woman Has a Right to Expect Certain Conditions," MacFadyen's "Timur Bekmambetov," Campbell's "Five Theses about Day Watch," Khapaevea's "From a Vampire's Point of View" and Norris' "In the Gloom" on Canvas.



Putin Shirtless...Again

Wednesday, April 2 **Russian Vampires, Orientalism, and New Macho Others**

- New Russians as Vampires and "Others"
- View scenes from *Nochnoi dozor* [Night Watch] (2004), *Dnevnoi dozor* [Day Watch] (2006), and *Potselui babochki* [Kiss of the Butterfly] (2007)

For next meeting, read Landy's "Andrei Konchalovskii," and Macguire's "Fedor Bondarchuk" on Canvas.

Monday, April 6 **Even Tough Russian Guys Have Soft Sides**

- Chechnya: Chinks in the Russian Macho Armor
- View scenes from *Obytaemyi ostrov* [Inhabited Island] (2010) and *Dom durakov* [House of Fools] (2004)

For next meeting, finish writing Reflection Papers.  
**Position Paper is due to be uploaded on Canvas by 4:00pm on Wednesday!**



Night Watch (2004)

Wednesday, April 8 **Viva Rusia! Russia's Fascination with Latin Lovers and Desperados**

- Early Years: Eisenstein and Trotsky
- View scenes from *¡Que Viva México!* [Long Live Mexico!] (1919)
- **Position Paper due today.**

For next meeting, read Garber's "Clothes Make the Man" on Canvas.





Monday, April 13 ***Pachucos and Stilyagi: Separated at Birth?***

- How the zoot suit connected two cultures and movements
- View scenes from *Stilyagi* [*Hipsters*] (2008)

For next meeting, read MacFadyen's "Literature Has Left the Building," and "Soaps: The Influence of Latin America" on Canvas.

*¡Que Viva Mexico!* (1919)

Wednesday, April 15 ***Telenovelas and Russian Pop Culture***

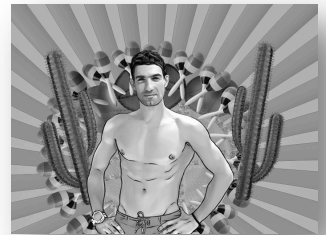
- Vysotsky in Mexico: The Russian Bard in the Land of *Los Machos*
- View scenes from "*Los Ricos También Lloran*" ["The Rich Cry, Too"] and "*Simplemente María*" ["Simply Maria"]

For next meeting, read Solomon-Godeau's "Male Trouble," and Fausto-Sterling's "How to Build a Man" in CM pp. 69-76, 127-134.

Monday, April 20 ***Pop culture and Moscow***

- Reimagining Mexico in Moscow
- View scenes from "*Kanikuly v Meksike*" ["Vacation in Mexico"]
- Mexico v. Russia: Questions of Alterity

For next meetings, prepare to present or to comment on in-class presentations.



MTV Russia's  
"*Vacation in Mexico*" (2010)

Wednesday, April 22 ***In-Class Presentations***

Monday, April 26 ***In-Class Presentations***

Wednesday, April 28 ***In-Class Presentations***

Monday, May 3 ***In-Class Presentations***

Wednesday, May 5 ***In-Class Presentations and Closing Remarks***

- The Next New Mexican/Russian *Macho*?
- Men and *Machismo* in 2020