

**Spring 2022**  
**Transnational Latinx Popular Culture**  
MAS 347C (39910) LAS 328C (39200) WGS 340 (453990)

TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS FROM 11:00 TO 12:30 PM  
XXX

FIRST TWO WEEKS: INTERNET  
CANVAS / ZOOM (SYNCHRONOUS)



**TEACHING TEAM**

PROFESSOR: LAURA G. GUTIÉRREZ (SHE/HER/ELLA THEY/THEM/ELLE)	TA:
EMAIL:	EMAIL:
OFFICE PHONE:	-
OFFICE HOURS: ON ZOOM	OFFICE HOURS: ON ZOOM
OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS FROM 1:00-2:00PM & BY APPOINTMENT	OFFICE HOURS: MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS FROM 11:00AM-NOON & BY APPOINTMENT

### **Land Acknowledgment**

(I) We would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on Indigenous land. Moreover, (I) We would like to acknowledge and pay our respects to the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, here on Turtle Island.

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course uses a set of interdisciplinary methods (mainly ethnic studies, Latinx studies, cultural studies, and performance studies) to help us understand the kind of 'work' culture is doing in a larger framework, historical, economical, and societal. The class uses these theoretical and methodological lenses to examine transnational Latinx popular culture from the 20th and 21st centuries in order to consider the ways in which it has been an important aspect of nation-building strategies on different scales, from nation-states to Latinx communities in the US. We pay particular attention to expressive culture from the beginning of the 20th century, focusing on social dance forms like samba, tango, and danzón. Additionally, sports spectacles are analyzed to understand the performance of masculinity, the interconnected between politics and 'entertainment' (soccer) and the theatricality of the spectacle (lucha libre—Mexican masked wrestling). The course material moves through the 20th century and into the 21st century and across geo-political divides to continue to put forward the idea that Latinx popular culture is transnational (at the same time as translocal); cultural works that will be examined in order to grasp a full understanding of this notion run the gamut from the formation of salsa to the reggaetón phenomenon and telenovela (Latin American soap operas) industry to music television. In a more general way, the ultimate goal of the class is to get the student to think about the ways in which popular cultural forms are part of a 20th and 21st century sensibility that is both part of "the practice of everyday life" and nation-building projects. But the student will be asked to think about how different publics consume popular culture (at times transforming it and/or changing its meaning) and, likewise, it is important to consider what happens when Latin American popular culture (thanks to the (transnational) cultural industries) travels, often across geo-political and linguistic borders (all within the hemisphere of the Americas). The operating question throughout the semester is then, what is transnational about Latina/o popular culture and why does this matter?

### **REQUIRED READINGS: ALL WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH CANVAS**

#### **THE MAJORITY OF THE READINGS ARE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:**

*\*Imagination Beyond Nation: Latin American Popular Culture*, edited by Eva P. Bueno and Terry Caesar

*\*Latino/a Popular Culture*, edited by Michelle Habell-Pallán and Mary Romero

*\*Memory and Modernity: Popular Culture in Latin America*, edited by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling

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- \**Fragments of a Golden Age: The Politics of Culture in Mexico since 1940*, edited by Gilbert Joseph, Anne Rubenstein, and Eric Zolov
- \**From Bananas to Buttocks: The Latina Body in Popular Film and Culture*, edited by Myra Mendible
- \**Global Soundtracks: Worlds of Film Music* edited by Mark Slobin
- \**Keywords for Latina/o Studies* edited by Deborah R. Vargas, Nancy Raquel Mirabal, and Lawrence LaFountain-Stokes
- \**Música Norteña: Mexican Migrants Creating a Nation between Nations* by Cathy Ragland
- \**The Other Side: Notes from the New LA, Mexico City, and Beyond* by Rubén Martínez
- \**Oye Como Va! Hybridity and Identity in Latino Popular Music* by Deborah Pacini Hernández

In addition to the readings available through Canvas, you will have to watch a number of films/documentaries (some of which will be made available through links on Canvas or we will watch in class).

**FILMS/VIDEOS: ON RESERVES OR ONLINE**

***Latin Music USA*** (produced by PBS)

**FILMS/VIDEOS: SCREENED IN CLASS**

***Angelitos Negros*** by Joselito Rodríguez

***Bananas is my Business*** (on Carmen Miranda) by Helena Solberg

***Lucha Libre*** by the National Geographic (on line)

***The Three Caballeros*** (produced by Disney) (selections)

Additional material from films, documentaries, and music videos

**ADDITIONAL AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIAL**

Music and music videos will be played and/or shown during lecture class and, at the discretion of the professor. At times, students may propose music/music video to play/watch during class or during a presentation.

**Some preliminary notes**

\*Even when we meet virtually for the first two weeks, the space the we will always be seeking to create will be respectful of all of our differences, whether they are religious beliefs, racial backgrounds, immigration status, gender presentations, ways of speaking (i.e. accents), in sum, all of our differences.

\*Let's do our best to stay healthy, both physically and mentally. Do let me know if I need to do anything to ensure that we are all doing well.

**Requirements**

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Attendance** and **Active** class participation→15%
- One short class presentation-→15%
- Two short papers (2-3 pages; 20% each)→40%
- Final Research Paper→30%

**DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS:**

**ATTENDANCE AND ACTIVE CLASS PARTICIPATION (15%):**

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Part of what makes my classes more generative are the discussions, for them, you must attend. Although attendance accounts for five percent of your final grade (5%), discussion will be ten percent (10%). I will not take attendance, but will monitor attendance by your participation as we are aiming to generate a space of collective learning. Tardiness will not be tolerated; please arrive to class on time.

The students are entirely responsible for class material that is covered during class lectures and discussions. The professor and TA will not hold additional hours to cover material missed because of an absence. Office hours are exclusively for the review of material or if the student needs additional guidance (understanding concepts, historical contexts, etc) or has questions about assignments and needs guidance (not direct help).

There is an **active** participation component to your grade so you must come prepared to participate actively in the discussion of the assigned texts/materials. If class discussions become too professor-centered, the professor will upload questions that the student must then bring to class, with answers, in order to earn participation grade. The professor will ask each student to bring in a text to class to share and discuss. Additionally, you must be willing to listen to your fellow classmates and respond intelligently and respectfully.

The TA will post a prompt on Canvas every Friday, which you must answer on Canvas before the following class day. This will be part of your participation grade, in the event that you are not able to participate in class discussions. The prompts will start during the second week of class.

**SHORT PAPERS (40%):**

You will have two 2-3-page papers (each worth 20%) based on course readings. These papers are designed to gauge your ability to synthesize the readings and to take a rigorously argued and logical position vis-à-vis that material. They are intended for the student to be able to expand the ideas that have been generated by the reading and/or viewings of films and in lecture and discussion sections. I will upload 3-4 questions onto canvas and you will be asked to base your short essay on one of those questions. The papers are due during class and NO LATER!

**SHORT IN-CLASS PRESENTATION (15%)**

I am committed to a collective learning process and, to this end, towards the end of the semester, I would like each student to present on their final research project that has used as its base some of the theoretical ideas and concepts in class in order to examine a popular cultural text. The presentation will be dynamic and could and should use visual material to exemplify. The idea is that we will learn together from each presentation.

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER/PROJECT (30%)**

The final research paper asks you to engage a cultural text that falls into the category of Latinx popular culture and do a critical analysis, using some of the concepts that were discussed in class and/or discussed in the readings. The student is expected to also bring in other sources (limit the number of non-academic sources, make sure that some are also academic sources). The final research paper should be at least 5 pages in length, but no more than 8 pages. If you wanted to present your research in an alternative format—a short video, a blog, etc—speak with me during office hours.

**Grading Scale:**

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92-100	A
80-91	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
below 60	E

**Notice regarding Academic Integrity**

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin. More specifically, you and other students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For additional information, particularly what constitutes Academic Dishonesty and about possible consequences, see:

<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php>

Additionally: "No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have the instructor's explicit, written permission.

Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. UT is aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course."

**Religious Holidays**

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Documented Disability Statement**

The University of Texas provides on request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, students who need special accommodations should notify the instructor by presenting a letter prepared by the Service for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. Disabilities range from visual,

hearing, and movement impairments to Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, psychological disorders (bipolar disorder, depression, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, etc.), and chronic health conditions (diabetes, multiple sclerosis, cancer, etc.). These also include from temporary disabilities such as broken bones, recovery from surgery, etc. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at (512) 471-6259 [voice], (512) 410-6644 [videophone], via e-mail at [ssd@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ssd@austin.utexas.edu), or visit: <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>.

### **Senate Bill 212 and Title IX Reporting Requirements**

Under Senate Bill 212 (SB 212), the professor and TAs for this course are required to report for further investigation any information concerning incidents of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking committed by or against a UT student or employee. Federal law and university policy also require reporting incidents of sex- and gender-based discrimination and sexual misconduct (collectively known as Title IX incidents). This means we cannot keep confidential information about any such incidents that you share with us. If you need to talk with someone who can maintain confidentiality, please contact University Health Services (512-471-4955 or 512-475-6877) or the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center (512-471-3515 or 512-471-2255). We strongly urge you make use of these services for any needed support and that you report any Title IX incidents to the [Title IX Office](#).

### **Confidentiality of Class Recordings**

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings.

### **Cultural Diversity in the United States**

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. The purpose of the Cultural Diversity in the United States Flag is for students to explore in depth the shared practices and beliefs of one or more underrepresented cultural groups subject to persistent marginalization. In addition to learning about these diverse groups in relation to their specific contexts, students should engage in an active process of critical reflection. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one underrepresented cultural group in the U.S.

### **IMPORTANT DEADLINES:**

First essay due: **February 17 @ 11:59pm**

Presentation on Final project: Brainstorm ideas/rapid fire (what are you thinking of exploring as a final essay/project?): **March 24 during class**

Second essay due: **April 8 @ 11:59pm**

Presentations on Final Essay/Project: last weeks of the semester

Final Essay/Project: **May 10 @ 11:59pm**

### **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

I will try my best to follow the syllabus; if changes do occur, I will inform you ahead of time.

**Week 1 (January 18 and 20) Introduction to the course and main concepts;  
Transnationalism**

**Tuesday:**

Brief introduction and review of syllabus

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Transnationalism" by Ginetta Candelario

**Week 2 (January 25 and 27) Modernity and Nation: Latin American Popular Culture**

**Tuesday:**

Discuss concepts of folk culture, popular culture, mass culture

Reading: "Popular Culture in Latin America" by Vivian Schelling

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Introduction: The Politics of the Popular in Latin American Popular Culture" by Caesar and Bueno

**Week 3 (February 1 and 3) Samba: The Role of Music in Nation-Building Projects:  
Cultural Policy as Imperialism**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "From Slavery to Samba" by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Baianas, Malandros, and Samba: Listening to Brazil through Donald Duck's Ears" by Eric A. Galm

Viewing: *The Three Caballeros* (excerpts) in class

**Week 4 (February 8 and 10) Samba: The Role of Music in Nation-Building Projects:  
Gender as Performance**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat" by Shari Roberts

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Helena Solberg Unmasks a Brazilian Idol" by Nena Terrel

Viewing: *Bananas is My Business* by Helena Solberg (excerpts) in class

**Week 5 (February 15 and 17) Popular Literature: Literatura de Cordel, *historietas*  
(Comic Books), and *tiras cómicas* (Comic Strips)**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Oral Poetry and the Art of Storytelling" by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Introduction" and "The Creation of Mexican Comic Books, 1934-1952" by Anne Rubenstein

**Week 6 (February 22 and 24) Argentine Soccer and Masculinity: From the Politics  
of a Style to Dictatorial Tactics**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Playing Styles and Masculine Virtues in Argentine Football" by Eduardo Archetti

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Los Desaparecidos y la Copa Mundial" by Grant Farred

**Week 7 (March 1 and 3) Urban Melodramas: Post-Revolutionary Mexico, Film, the  
Iconicity of Pedro Infante, Blackness, and Racial Anxieties**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Bodies, Death and Cinema: Pedro Infante's Death as Political Spectacle" by Anne Rubenstein

**Thursday:**

Reading: "'The Soul Has No Color, But the Skin Does': *Angelitos Negros* and the Uses of Blackface on the Mexican Silver Screen, ca. 1950" by Marilyn Miller and "Cri-Cri El Grillito Cantor is Beloved by Mexican Children, But It Has an Unexamined Problematic Past" by Eduardo Cepeda (on *Remezcla*)

Viewing: *Angelitos Negros* by Joselito Rodríguez (excerpts)

**Week 8 (March 8 and 10) The Spectacle of Good vs Evil (Live and Mediated): Masculinity and Lucha Libre in Mexico**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "El Santo's Strange Career" by Anne Rubenstein

Viewing: *Lucha Libre* (from the *National Geographic*) (during class)

**Thursday:**

"Masked Media: The Adventures of Lucha Libre on the Small Screen" by Heather Levi

Viewing: selection of clips from a number of films featuring *El Santo* (during class)

**Week 9 (March 15 and 17) Spring Break**

**Week 10 (March 22 and 24) 'The Tears of the Nation,' Melodrama on the Small Screen: The Case of *telenovelas***

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "The Telenovela: From Melodrama to Farce" by William Rowe and Vivian Schelling AND "Memory and Form in the Latin American Soap Opera" by Jesús Martín-Barbero

**Thursday:**

Rapid fire presentations: Everyone has 2-3 mins to verbally (no tech) present an idea for a final essay/project

**Week 11 (March 29 and 31) Spanish- and English-language Media in the US: Transnationalization of the Telenovela (Industry)**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Televisual Melodrama in an Era of Transnational Migration" by Catherine L. Benamou

**Thursday:**

Reading: "'Ugly' America Dreams the American Dream" by Isabel Molina-Guzmán

Viewing: *Ugly Betty* (clips will be shown in class)

**Week 12 (April 5 and 7) Music's Elusive Geographies: Salsa's and Pop Transnationality**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Situating Salsa: Latin Music at the Crossroads" by Lise Waxer

Viewing: *Latin Music USA*—program #1

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Corazón del rocanrol" by Rubén Martínez from *The Other Side* and "Florecita Rockera: Gender and Representation in Latin(o) American Rock and Mainstream Media" by María Elena Cepeda

Viewing: *Rompan Todo* documentary series (excerpts)



**Week 13 (April 12 and 14) Music's Elusive Geographies: Norteñas, Corridos, Mexicanidad, Migration, and the "Two Mexicos"**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Mexicanidad and Música Norteña in the "Two Mexicos" by Cathy Ragland

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Los Tigres del Norte and the Transnationalization of Música Norteña in the Working-class Mexican Diaspora" by Cathy Ragland

**Week 14 (April 19 and 21) Music's Elusive Geographies: Reggeaton's Antecedents and its Circuitry**

**Tuesday:**

Reading: "Turning the Tables: Musical Mixings, Border Crossings, and New Sonic Circuitries" by Deborah Pacini Hernández

Viewing: music videos (clips, will be shown in class)

**Thursday:**

Reading: "Introduction: Reggaeton's Socio-Sonic Circuitry" by Wayne Marshal, Raquel Z. Rivera, and Deborah Pacini Hernández and "A Beginners Guide to the History and Hybridity of Reggeaton" by Caitlin Donohue

Viewing: music videos (clips, will be shown in class)

**Week 15 (April 26 and 28) Presentations**

**Tuesday:** Presentations

**Thursday:** Presentations

**Week 16 (May 3 and 5) Presentations**

**Tuesday:** Presentations

**Thursday:** Presentations

**FINAL PAPER DUE:  
MAY 10, 2022  
11:59PM ON CANVAS**