The course examines the history of Mexican-origin communities in the United States since 1848 as an ethnic group and bottom segment of the American working class in transnational contexts. My primary purpose is to explain their social and cultural incorporation over time, making special note of time and place-specific variations in the process. I will emphasize important turning points in this history and underscore themes such as changing social relations, diplomatic relations with Mexico, migrations, civil rights history, expressions of identity, and intellectual history.

The course meets the cultural diversity requirement in the new core curriculum that calls for at least one-third of its content to address the culture, perspectives, and history of one or more underrepresented groups in the United States. The course meets this requirement with its focus on Mexicans as an underrepresented group and their relations with African Americans and communities in Mexico. The course also provides students opportunities to advance their critical thinking and communication skills, as well as a sense of personal and social responsibility.

Reading and writing assignments and class discussions will advance critical thinking and history writing skills. Required attendance and expected academic honesty will promote a sense of personal responsibility. Numerous examples from history—including the practice of hard work and public service as acts of family and community responsibility and the work of attorneys who worked tirelessly to extend the constitutional guarantees of the 14th amendment to their communities—will be used to ground the sense of social responsibility in the course.

The course accommodates students with special challenges. They may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512 471-6259. Students seeking assistance with their writing, contact the Undergraduate Writing Center, 471-6222. Medical assistance and counseling services are available at the UT Counseling and Mental Health Center, 471-3515. Our teaching assistants and I are also available.

Do not use your personal computer while in class, unless you are taking lecture and discussion notes. Course materials, including a copy of my resume, this syllabus, lecture notes,
and guides for conducting research and preparing your writing assignments will appear on Canvas. Call the ITS help desk—475-9400—if you have problems accessing the Canvas site.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Four examinations a maximum of 40 points;
- Five reports on reading assignments for a maximum of 30 points;
- A family history research paper (or its equivalent) for a maximum of 25 points; and
- Attendance and class participation for a maximum of 5 points

I have scheduled examinations February 9, February 23, March 23, and April 27. I will use part of the previous classes for a discussion based on a guide that I will post. The review guide will include at least three essay questions. The examination will include two essay questions that will have appeared in the study guide, and you will be required to answer 1 essay question. Each examination will be worth 10 points.

Students should select five reading assignments noted in the schedule and submit a two-page report for each on the following class meeting. Each report should answer the following questions with two-sentence responses for each question: What is the author attempting to demonstrate; what arguments and data/information does the author use to support his thesis; and how effectively did he support the book’s overall purpose. You are responsible for selecting the five readings. Each of the six reports will be worth 6 points (for a total of thirty) and each is due two class meetings after their selection.

Students should conduct two interviews with family members and prepare a family history paper that addresses at least two major themes and that is at least eight pages long with supportive documents like a family tree, a migration chart, and photographs. Students can access one of numerous free programs (Ex., Family Echo) for samples of family trees. If you cannot prepare a family paper, please propose an equivalent oral history as soon as possible. An outline of your paper is due on February 16 and the paper is due on our last class day, May 4.

Unless excused, you should be on time for class and remain for the duration of the class. More than three unexcused absences will result in a two-point deduction on the final grade, and one more point deduction for every subsequent unexcused absence. Students should submit excuses for absences one class meeting after the absence. Teaching Assistants will circulate an attendance sheet.

I will reward students who participate in class discussions. If you participate, you are responsible for turning in a sheet of paper to our teaching assistants with your name and the date of the class when you participated. We will maintain a record of your participation with these documents.

**Grading**
I will use the following grading scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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**Required**

**Textbooks** (Available at the University Coop Bookstore)


Emilio Zamora, *Claiming Rights and Righting Wrongs; Mexican Workers and Job Politics during World War II* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009).

**Films**

*Latino Americanos, Episode 1: Foreigners in their Own Land*
*Latino Americanos, Episode 2: Empire of Dreams*
*A Class Apart*
*Taking Back the Schools*

**Other Reading Assignments**

Mexican Occupational Table, 1930-1970. I will post a copy of the table.


Angela Valenzuela “The Drought of Understanding and the Hummingbird Spirit; A Letter to My Family.” I will post a copy of the essay.


Emilio Zamora, “Las Escuelas del Centenario in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato; Internationalizing Mexican History,” In Mónica Perales and Raul Ramos, Eds., *Recovering*
the Hispanic History of Texas (Houston: Arte Público Press, 2010). I will post a copy of the essay.


**SCHEDULE**

**INTRODUCTION**

1-17 Terms, course requirements, expectations, and Mexican American History.

My purpose will be to establish a common frame of reference for the course. For instance, I will explain my use of different terms—Mexicans, Latin Americans, Tejanos, Mexican Americans, and so on—to underscore the different historical contexts that produced them. I will also share a history of the historical literature—and the larger Mexican American Studies literature—to underscore the intellectual and political climate that gave rise to a relatively new field in U.S. history.

Assignment: “David Foster Wallace, In His Own Words.”

1-19 Empathy and Perspective in the Study of History: Comments and Discussion

I will address the issues of empathy and perspective as necessary principles in life and in the study of history. I will do this with David Foster Wallace’s commencement address. He notes that a liberal education calls on us to place ourselves “in other people’s shoes” and be considerate of them. My intent is to underscore the importance of a considerate
approach to understanding others, especially when studying historical materials on communities that may be different from ours.

Assignment: Latino Americanos, Episode 1: “Foreigners in their Own Land,”

**The Conquest Generation, 1848-1900**

1-24  *Pre-20th Century Review: Independent Mexico, U.S. Expansionism, and Wars*

An expansionist United States reached Mexico’s northern region (the current American Southwest) as Spanish colonial rule was waning (1821-48) and Mexico was achieving its independence (1821). The result included wars (Texas insurrection, 1835-36; Mexico-U.S. war 1846-48), Mexico’s loss of more than one-half of its national territory, the absorption of the newly acquired region into a politically charged environment in the United States, and the incorporation of Mexicans as a territorial minority. I will also address different interpretations on Western expansionism, the dissolution of Mexico’s claim over its northern territory, and the first stages in the incorporation of Mexicans into a developing socio-economy in the American Southwest. Texas plays an especially important role in national rivalries and conflicts, as American settlers followed the movement of cotton production into the Gulf States and established communities that would entertain ideas of insurrection during the early 1800s. My references will include works by Carey McWilliams (*North From Mexico*), Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America*, Juan Gómez-Quiñones (*Roots of Chicano Politics*), and Mario García (*Mexican Americans*). My use of foundational texts on U.S., Mexico, the American Southwest and Mexican Americans will familiarize students with relevant historical literature that they may wish to consult.

1-26  *Westward Expansion and the Incorporation of the Annexed Territories, The Case of Santa Barbara, California.*

We will continue the discussion on U.S. expansionism, paying closer attention to the consequences of the wars to regions and communities of the American Southwest, the region that some historians call the “Mexican Cession” while others describe it as the “home” of Mexican Americans as indigenous people and a territorial community. I will use Albert Camarillo’s study of Santa Barbara (*Chicanos in a Changing Society*) to illustrate how military occupation, racial conflict, and the arrival of Anglo newcomers introduced important social and political changes. The concepts of *proletarianization* and *barrioization* will help me explain the kind of social marginalization and community building that Camarillo uncovers in California. I will incorporate the works of Sara Deutsch (*No Separate Refuge*), Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest*), and David Montejano (*Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*) to support their claim that experiences in Santa Barbara and southern California are also evident in other parts of the American Southwest.
Assignment: Gonzales, Chapter 4

1-31  **The Pre-1900 period**

We will prepare for the following period in Mexican American history by reviewing the ground covered in the previous class meetings, including the assigned film, “Foreigners in their Own Land.” The central theme will be the incorporation of Mexicans into the U.S. socio-economy as an ethnic minority and bottom segment of the American working class.

Assignment, Gonzales, Chapter 5

**THE MEXICANIST GENERATION, 1900-1940**

2-2  *Industrialization of the American Southwest; Work, Migration, and Community Building*

Unequal social relations and racial thinking emerged with the continuing incorporation of the American Southwest. This was part of a larger story of development, involving the growth of basic industries (railroads, mining, agriculture and urban-based industries like construction). The industrialization process increased the demand for labor and triggered a massive movement of workers and their families from Mexico who joined earlier arrivals and U.S.-born Mexicans in low-wage, low-skilled jobs. The anti-Mexican ideas associated with the wars (1835-36, 1846-48) and the undeclared “low intensity” fighting of the late nineteenth century reinforced the racialized relations associated with economic development. Studies by Montejano (*Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*), Arnoldo De León (*They Called Them Greasers*), Carey McWilliams (*North From Mexico*) and Emilio Zamora (*The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas*) help us understand these racial ideas and the way Mexicans adjusted to life and work in the United States.

2-7  Film: Latino Americans, Episode 2: Empire of Dreams

2-9  Examination

Assignment: “Las Escuelas del Centenario in Dolores Hidalgo, Guanajuato; Internationalizing Mexican History”

2-14  *Moralist and Mexicanist Expressions of Emerging US Working Class Political Culture*

Discussion of film and article with a focus on the social marginalization of Mexicans in the developing socio-economy as well as their experience as “architects of their own world.” In other words, they not only faced a condition of inequality but also acted on their own behalf by promoting cultural principles and values that gave meaning to their
lives, sustained their communities and defined their political projects. Organizations, especially mutual aid societies—known in other ethnic and working class communities as benevolent or self-help organizations—reflected and reinforced popular “Mexicanist” collectivist values like mutualism. Sara Estela Ramirez, a teacher, poet, and early supporter of an anarchist-syndicalist exiled group, was a major exponent of collectivist values and her writings illustrate how intellectuals promoted mutualism, reciprocity, and even altruism to reinforce cultural ties and define different social causes. The speakers at the Mexicanist Congress of 1911 strongly suggests the Ramirez was not alone in her pronouncements on mutualism. Foster Wallace’s commencement address and works by Gómez-Quiñones (Sembradores) and Zamora (The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas) will serve as points of reference in my remarks.

Assignment: Zamora, “José de la Luz Sáenz; Experiences and Autobiographical Consciousness,” and Mexican Occupational Table, 1930-1970.

2-16 Americanization, Political Divisions and a New Ethnic Orientation

Increasing acculturation (or Americanization) in the 1910s and 1920s—exposes a major inconsistency in the Progressive movement in U.S. history—often associated with Mexicans who were born in the United States and experiencing some upward mobility, accentuated differences and even contributed to social and political divisions in a growing and geographically expanding Mexican population. Three important political leaders—Clemente Idar, Emilio Flores, and José de la Luz Sáenz—illustrate how class and political differences led to divisions over identity, immigration, and the Mexican Revolution during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The armed Mexican revolt of 1915 and the emergence of the moderate League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in 1929 reflect these differences and divisions. I will focus on Zamora’s The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas, “Fighting on Two Fronts: José de la Luz Saenz and the Language of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement” and Saenz’s Los México-Americanos y La Gran Guerra to support my views on cultural difference, political divisions, and the increasingly complex Mexican cause for equal rights.

Assignment: Gonzales Chapter 7 (pp. 163-78)
Assignment: Zamora Chapter 2

2-21 Continue discussion on Americanization, Political Divisions and a New Ethnic Orientation

2-23 Examination

MEXICAN AMERICAN GENERATION, 1940s-1960s

2-28 War, Recovery, and Disillusionment, An Unprecedented Turn of Events
Mexicans, like others in the American Southwest and the nation, recovered from the hard times of the Depression when the expanding wartime economy provided them
better-paying jobs, especially in urban areas. The opportunities, however, varied. I will
discuss how Mexicans failed to benefit from wartime opportunities to the same extent
as Anglos and Blacks even as the wartime expanded and the federal government
intervened on behalf of minority group members and workers. Uneven development in
a racialized society seems to be saying that “everything was changing while staying the
same.” I will use the works of Carlos E. Castañeda (“The Second Rate Citizen and
Democracy”), Pauline Kibbe (Latin Americans in Texas), Walter Fogel (Mexican
Americans in Southwest Labor Markets), Mario Barrera (Race and Class in the
Southwest), and the assigned occupational table to demonstrate persistent inequality
and an uneven rate of upward mobility among Whites, Blacks and Mexicans.

Assignment: Zamora, Chapter 3, “Elevating the Mexican Cause to a Hemispheric Level”

3-2 Wartime Unity in the Americas and The Internationalization of the Mexican Cause

The war provided Mexicans opportunities to demonstrate their loyalty at home and at
the war front, and to challenge inequality and discrimination in education, employment,
and public establishments. Mexico offered one of these opportunities when its leaders
intervened on behalf of Mexican rights in the United States and encouraged the State
Department “to bring the Good Neighbor Policy home.” This elevated racial
discrimination to a point of major importance in relations between Mexico and the
United States, a development that had not occurred before nor has it been seen again. I
will focus on how some LULAC leaders capitalized on the growing hemispheric attention
to racial ideas and discrimination in the United States to continue campaigning against
inequality.

3-7 Testing the Good Neighbor Policy in Texas

Mexico’s advocacy policy on behalf of Mexicans in the United States energized the
Mexican cause for equal rights in places like Texas at the same time that the state
government adopted some of the most progressive civil rights policies in the United
States. The State Department’s favorable response to Mexico involved concessions like
the expansion of the purview of the Fair Employment Practice Committee (the federal
agency responsible for implementing the nation’s first non-discrimination policy in
industrial employment) to include Mexicans in the Southwest, as well as pressure on
Texas to be a good neighbor to its Mexicans in the state. With the financial help and
encouragement of the State Department, the Texas governor established the Good
Neighbor Commission and adopted the Good Neighbor Policy as the state’s official in
fighting discrimination. The State Legislature also passed a joint resolution known as
the Caucasian Race Resolution, a seemingly odd attempt to prohibit discrimination
against Mexicans, the “other White” group that was now called Caucasian.

3-9 The 1950s: Incorporation, Social Differentiation, Biculturation
My purpose is to demonstrate the growing social, cultural, and political complexity that becomes evident in the immediate post-war period. The unequal incorporation of Mexicans—characterized by significant social gains and the persistence of segregation—resulted in marked social differences among them and between Mexicans and the larger society. The internal social differences manifested themselves in significant cultural differences and political divisions. A framework that accounts for upward social mobility alongside inequality helps us explain seemingly contradictory trends in education, health, and employment. For instance, Mexican youth graduate from high school in record numbers while their high dropout rates remain significantly high.

3-14 Spring Break

3-16 Spring Break

3-21 *Film: A Class Apart*

*Assignment, Gonzales, Chapter 7, pp. 178-93*

3-23 Examination

*Assignment: Zamora, Chapter 5*

3-28 *Socio-Economic Realities and Possibilities, and the Emergence of a New Cause*

We will discuss the film and the importance of the 14th amendment in the story of litigation for equal rights. I will follow with comments on the new cause for dignity and equal rights that dominated public life in Mexican communities. The bold and aggressive style of protest and self-affirmation was due principally to the greater participation by youth. The cause of the farmworkers and other organized Mexican workers gave the movement much of its impetus while the upwardly mobile Mexican Americans who faced obstacles in their lives added an element of righteousness.


**CHICANO GENERATION AND BEYOND, 1960S-2000**

3-30 Social Protest: The Chicano Movement

An examination of the major leaders—César Chavez, Reies Lopez Tijerina, Rodolfo Gonzalez, and José Angel Gutierrez—will allow us to examine significant trends in the Mexican social movement, including the building of alternative educational institutions and the establishment of a third party challenge in electoral politics. Activism was not
limited to organizing against inequality. It was also evident in the intellectual activity that accompanied it and that generated new and reformulated ideas about group identity, civic culture, social entitlement, and strategies for change. The Cultural Renaissance found expression in literature, public performances, and popular culture.


4-4 The Continuing Issue of Unequal Development

The trend of unequal development that emerged during the Second War continues into the present and it is especially evident in the area of education. Inequality is evident in academic performance between Anglos and Mexicans at the same time that some of the latter are registering significant advances. In other words, the achievement gap continues between Anglos and Mexicans and the gap among Mexicans is becoming increasingly important.


4-6 Cultural Renaissance

Cultural activity in the form of academic and popular publications, artist forums, public art, and artistic performances accompanied and gave definition to the social movement of the 1970 and 1980.


4-11 A discussion on the previously assigned works on 4-4 and 4-6.

4-13 Film: Taking Back the Schools

4-18 A Discussion of Film


4-20 Immigration and a Developing Community

Immigration continues to be an important issue in relations between Mexico and the United States, between Mexican communities on both sides of the international line,
and between Mexicans and the larger American society. As the public discourse focuses on issues such as immigration policy, the management of labor flows across the international line, and public perceptions, Mexicans continue to undergo uneven social development and advance pan-Mexican as well as Pan-Latino identities.


4-25 General Discussion on the course’s purpose: to understand the Mexican experience of social and cultural incorporation in the United States.

4-27 Examination

5-2 Discussion of family histories

5-4 Discussion of family histories
Submit family history papers