BBL 3033 Mexican Americans in the Southwest

Note: This Syllabus is provided for informational purposes regarding the anticipated course content and schedule of this course. It is based upon the most recent information available on the date of its issuance and is as accurate and complete as possible. We reserve the right to make any changes deemed necessary and/or appropriate. We will make our best efforts to communicate any changes in the syllabus in a timely manner. Students are responsible for being aware of these changes.

Course Description:
This is a lecture/discussion course that presents an overview of the historical foundations of the United States/Mexico biculturalism in the Southwest. An examination of the historical forces that created and shaped the Mexican American people as a bicultural community. It examines social, political and cultural forces that have created and given shape and meaning to the Mexican Americans or Chicanos/as. Particular attention is given to Chicana/o experiences in the Southwest from earliest times to contemporary times.

Course Objectives:
• Examine the ways in which sociohistorical and cultural forces have shaped our understanding of Mexican and Anglos in the making of Texas and the Southwest.
• Analyze the social, political, and cultural forces that have shaped and given meaning to Mexican American or Chicana/o identities.
• Understand and synthesize arguments that frame Chicana/o experiences in the Southwest beginning with the 1840s up to contemporary times.
• Write about and discuss concepts presented in the texts in order to produce critical response papers or thinkpieces, and a final paper on the course content.

Requirements for successful completions of course: Each student is responsible for completing assigned readings and for the material covered in lectures, attending class and being active participants, and submitting assignments on due dates. Class format will include lectures, group assignments and other participatory activities. Students should be prepared to participate in class discussion and to share understanding and formulate questions of the readings. Students are expected to read assigned material by the due date, and, from time to time, complete free writes or pop quizzes on the readings.

1. Attendance and participation credit will be assigned for actively engaging the ideas in the context of course discussion – Credit 20%.

An attendance sheet will be circulated. It is the responsibility of each student to sign the roster. If I fail to circulate the sheet, all will be counted as present. Three absences for any reason will reduce your final grade by ONE LETTER GRADE (e.g., an “A” becomes a “B.” Excessive absences (more
than five class periods) may result in an “F.” Tardiness or an early departure of 20 minutes (or more) will be considered an absence.

Your participation in community lectures and group discussions is indispensable to the learning process. As producers (as opposed to just consumers) of knowledge, everyone is responsible for creating a community of learners/teachers.

2. On-going Semester Project – Complete a social history through essays and critical reading responses. These assignments should include discussion and analyses of generational and migratory experiences, covering four generations. The purpose of these assignments is to recover stories and photographs to illustrate the link between your personal/family historical legacy and the social history of Mexican Americans. – Credit 40%

Your essays and critical reading responses will be graded on critical thinking and synthesis of class material; including specific examples or text from the assigned readings, class discussions, and videos. Assignments must be typed and submitted and turned in at the end of the period, when they are due. (Points will be prorated to reflect the value of each assignment. No late paper will be accepted.)

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:
- Discussion – A thorough description and discussion of the topic (family history, photos, etc.)
- Analysis – Did you go beyond description of the topic? Have you extracted the arguments and assumptions in the course material? Have you linked the topic of the assignment to course material to support your ideas.
- Organization – Is your essay well-organized? (i.e. introduction, conclusion, etc.). Have you organized your ideas so that they are coherent and clear for the reader?
- Style – Have you edited your work for spelling and grammar? Have you used APA style?

3. Final Paper: Description, Analysis, and Reflection of Family/Personal History. Using a synthesis summary of your assigned critical reading responses as your theoretical foundation, you will prepare a final essay that incorporates your family’s social history. In addition to embedding your critical reading responses into the text, you will illustrate your narrative with the family stories and photographs to illustrate that social history and the periods covered in the course. This assignment is due the last day of class – 40% Credit.

The final project, which describes, analyzes, and reflects on the social history of your family, as well as their geographical or migratory movement in the Southwest within the context of the readings, will require the collection of family stories, along with photos to document their movement. To successfully and timely complete this project, collect information throughout the semester, starting with the conocimiento developed for this course.

Since conflict, resistance, or accommodation may be central to understanding the sociocultural history of your family, and / or the movement / migration of your family, you will need to examine the social processes that shaped your family’s experiences as Mexican Americans or Chicanas/os. For example, if they migrated because of joining the military, how did this influence your growing up and relationship with your relatives and those communities with which you came in contact? Also, how have these experiences shape understandings of your family as members of an ethnic
group? In what ways did their movement / migration contribute to the shaping of their social identity? How did work and ethnicity / or race location contribute to their understanding of selves? In what ways did their class background contribute to their educational or employment options? You may also entertain other questions that may emerge.

Again, I cannot urge you enough—begin to collect stories, pictures, and other artifacts to illustrate your point—newspaper stories, newsletters, etcetera.

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**Required Texts:**