The University of Texas at San Antonio  
Department of Bicultural Bilingual Studies

BBL 5093  Multicultural Art and Folklore in the United States

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:

A study of the visual arts and the folklore of representative culture groups creating a significant contribution to contemporary society. The course emphasizes Latino contributions to mural and street art, regional and religious art, as well as folk, popular, and other arts.

Rationale for Course:

The study of folklore and the arts in the United States is in essence a study of cultural or social pluralism. Cultural or social pluralism as expressed through the arts is a very general concept, which consists of the contact with multiple systems or subsystems within social, economic, or political units. This course, therefore, is designed to reinforce and expand student awareness about the scope, depth and diversity of various artistic mediums and genres expressed by the different Latino cultural groups within the United States.

Course Objectives:

As a result of taking this course, students should understand and be able to explain the following: (a) the major subsystems of cultural pluralistic expression in the U. S. context, (b) the similarities and differences between art and folklore in the U.S., (c) the different approaches to the artistic cultural expression, (d) the processes and outcomes of culture contact as expressed through art and folklore and (e) the theoretical framework used to study and describe these processes.

Required Texts And Readings:


**Course Requirements:**

1. Strict attendance, discussion of readings as assigned and other assignments. (10 pts.)
2. Written reports of cultural events. (15 pts.)
3. One discussion group activity based on readings (15 pts.)
4. Ethnographic research session (30 pts.)
5. One research project and presentation (30 pts.)

**Incomplete and Make-up Work:**

No incomplete will be given except for extreme extenuating circumstances.

No makeup work will be given without special arrangement prior to the scheduled date except for extreme extenuating circumstances.

**Assignments**

1. **Reading Discussion Groups:** The purpose of the discussion groups is to give students an opportunity to share in the delivery of content. Remember you learn more when you have to teach something to someone else. Three to four group members will cooperatively plan for and lead a discussion on a given reading assignment. To prepare, your group should:
   a. read the material
   b. get together and discuss major points, meet with me to develop presentation; and
   c. develop a process that will help the class understand the points
   You may use handouts, charts, etc., to assist your presentation. Try to get as much class involvement as possible

2. **Cultural Events:** Students will become familiar with the cultural richness and resources of the local community and the surrounding region by active participation. Each student will attend four (4) cultural events of choice and fill out a Cultural Event Form for each event attended. Cultural events attended should reflect art exhibits, cultural programming, musical events, and traditional ethnic cultural events.
   Students are encouraged to attend free events, to search out cultural centers and events not previously known, and to attend with family and/or friends. Forms will be due at semester end.

3. **Ethnographic Research Session: Folklore as Culture**

This cultural project will study folklore culture as it is reflected in the workplace, in the homes and in the lives of the Latino population in San Antonio. The goal of the project is to observe the ways that families incorporate aspects of culture into their lives and how these cultural processes shape their bicultural experiences and identity. We will research the unique elements of the adaptation of different generations of Mexican origin families in San Antonio as affected not only by the history and context of our city but also to examine the effects of different cultural orientations, social relationships, and community structures on their personal cultural adaptations. The purpose of this assignment is for students to gain research experience and to view the different perspectives of cultural identity and to determine the bicultural experience of a community member.

**Study team research interviews and observations of a Latino middle class community member/family process:** You will investigate how folklore culture and identity is presented through the stories, music, dichos, print, art, and practices of the day-to-day lives of the families who live in San Antonio.

   Interview and observe the working members/person (Latinos) of a family, and/or 1 other adult, as to (a) their definition of cultural identity, (b) their interpretation of cultural expressions, (c) their life
history in terms of their bicultural experience, etc. in U. S. life. Report findings, analyze responses and state some implications of the research findings.

Each team will:

a. Identify a middle class Latino family who is either of native or immigrant status to interview and observe.

b. Who is of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th generation living in the United States.

c. Select a family that is either in the 20s, 30s, or 40s age group.

d. Directions for conducting the two interviews are as follows:

   Interview Statements
   • Develop at least 10 questions.
   • Submit for approval.

e. Interview the families and observe their work environment, their homes, lifestyles for background information and examples of folklore culture, cultural adaptation and identity formation.

f. Transcribe the interviews and photograph the examples of folklore culture.

g. Submit in a report via a selected format the findings of the ethnographic cultural study.

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGN:
The goal of the research project is to provide an opportunity for students to explore a course-related topic in some depth. A documented project describing an aspect of art, cultural expression, folklore, music, as reflected—in one of the following cultural contexts: social, language or educational. There is a certain amount of flexibility as to what students can do in connection with this course requirement. Topics for the research paper and presentation will be selected from those presented in class. In selecting a topic, it may be helpful to think about specific examples from the area that interests you.

REALIA STUDY, drawing on ethnographic techniques, of a local or regional group’s cultural expression, movement, or an artist. Options include:

   (1) a study of a specific artist and or medium (e.g., visual artist, sculptor, photographer, musician, folk artist, etc.) or
   (2) a descriptive study of a major ethnic group’s folk art or folklore.

Primary data collection (for example, interviews, life histories, observation of cultural events, works, objects, etc.) is essential for this project. Two people may work together on a project, if one collects historical and demographic information and the other collects the primary data. Each person will be graded for his/her contribution.

PRODUCT:
(1) a written and oral presentation of procedure, primary and secondary data collected, results, and conclusions. Handouts of interview protocols, observation data, and questionnaire responses required, as are examples, objects, and/or works, etc.

OR
(2) a visual presentation to the class (video or slides) with handouts and a report containing procedure, data collected, results, and conclusions.

A one-page proposal describing research project listing the option selected, resources, books, articles, etc. identified for completing the project.