

SPCM 3310: Latino/a Social Movement Rhetoric

MTWRF 11:00am – 1:45pm, Journalism 506

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This course takes an interdisciplinary look at the rhetoric of Latino/a social movement in the United States, paying particular attention to the Chicano/a and Boricua movements. As a course in the *rhetoric* of social movements, we will take seriously the ways in which different groups (e.g., MECHA and the Young Lords) and individuals (e.g., Cesar Chávez) engaged in a public protest discourse designed to rectify various forms of oppression. As an interdisciplinary study of Latino/a social movement in the United States, we will be consulting a variety of "academic" sources from different fields. We will also engage critically a variety of rhetorical artifacts including speeches, film, and literature. After addressing ways of examining social movements generally and the historical roots of Latinos/as in the U.S., we will likely focus our attention on four key movement moments: the United Farm Workers, Chicano protest in the 60s and 70s, Puerto Rican radicalism of the 60s and 70s, and contemporary Latina feminist rhetoric.

In one way or another, "borders" play a prominent role in the discourse of Latino/a social movement. For some, the "border" is a political fiction – that part of nation-state politics which serves the purpose of delineating foreign from domestic, us from them. This "border" plays an important role in early Latino/a radicalism as a point a contestation and struggle. "Borders" also act as a metaphor for the complexity and sometimes paradoxical nature of Latino/a identity, which shifts the locus of struggle from political "borders" to the "borders" that divide groups from each other and individuals from themselves.

The problem with this course – and the problem with just about *any* course – is that we will necessarily be leaving a lot out about which we *could* talk at length. The nature of the summer session, sadly, does not allow us to address *every* issue and group that would be germane to a discussion of Latino/a social movements in the U.S. That said, this class ought to provide you with a robust understanding of the general issues, and some specific groups, involved in the most active period of Latino/a social protest in the contemporary U.S.

Classroom Climate

The types of issues we will discuss in this class range from the writings and speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Cesar Chavez to the politics of protest and representations of races and classes. Some of you will undoubtedly have strong reactions to some of our readings and issues—strong reactions are not discouraged. However, the ways in which reactions get framed and presented must be respectful and civil. In order for us all to glean the most from this course, we must create an environment in which individuals feel comfortable speaking their minds and relaying their experiences. Constructive criticism and responses are welcome (and expected). Disrespect of any kind—including discriminatory speech that creates a hostile environment with respect to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, age, religion, or ability—cannot be tolerated.

Readings

The readings for this course vary in length, difficulty, and origination. Many readings are theoretical in nature and are drawn from journals in the fields of communication. Some readings are from popular press magazines. Still other readings come from the ever-changing world of the Internet. Due to the multifarious nature of our texts, there will be some day-to-day variation in terms of your reading load. Some of the essays are complex and will likely challenge you. That said, they are not included to frustrate you; rather, they have been chosen because they are strong examples of the positions we are discussing and they lay out arguments in ways that are especially nuanced and sophisticated. With this in mind, you should plan to *give yourself plenty of time to read carefully*, take notes appropriately, and be prepared to ask questions when necessary.

Three books plus a course reader are required for this class and are available at the UGA bookstore or online at Barnes & Noble (<http://www.bn.com>) and Amazon.com (<http://www.amazon.com>).

- Muñoz, Carlos. *Youth, Identity, Power: The Chicano Movement*. 2nd Ed. London: Verso, 2007.
- The Latina Feminist Group. *Telling to Live: Latina Feminist Testimonios*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Torres, Andrés, and José E. Velázquez. *The Puerto Rican Movement: Voices from the Diaspora, Puerto Rican Studies*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.
- Electronic Course Reader (you must print articles)

We won't read these books in their entirety, but they will be useful in your further inquiries into the subject matter, touching on a variety of additional topics that you may find interesting. Supplementary materials will be sent over email throughout the Maymester, so please keep your mailbox empty enough to receive PDF attachments.

IMPORTANT: Bring your readings to class daily (the ones relevant for that day). You must have your readings with you in order to get the most out of the classroom discussions and lectures. I will periodically check that you've brought them with. *Failure to do so will result in point deductions from your course grade.*

Academic Integrity

All students are responsible for knowing the University's policy on academic honesty. All academic work submitted in this course must be your own unless you have received my permission to collaborate and have properly acknowledged receiving assistance. Furthermore, it is IMPERATIVE that you cite referenced work fully and appropriately. You are bound by the Honor Code. Any instance of academic dishonesty will be dealt with swiftly and severely. It is my responsibility to uphold the University's academic honesty policy and report my belief of dishonesty to the Office of the Vice President for Instruction. If you have ANY question whatsoever about what might constitute academic dishonesty, ask. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse.

Attendance

Attendance WILL be taken in this class. Since we are in a Maymester and each class is equivalent to one full week in a regular semester, the attendance policy will be strict: You may miss UP TO two (2) days for whatever reason. I don't distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences; so whether you're sick, in court, hung over, or whatever – you get two absences. Period. After that, your final course grade is reduced by one full letter grade for each additional day you miss. So if you would have ended the semester with a B-, but missed three days, you'd end with a C-.

It is an expectation that good students will attend class regularly and inform the professor (in advance) if they are going to miss. Participation (see below) is a graded component of this course; so you must be here to participate effectively. If you miss classes, it is *your* responsibility to get notes and assignments from other students. It is also expected that if you miss a day, that you take responsibility for your actions and seek to make up your missed time. You are all adults and can make your own decisions; but part of being an adult means owning those decisions.

Technology Issues

It is assumed that each student enrolled in this course has access to a personal computer, complete with printer and access to the Internet. For those students unable to obtain their own computer, it is assumed that they possess a level of computer literacy sufficient to allow frequent use of the computers provided in "labs" throughout the campus. Each student is **required** to obtain the rudimentary skills necessary to maintain a university **e-mail account**. Check your e-mail and the course website regularly so you receive class-related messages in a timely fashion.

We all depend upon machines to get our work done. We all know that machines break down. When they do, it does not constitute an "excuse" or an "emergency." It is expected that you will prepare your assignments *far enough in advance* so that *when* (not if) your computer malfunctions you will still have time to rectify the problem and turn in the assignment on time.

Assignments/Evaluation

Student grades are based on several factors.

1. ***In Class Participation*** (10% of final grade): This is a crucial element in this course. We will spend the bulk of our time **discussing** the ideas raised in the readings and raised in class. I'll be the first to admit that I don't know everything. As such, I will try to act mostly as a facilitator and **each of you** will bear some responsibility for the educational experience of the entire class. The key criteria for assessing class participation are the amount and regularity of contributions and the degree to which contributions are thoughtful, informed, constructive, and on topic. Attendance also figures into this portion of the grade.
2. ***Web Forum*** (15% of final grade): I expect you to be an active participant in our online environment available at <http://retorico.info>. On the course website, I will post announcements, updates, resources, etc., and it is your responsibility to visit the site regularly. Additionally, I expect you to be an active participant in our **course forums**, which I have divided by unit and assignment. This means that you should be posting a question or comment about the readings (addressed to your peers) **everyday**. I see the course forum as an extension of our in-class discussions and expect you to be actively involved.
3. ***Reaction Paper*** (10% of final grade): You will be expected to write a brief (3 page long) reaction papers on a chapter from one of the books. The key is that the chapter on which you write your reaction should NOT be one that we read as a class. Your paper should engage the reading using materials/concepts from the class and demonstrate your ability to apply those materials/concepts in an independent and substantive fashion. It's a lot like what's expected of you on the exam essay questions. Due dates will vary and will be assigned early in the Maymester.
4. ***Exams*** (65% of final grade): There will be three exams, each worth more points than the last. The first midterm will be mixed format, recall and application questions, and will be worth **15%** of your final grade. The second midterm will be mostly essay/application with some simple recall and will be worth **20%** of your final grade. The final exam will be three large essay questions and will be worth **30%** of your final grade. All exams are cumulative in that you're expected to continue demonstrating knowledge of prior concepts/materials.

Grading

All grading will be conducted on the standard A to F scale. A grade in the “A” range indicates work that is “outstanding” relative to basic course requirements; work in the “B” range is significantly above basic course requirements, though it may not be outstanding in any or every regard; work in the “C” range meets the basic course requirements in every respect; work in the “D” range fails to meet the basic requirements but is minimally deserving of credit; “F” work indicates a failure to meet the basic requirements of the course, typically by failing to complete assignments or by violating fundamental, University rules and regulations concerning plagiarism. I will *not* provide grade updates – it is your responsibility to keep track of your own grades if that’s something you get curious about. **All assignments must be completed** (even if you’re not getting a grade for them) **in order to pass the course.**

I am more than happy to discuss grades with you, but those discussions must be calm and rational. If you believe a grade should be *reconsidered*, take time to review my comments and follow these instructions:

1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving the grade but no more than 1 week to talk to me.
2. Your reasons for receiving another grade (which you must specify) must be written in a memo to me (2 page max).
3. The original evaluation & all assignment materials must be included with your memo.

There is no guarantee that a reconsideration of your work will yield a higher grade; but I am willing to consider your reasons and, at the very least, help you troubleshoot deficiencies for subsequent assignments.

Late Assignments

Late assignments are not accepted. Whether or not you are present in class, any and all assignments due that day must be turned in by the beginning of the day’s class. There are no “make-ups,” there is no “extra credit,” and I do not discriminate between “excused” and “unexcused” absences for the purposes of the assignments. It is your responsibility to **contact me ahead of time with ample notice** regarding any special circumstances that may affect your ability to complete an assignment on the day it is due. I will respond to these circumstances on a case-by-case basis. If you know you are going to be gone the day an assignment is due, you should turn it in ahead of time.

Course Reading/Assignment Schedule

It is expected that you will read the text(s) **BEFORE** coming to class for the day and that you will *bring the readings with you to class* so we can discuss them fully. We may alter some of the readings as the semester progresses depending on the needs of the class.

Tuesday, 5/13

- Course Intro.
- Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation”

Wednesday, 5/14

- Griffin, “The Rhetoric of Historical Movements”
- Simons, “Requirements, Problems, and Strategies: A Theory of Persuasion for Social Movements”
- McGee, “‘Social Movement’: Phenomenon or Meaning?”

Thursday, 5/15

- Andrews, “Confrontation at Columbia”
- Scott and Smith, “The Rhetoric of Confrontation”
- Haiman, “The Rhetoric of the Streets”

Friday, 5/16

EXAM #1: You will have an in-class, mixed format exam over the first set of readings and lecture material. The exam will consist of a definitional section (you’ll be given a term and be asked to define it) and an essay section (you’ll be asked to apply the readings in some way).

Monday, 5/19

- YIP, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 2
- Video: *Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement: The Struggle in the Fields*

Tuesday, 5/20

- Ferriss and Sandoval, “Chapter Three: Delano”
- Cesar Chavez, “The Plan of Delano”
- Hammerback and Jenson. “Ethnic Heritage as Rhetorical Legacy: The Plan of Delano”
- Video: *Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement: Taking Back the Schools*

Wednesday, 5/21

- YIP, Chapter 3 & Chapter 4
- “El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán” and “El Plan de Santa Barbara” at <http://www.umich.edu/~mechaum/mecha.htm#National>
- Video: *Chicano!: History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement: Fighting for Political Power*

Thursday, 5/22

- Delgado, “Chicano Movement Rhetoric: An Ideographic Interpretation”
- Jensen and Hammerback, “Creating a Nation in Spirit and Reality: The Rhetoric of Jose Angel Gutierrez”

Friday, 5/23

EXAM #2: Similar format to the first exam, but less definition and more essay material.

Monday, 5/26

NO CLASS -- Holiday

Tuesday, 5/27

- PRM, Chapters 1 & 2
- Video: *Yo Soy Boricua, Pa' Que Tu Lo Sepas!* (in English, "I'm Boricua, Just So You Know!")

Wednesday, 5/28

- PRM, Chapters 9, 12, and 6
- Ogbar, “Puerto Rico en mi Corazon”
- Video: *¡Palante, Siempre Palante! The Young Lords*

Thursday, 5/29

- Young Lords, selections of primary materials
- Enck-Wanzer, “Trashing the System”

Friday, 5/30

- Flores, “Creating Discursive Space”
- TTL, Introduction and Part I (Genealogies of Empowerment)

Monday, 6/2

- TTL, Part III (The Body Re/Members)

Tuesday, 6/3

- Catch up on Latina feminist stuff
- Review for final exam

Wednesday, 6/4

Final Exam: The final will be all essay questions.