

HIST 3150.001: Historical and Cultural Development of the Mexican American Community



*Picture of El Asco art collective, a group of artists that pushed the boundaries of art and social critique during the 1970s (from left: Patssi Valdez, Willie Herrón, Glugio 'Gronk' Nicandro, Humberto Sandoval, and Harry Gamboa Jr.

Dr. Manny A. Grajales
Fall 2026

Department of History
University of North Texas

Class Hours: MWF 1:25pm-2:15pm
Office Location: Wooten Hall 266

Class Location: Wooten Hall 215
Email: Manuel.Grajales@unt.edu

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11:00am to 12pm & 2:30pm to 3:30pm; by appointment

Course Description:

This course introduces the history of the Chicana/o/x community from the 19th century to the present. The goal of this class is to broaden your general and specific knowledge of Mexican History in the United States. There will be a brief review of the pre-nineteenth-century origins of the Mexican people at the beginning of the course. Materials for the class will include lectures and discussions of films, video clips, and readings. If possible, guest speakers will be invited to engage students. A variety of themes will be emphasized, including but not limited to labor, politics, racial formation, education, immigration, gender, and culture. The required course materials will be short readings (academic and public journal articles), videos, and podcasts throughout the semester. However, the instructor reserves the right to revise the syllabus during the semester and will communicate any changes with the class.

Required Text(s):

No Required Texts to purchase. I will provide all materials via Canvas.

NOTE: If you are someone that needs a textbook for general survey purposes, I have a scanned copy of the following textbook that will act as a guide for our course:

+Arnoldo De Leon and Richard Griswold del Castillo. *North to Aztlán: A History of Mexican Americans in the United States*. Illinois: Harlan Davidson Inc., 2006 [1997].

The assigned readings, videos, and podcasts on Canvas are the main assignments that will build our weekly discussions. **These must be engaged with before class week.**

Student Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course:

1. Students will be able to identify the historical and cultural changes of Mexican Americans from the indigenous America until the early 21st century.
2. Students will demonstrate awareness of societal and civic issues affecting Mexican Americans.
3. Students will improve their analytical, discussion, and writing skills.
4. Students will construct projects that uses evidence driven arguments, solid research methods, and employ student creativity to explain the historical and cultural moments in Mexican American History.

Course Requirements:

Attendance/Participation (15%)

It is vital for you all to attend class. I do understand that commitments outside of this class may cause conflicts or personal wellbeing will need to be prioritized. For that, please communicate with the instructor to let me know what is going on so we can plan accordingly. Additionally, you are allowed three unexcused absences during the semester, no questions asked.

It is vital that you contribute to class discussions.

Participation includes asking questions you have, sharing your knowledge with the class, and any other participation. I will provide alternatives for those that are nervous about speaking in class to gain participation points. An important component of participation is being present and engaged on **Fridays, when we discuss the exploratory items assigned.** I will divide the list of Friday Exploratory materials among the class. You will work together to connect the materials together with the histories and themes discussed that week.

Attendance will be graded as follows:

- A-Active participation in class and completes all 9 Reading share space posts. Consistently attend class (no more than 3 unexcused absences)
- B-Generally participates in class/completes 7 or 8 of the 9 Reading share space posts. Generally attend class (no more than 6 unexcused absences)

- C-Shows up, doesn't really talk or interact with peers/completes 6 of the 9 Reading share space posts. Sometimes attends class (9 unexcused absences)
- D-Shows up but doesn't talk or interact with peers/completes 5 of the 9 Reading share space posts. Only attends class half the time (up to 10 unexcused absences)
- F-Shows up but doesn't talk or interact with peers/completes only 4 of the 9 Reading Share Space posts. Absent more than half of the time (13 unexcused absences or more).

Reflections Assignment (40%)

Spread throughout the semester, students are responsible for **eight** reflection assignments.

***Note:** I am open to alternative ideas to complete the reflections (short Video Logs, visual presentations, etc). You will have to okay this with me if you want to go this route.

The ***first reflection*** (due at the end of week 1) **is a 300–500-word introduction of yourself.** Who are you, what was your journey to college, and what do you know about Mexican American History? If you have limited context, what do you know and what questions do you want to explore in the class or in the future. See this as practice for the weekly reflections and give me insight on who you are and what you know.

Six Reflections will be based on assigned materials throughout the course of the class. In 500 words or more (you are allowed and encouraged to write more if you are excited about the topic) you will offer a specific statement on the importance of the topic you are discussing, the contributions of the people writing about these topics, provide a reflection/reaction to the materials while also analyzing some of the deep issues within the assigned material for the week. You will need to submit your first reading reflection by the end of Week 4 so I can grade and let you see what my expectations are. **I will explain the setup of submitting these reflections each week will work during the first week of class.**

The final Reflection Essay is due at the end of the last week of classes. This will be a reflection essay that answers three questions charting your growth from the beginning of the class until now and point out some themes, readings, etc that stood out to you. The length of the reflection piece must be 400-600 words. The prompt will be available on canvas.

Mexican American Public History Project (25%)

The proposal will be worth 5%. The midterm submission is worth 20% and will be three components (bibliography and chart, Reflection essay, final product).

Breakdown of the project:

The Mexican American Public History Project allows students to explore Chicana/o/x and Mexican American History by developing a creative project based on the topics we are learning throughout the semester or something that interests you (topics, theme, etc).

The proposal (due end of Week 4) will submit a document stating your choice of topic and why your interested in this project. You will also state what medium you will use

(more on this), 2 or 3 guiding questions, and an annotated bibliography of at least seven sources (one being a primary sources). Each annotation needs to be between 50 to 100 words stating the importance of the source to your research. You will submit this via Canvas.

Mediums choices could include:

Mini Podcast; Video Presentation (multiple formats); Oral History Project; (For aspiring teachers)-Create a class day lesson plan; Painting (abstract, mural, etc); Poem; a Song; Mini documentary; Animation; X/Twitter Thread; Social Media Reel; 3D model; Junk Journal; scrapbook; Virtual Exhibit (Museum); panorama; Other: Basically, pitch a medium. (If you are a poet, song writer, graphic artist, do something with those skills).

More information on topics will be discussed in class and available on Canvas

After submitting your proposal, the submission of your Public History project (due week 10) will have the following components:

- Complete Bibliography (Chicago/Turabian. If you are a non-history major you can use MLA or APA but must ask my permission)
- Chart showing the time you devoted to the project (for instance, hours for searching primary sources + hours creating an animation, etc.).
- Reflection essay (600-750 words in which you describe the intent behind your public-history project, what you learned while researching it, your self-evaluation of how well you succeeded in creating it, and what more you hope to learn about this topic as you are writing your Final Research Project Paper on this topic.
- The Final product.

More details about the project will be available on Canvas

Final Project: Research Paper (15%)

You will submit a final paper at the end of the semester (due on Reading day, last day before finals) focusing the paper on the major theme or story that inspired your un-essay project. You will develop a research based, argumentative essay about the significance of that topic to Mexican American History and Culture. The length of the Research Paper is 2100 to 2400 words (around 7 to 9 pages double spaced). Bibliography, citations, and cover page do not count to final word count.

Citation style is negotiable based on what discipline you are coming from, but History Majors will use Chicago/Turabian. The paper itself is worth 20%. More information on this will be provided on Canvas and during the first week of class.

Percentage Breakdown

Attendance/Participation-**15%**

Reflections-**40%**

Reflection Essay (Who are you and what did you learn?)

Six Reading Reflections

Final Reflection, Week 14 (What did you Learn?)

Mexican American Public History Project-**25%**

Proposal

Project

Final Research Paper-**15%**

Assignment Due Dates and Important Dates

Important Dates

Labor Day-No Class, September 7th

Class Guest Speaker (Dra. Orquidea Morales, University of Arizona), October 2nd

Final Day to Drop Course, November 6th

Request an Incomplete, Start on November 7th

Thanksgiving Break, November 23rd to 29th

Reflections:

1st Reflection (Who are you? What do you know?), August 23rd (11:59pm)

***Note for Reflections 2 through 7: This is final due date to get at least two submitted. If you submit, they must be submitted the Sunday before class week.**

I'll explain more on the first week of class

2nd Reflection-September 6th (End of Week 4)

3rd and 4th Reflection-October 4th (End of Week 7)

5th and 6th Reflection-November 8th (End of Week 12)

7th Reflection November 22nd (Day before Thanksgiving Break officially starts)

UnEssay Project:

Proposal-September 13th (11:59pm)

Unessay Product-October 23rd (Physical items by 5pm Friday; Digital materials by 11:59pm)

Final Essay (based on project topic)-December 3rd (11:59pm)

Final Assignment:

Final Reflection Essay (December 7th)

Course Outline and Readings.

The instructor has the right to make adjustments. However, I will make sure to address any changes with you all prior to our class if possible. **Fridays** we will discuss **Exploratory items** from a list I will provide you (during the first week of class). This will be a mix of articles, videos, documentaries, podcasts. I will explain more of the set up during the first week of class.

Week 1 (Aug 17-21) Syllabus and Introduction

Understanding Mexican American History

8/23: How to use Library resources from Mr. Doug Campbell (Reference Librarian for history); More discussion on project

First Friday Exploratory Item discussion

Week 2 (Aug 24-28): Indigenous America and Clash of Cultures

*North to Aztlán: Chapter 1 (1-19), Native American and Spanish Settlement

Article: The Echo of Voices after the Fall of the Aztec Empire by Alex Hidalgo (Hispanic American Historical Review, 2023)

Week 3 (Aug 31-Sept 5): Nueva España and the Colonization of La Frontera

*North to Aztlán: Chapter 2 (20-40) The Spanish/Mexican Northern Frontier

Essay: The Paradox of Friendship: Loyalty and Betrayal on the Sonoran Frontier (2014). By Ignacio Martínez (UTEP)

Week 4 (Sept 7-11): Revolutions and The Creation of the Mexican Peoples (Part I)

Labor Day: No Class Monday (Sept 7)

Article: The Complicated History of Texas Revolutionary Hero Juan Seguín (Texas Highways). By Roberto Andrade Franco (Journalist, ESPN)

Week 5 (Sept 14-18): Revolutions and The Creation of the Mexican Peoples (Part II)

*North to Aztlán: Chapter 3 (41-62) Natives in a Foreign Land

Essay: “For Our Own Best Interests”: Nineteenth-Century Laredo Tejanos, Military Service, and the Development of American Nationalism (2011). Alex Mendoza (UNT)

Week 6 (Sept 21-25): La Frontera in Transition

*Supplemental Reading: North to Aztlán: Chapter 4 (63-84) The Borderlands in Transition

Article: Rooted in Place, Constructed in Movement: Transnational Labor Solidarities in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands. By Sonia Hernández (Texas A&M University)

Week 7 (Sept 28-Oct 2): Migration and Violence

*North to Aztlán: Chapter 5 (85-109) The New Colonias: Development, Dispersal, and Diversification, 1910-1930

Website: Refusing to Forget Project: (More details first week. Discuss this on Wednesday)

Guest Speaker, Friday, October 2nd: Dra. Orquidea Morales (University of Arizona) will give a talk on Horror, Gender, and Mexicanidad on the Border.

Week 8 (Oct 5-9): Depression and Belonging

(North to Aztlán: Chapter 6 (110-134) Communities under Stress: Depression and War)

Essay: “In a Race all of their Own”: The Quest to make Mexicans Ineligible for U.S. Citizenship (2010). By Natalia Molina (University of Southern California)

Week 9 (Oct 12-16): A World at War

+Book Chapter: Transnational Latino Soldiering: Military Service and Ethnic Politics during World War II by Luis Alvarez (from *Latinas/os and World War II*, University of Texas Press, 2014)

Week 10 (Oct 19-23): Research Week

Use time to finish the Un-essay project

Week 11 (Oct 26-30): Origins of Mexican American Civil Rights

North to Aztlán: Chapter 7 (135-157) Mexican Americans in Postwar America

+Article: Community resistance and Conditional patriotism in Cold War Los Angeles: The battle for Chavez Ravine by Ronald Lopez II (Sonoma State University)

Week 12 (Nov 2-6): The Chicano Movement and Impact

North to Aztlán: Chapter 8 (158-181) Aztlán Rediscovered: The Chicano Movement

Essay: *¡Medicina Sí Muerte no!*: Race, Public Health, and “the Long War on Poverty” in Mathis, Texas, 1948-1971 (2013). By Felipe Hinojosa (Baylor University)

Week 13 (Nov 9-13): Legacies of the Chicano Movement and the end of the 20th Century

North to Aztlán: Chapter 9 (182-206) Latinos and the New Immigrants

Online Journal: *Inheriting a Path: Rosie Castro’s Influence on Julian and Joaquin* by Tiffany Jasmin González (University of Kansas)

Week 14 (Nov 16-20): Dilemmas and Promises of the New Millennium

North to Aztlán: Chapter 10 and Chapter 11 (207-232) The Dilemmas and Promises of the New Millennium & Community, Diversity, and Culture: Some Conclusions

News article: Texas Observer-Librotraficante-On the Road to Arizona

Thanksgiving Break November 23rd to 29th

NO CLASS! NO ASSIGNMENTS DUE! REST!

Week 15 (Nov 30-Dec 4):

Finish up!

Finals Week: December 7th to December 11th

Campus Resources

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site \(Links to an external site.\)](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

Rules of Engagement

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors. Here are some general guidelines:

- While the freedom to express yourself is a fundamental human right, any communication that utilizes cruel and derogatory language on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law will not be tolerated.
- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in any communication online or face-to-face, even when their opinion differs from your own.
- Ask for and use the correct name and pronouns for your instructor and classmates.
- Speak from personal experiences. Use “I” statements to share thoughts and feelings. Try not to speak on behalf of groups or other individual’s experiences.
- Use your critical thinking skills to challenge other people’s ideas, instead of attacking individuals.
- Avoid using all caps while communicating digitally. This may be interpreted as “YELLING!”
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm in emails or discussion posts as tone can be difficult to interpret digitally.
- Avoid using “text-talk” unless explicitly permitted by your instructor.
- Proofread and fact-check your sources.
- Keep in mind that online posts can be permanent, so think first before you type.

See these [Engagement Guidelines \(Links to an external site.\)](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (<https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips>) for more information.

ADA Accommodation Statement: The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability

is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Course Technology & Skills

Minimum Technology Requirements

Provide a list of the minimum technology requirements for students, such as:

- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Speakers
- Microphone
- Plug-ins
- Microsoft Office Suite

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

Provide a list of course-specific technical skills learners must have to succeed in the course, such as:

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using spreadsheet programs
- Using presentation and graphics programs