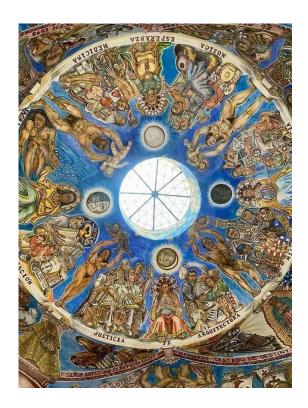# English 2540: Introduction to Chicanx Literature

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**Use this link to schedule appointments**: https://calendly.com/stevenromero/fall-2023-office-hours
**Use this link to access Zoom room**: https://unm.zoom.us/j/93032820088

## Course Description
A survey of Chicanx literature from Mesoamerica to the present. Students will study literary works of fiction, poetry, film, essays, and non-fiction in relation to their historical, cultural, regional, and gendered contexts. Texts will be selected from a diverse group of authors, literary/ pop culture periods, and media forms. Topics and themes may include the literary performance of identity and culture, intersectionality and racialization, struggle and protest, and artistic activism. **(Course Schedule w/ Reading List will be provided via Canvas each week, unless otherwise requested.)**

## Student Learning Outcomes
Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Identify key ideas, representative authors and works, significant historical, cultural, or rhetorical contexts, and a variety of perspectives expressed in the literature of different regions
- Critically reflect on literary works as expressions of individual or communal values within the social, political, cultural, or religious contexts of different literary periods
- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of key forms or styles of expression during different rhetorical contexts or in different regions.

- Articulate the literary and rhetorical principles that guide the scope and variety of works in the arts and humanities
- Compose thoughtful, critical, and research-based compositions about the assigned texts and how they reflect or deflect lived experiences, using a working understanding of literary devices

## Context for Course

From *Keywords for Latino/Latina Studies*:

Self-naming is political, ideological, and resistant. "Chicano" remains thus inflected, true to its emergence in activist communities of the 1960s and 1970s to signify self-determination, working-class origins, and a critique of social relations of power. Although not entirely clear who first appropriated "Chicano" for this usage, it is generally accepted that at one time the word circulated in Mexican Spanish as a negative reference to the "lower classes." Its appropriation by students and activists transformed it into an empowering alternative to "Mexican," "Mexican American," or "Hispanic." To name oneself as "Chicana" or "Chicano" is to assert a gendered, racial, ethnic, class, and cultural identity in opposition to Anglo-American hegemony and state- sanctioned practices of representing people of Mexican descent in the United States. As it evokes the "radical" politics of cultural nationalism, "Chicano" stands against the institutionally normative "Hispanic," as well as the linguistically insistent "Latino" (Alcoff 2005). Always associated by Chicanas and Chicanos with State attempts to classify, homogenize, and deracinate, "Hispanic" is typically linked to conservative political values, even as it is often the name chosen in English by many in the U.S. Southwest who in Spanish might call themselves *tejana*, *mejicano,* [or *genízaro*]. In the U.S. Southwest, "Mexican American" most often appears in academic program names and Chicana and Chicano studies scholars tend to use "Mexican American" and "Chicana/ Chicano" interchangeably.

–Sheila Marie Contreras (p.32)

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**NOTE:** With this in mind, I am going to use—and you are going to encounter—instances in which authors and I use the terms "Chicana/o," "Chicanx", "Chicane", "Hispanic", "Latina/o", and "Latinx/e" interchangeably to account for the multitude of historical, social, political, and rhetorical complexities that impact the *people* (i.e. Black, Indigenous, queer, disabled, etc..) whose designations and realities exist inside these intersectional spaces of both joy and oppression.

## Grading Policy

If we think about the goal of education—learning, whether that's learning a set of skills or concepts, we see that grades are useless. Someone who earns an A in an engineering class may not be able to build a good bridge. Someone who earns a C in a writing class may go on to be a world-renowned novelist.



In fact, several studies that I've read in my professional experience, show that grades inhibit learning. Students get so focused on a grade that they sacrifice actual learning to attain the grade. On the other hand, if you've ever taken a yoga class or participated in a sport or been taught how to play an instrument, you received support (and feedback) from an instructor and/or peers, but not a grade, and you probably learned more efficiently (and had way more fun).

If I could get rid of grades, I would. But I can't. What I can do is think about how to appropriately credit effort and engagement in a way that's fair and accessible to all students. Each of you will acquire different skills and reach different levels of awareness and understanding of the concepts presented in this class.

This syllabus, the activities, and major projects in this course are designed to ensure that any student who engages in the work can receive full credit (an "A") by the end of the term. Some of

you might be wondering how I will assess you by "engaging with the work"—only you know how much time and energy you can put into any single task, and I will not penalize you based on the "quality" of the work you do.

Instead, **each week you will receive full participation credit by completing a set of activities, which include peer discussions, reading annotations, and personal reflections. After you submit these activities, I will provide notes for you to think about as you work towards the major projects.** That's it—you do not have to worry or stress about points being taken off for biased grammar "rules" or according to a complicated rubric. With all this in mind, here is how I will assess the major projects in class.

To receive full credit (an "A") for major projects, you agree to meet the minimum **expectations as outlined in the project prompt <u>AS WELL AS</u> fulfill the following:**

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1.) You submit a complete draft of the project by the deadline.
**AND**

2.) You submit a post-project reflection with the draft of your project.
**OR**

3.) You schedule a one-on-one conversation with me via Zoom or phone to discuss your project draft.

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If you submit a <u>completed</u> project draft (and nothing else), you will earn a "B" for that project. You can also earn a "B" if you submit an incomplete draft but still complete a post- project reflection or do a one-on-one conversation with me.

Submitting an incomplete draft without completing a post-project reflection or doing a one-on-one conversation with me will earn a "C" or "D" for that project. **If you do not submit a draft at all, you will not receive credit for that project.**

<u>**NOTE**</u>: You are not expected to submit project revisions because even 15 weeks is not a lot of time to address my feedback thoughtfully and substantially, especially if you are taking multiple classes. However, if you want to do a project revision based on my feedback, you may do so for additional credit at the end of the term.

Finally, if this policy sounds confusing right now, please do not despair! It will become clear as we move through the semester. In the meantime, please understand that I am here to support your learning, not to penalize your efforts in the form of grades.

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## Major Class Projects

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| Name | Project Description | Schedule |
|------|---------------------|----------|
| **Project One:** Digital Cuento/Testimonio | Students will select a topic on the broad theme of "identities", then create an audio/visual composition that explores how their lived experiences reflect broader issues relevant to course materials. | August 29 to October 16 |
| **Project Two:** Research Narrative | Students will workshop and develop a research question on a topic/issue relevant to Project One. Students will then submit a research proposal that articulates the topic/issue they want to explore. Then, students will develop a composition that incorporates both their research and lived experiences. Finally, students will informally present their project to classmates in a | October 17 to December 4 |

| | "platica" style via Zoom. | |
|---|---|---|
| **Final Project:** End-of- Semester Reflection | Students will compose a final self-reflection on all the work they've completed as well as new knowledge they've gained over the course of the semester. | December 5 to 17 |

## Final Grade Distribution

| **Participation = 55%** | This includes weekly peer discussions, individual reflections, and reading responses/analyses. |
|---|---|
| **Major projects = 45%** | Projects One and Two are worth 20% each, and Project Three is worth 5%. |

## Project Deadlines

For my courses, I will be implementing a tiered deadline policy for all major projects (excluding the End-of-Semester Reflection). For each major unit project, you will see the following information listed and explained on the project guidelines/prompt.

**The "Early Bird" Deadline:** this deadline is for students who want to work ahead.

**The Expected Deadline:** this deadline is when I expect most students to submit their projects.

**The "Last Call" Deadline:** this deadline provides up to one additional week to submit your project and still receive my feedback. You may submit your project after this deadline, but I will not be able to provide feedback on it.

**<u>Here's an example of the deadline policy</u>:**
**"Early Bird" Deadline**: October 9
**Expected Deadline:** October 16
**"Last Call" Deadline:** October 23

So, to summarize, this deadline policy provides you the flexibility to complete and submit your major projects within <u>fourteen (14) days</u> and still receive feedback. Please note that this policy only applies to the major projects, not module activities such as discussions, annotations, and reflections.

## Feedback and Grading Response Time

Students will have a reasonable amount of time to respond and complete all required work depending on the difficulty and specific requirements of each activity/project. In return, I will respond to emailed concerns within 24 hours from Monday through Friday between 9am and 7pm. I will do my best to provide feedback and/or grades on coursework within 2—3 weeks from the submission date. Feedback on projects may be provided in a variety of media including through Zoom communication, email, typed comments, audio clips, and screenshots; all graded coursework can be found in Brightspace.

## Participation

Because this is an online class, attendance will be assessed through participation in the weekly peer discussions and individual reflection activities as well as any additional office hour appointments as needed.

## Safety and Well-Being

I want to be clear, however, regardless of assigning an arbitrary point system to your participation in this course, my primary concern is your safety and well-being during this time of health, economic, and social distress. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if attendance and participation is impacted by factors outside your control. I am here to work with you as you navigate these difficult changes in our education and society right now.

## Technical Skills

To participate and succeed in this class, you will need to be able to perform the following basic technical tasks:

- **Use Canvas** for our specific course
- **Use UNM email** – including attaching files, opening files, downloading attachments
- Copy and paste within applications including Microsoft Office or Google Docs
- Open a hyperlink (click on a hyperlink to get to a website or online resource)
- **Use Microsoft Office** applications as needed
  - o Create, download, update, save and upload MS Word documents
  - o Create, download, update, save and upload MS PowerPoint presentations
  - o Download, annotate, save and upload PDF files
- **Use Zoom**
- Download and install an application or plug in – required for Zoom and the "Scrible" online annotation tool
- Be open to using software programs that may be new to you. (While these aren't required, you may want to use different programs to design your projects.)

## Web Conferencing

Web conferencing will be an optional method of instructions used in this course. For the online sessions, you will need:

- A high-speed internet connection is highly recommended for these sessions. A wireless Internet connection may be used if successfully tested for audio quality prior to web conferencing.
- A microphone on your computer that works.

## Community and Collaboration Statement

This class is built on collaborative learning—studies show that learning from others helps develop new pathways for thinking and strengthen interpersonal communication. Students in this course will actively collaborate with their peers throughout the composition process. The purpose of this is to develop shared critical reflection practices about the composition process so that students build a stronger sense of community among one another. With this, you will be faced with a range of perspectives on many issues. A willingness to hear others' perspectives is an essential part of this learning process. To make the most of our class, please remember that the classroom (whether face-to-face or virtual) is an intellectual and digital space in which cooperation and respect are essential.

**<u>Personal harm in the form of hateful language—racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ethnic, ableist, and/or religious intimidations, and so forth—will not be tolerated</u>.**

Please take some time to review the student conduct policy **here** and the "netiquette" policy **here** for guidelines about how to conduct ourselves in a virtual setting.

## Personal Statement on Student Inclusion

As an educator, I am committed to supporting students no matter their sexual orientation, gender, immigration status, race, religion, nationality, or socioeconomic status. I am Safe Zone and Dream Zone certified. For more information on these trainings, please feel free to ask! In general, I am available to listen and support you in a safe and confidential manner. I can also help you connect with resources on campus to address any issues and concerns you may face that interfere with your success at UNM as it relates to you and your lived experiences. My goal is to help all students be successful and to maintain a safe and equitable campus and learning community.

## Academic Dishonesty Policies and Procedures

Academic dishonesty is often referred to as plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when writers intentionally or unintentionally use another person's language, ideas, or materials and present them as their own without acknowledging the source. **For more information on the kinds and consequences of plagiarism, click here**: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kjCllFkukbp4BMNbH9eKget09F8Sl3hmg71H9Y876kE/edit?usp=sharing

## AI and ChatGPT Statement

AI (Artificial Intelligence) and ChatGPT have been at the heart of a lot of academic discussions surrounding issues of plagiarism. As teachers, we are doing our best to understand its ethical uses and impact now and moving forward in education. Personally, as someone who has a learning disability, I find AI and ChatGPT useful in helping me untangle my thoughts and understandings on complex topics, which are the foundation for this course. That said, I want to make clear my policy (at this current time) on assessing students who use AI and/or ChatGPT for writing activities/projects. We could dedicate a whole semester to discussing the ethical and existential dilemmas, but for now, **<u>here is my AI/ChatGPT policy</u>**:

- Any student who uses AI or ChatGPT to compose a piece of writing and/or audio file for this class is required to explicitly state when they use it, otherwise it will be considered plagiarism. (Please treat AI/ChatGPT as a citation the same way you would in a research report/essay.)

- If I question whether a piece of writing and/or audio file is composed of more than 50% assistance from AI/ChatGPT, I will reach out to you directly via email and request a reasonable explanation for why you used it before I offer feedback/ "a grade".

If anyone has questions or concerns about this policy, don't hesitate to reach out to me!

## Student Services and Additional Support Resources?

Please reach out to me if you would like specific resources–I'm happy to provide them!