

LALS/HIST 290: Mexican American History

University of Illinois at Chicago (Spring 2020)
T&Th | 12:30pm–1:45pm | Taft Hall 207

Instructor: Dr. Adam Goodman
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Office hours: Tuesday, 2:00–4:00pm

Course Description

Today, some 35 million people of Mexican origin live in the United States, including more than 11 million immigrants. Mexicans represent the largest immigrant group in the country and make up 11% of the total population. This course explores Mexican American history since the colonial era, with a focus on the post-1848 period. Students will learn about the diverse experiences of ethnic Mexicans through a close examination of primary sources, secondary texts, fiction, and film. We will cover, among other topics, the creation of the US-Mexico border; Mexican American identity and community formation; the history of Mexican Chicago; intra-ethnic relations; gender and labor organizing; the Bracero Program and undocumented migration; return migration, repatriation, and deportation; Cesar Chavez and the farm worker movement; the Chicana/o Movement; NAFTA and the militarization of the border; art and popular culture; and contemporary migration and immigrant activism.

Course Goals & Learning Objectives

- * Students will be able to describe the essential role Mexican Americans have played in shaping the United States, Mexico, and the two countries' interconnected histories.
- * Students will be able to describe key events and turning points in Mexican American history since 1848. They will also be able to describe thematic continuities (including the influence of domestic and foreign policy on Mexican American identity formation, and the persistent tension between inclusion and exclusion) and change over time.
- * Students will be able to identify and analyze a wide variety of primary sources (including archival sources), the building blocks of historical scholarship.
- * Students will gain reading, writing, and critical thinking skills that will help them understand historical trends in addition to the world around them.

Required Texts

- (1) Herrera, Yuri. *Signs Preceding the End of the World*. Translated by Lisa Dillman. High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, England: And Other Stories, 2015.
- (2) Innis-Jiménez, Michael. *Steel Barrio: The Great Migration to South Chicago, 1915-1940*. New York: New York University Press, 2013.
- (3) Pawel, Miriam. *The Union of Their Dreams: Power, Hope, and Struggle in Cesar Chavez's Farm Worker Movement*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2009.

*All books are available at the UIC Bookstore, Daley Library, or via I-Share. Short readings posted to Blackboard.

Assignments & Grading

Attendance & Participation (20%)

Students are expected to attend all classes, to arrive on time and stay the whole time, to complete all assignments, and to contribute to discussions and activities. Even though this is a lecture course, students are expected to be *active* learners—not only in class, but also when reading, researching, and writing. Students must attend class to earn a passing grade; five or more unexcused absences may result in a failing grade for the course.

Migrant Letters Project & Presentation (30%)

Throughout the semester we will examine Mexican American history through a variety of primary sources, including archival materials, census data, government reports, photographs, and newspaper articles. This project will require students to “get their hands dirty” in UIC’s Special Collections in search of information about the history of Mexican Americans and Mexican migrants in Chicago *before* 1945. Students will select a small number of related sources (subject to approval by the professor) and use them, in addition to class lectures and Michael Innis-Jiménez’s book *Steel Barrio*, to write a series of migrant letters. (We will discuss specifics of the project in class.) There will be an orientation to Special Collections during class on **Thursday, January 23**. *On that day, please go directly to Special Collections on the third floor of the Daley Library. Don’t be late!* Students must identify the source(s) they will use by **Thursday, February 6**, and the letters—*along with a digital copy of the archival source*—will be **submitted via Blackboard by noon on Tuesday, February 25**, when students will also give short presentations in class.

Take-Home Essay (20%)

Students will write a take-home essay grappling with some of the big questions raised in class and in Miriam Pawel’s *The Union of Their Dreams*. We will discuss this assignment in more depth later this semester. Essays should be **submitted via Blackboard no later than Tuesday, April 7 at noon**. The prompt will be distributed one week in advance.

Final Exam (30%)

There will be a cumulative take-home final exam that will require students to synthesize what we’ve covered throughout the semester, from lectures, to class discussions, to course readings. We will discuss the exam in more detail on the last day of class. Students will **submit their exams via Blackboard by Friday, May 8 at 10:00am**.

Policy on Late and Missed Assignments:

Late submissions of assignments will be marked down 10 points (a full letter grade) for each day late. So, for example, an 88 (or B) would drop to a 78 (or C). The **ONLY** exception is if there is a **documented** medical or family emergency. In that case, please contact the professor as soon as possible to make alternate arrangements. If you have a documented medical or family emergency or a waiver from the dean of students, you must show these to the professor.

Grade Scale:

90-100 – A

80-89.99 – B

70-79.99 – C

60-69.99 – D

59.99 and below – F

Grades will ***not*** be “rounded up.” In other words, to receive an A in the course, you must earn an actual, final average of 90.00 or above. A final average of 79.95, for instance, will be a C.

Note on Email, Technology & What to Bring to Class*

When writing a professional email to a professor (or anyone else), begin the message with a greeting such as “Dear Professor X,” and end the message with a formal sign off—something like “Best,” “Sincerely,” or “Regards”—and then your name. I’ll do my best to respond promptly to your messages, but please allow ***24-48 hours*** for me to get back to you. That means you should plan ahead and avoid sending last minute emails!

While technology enables learning in many cases, this will be a ***computer-, cell-phone-, and tablet-free*** course. We all learn better when we are focused, and it is just too tempting to have email, social media, and the internet at our fingertips. And if one person opens Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, it inevitably distracts other people. Out of respect for yourselves, your classmates, and your professor, please turn off any electronic devices before class starts. It’s only for 75 minutes twice a week! If you have special accommodations that require the use of one of these devices, let me know. On the rare occasion that we are going to work on something in class that requires the use of computers I will let you know ahead of time.

Everyone should come to class with a **notebook, pen or pencil, and the daily assigned reading(s)**. If the reading is an article or primary source from Blackboard, please print it out and bring it. Get in the habit of marking up the readings with questions, reactions, and comments; that will facilitate your retention of the material as well as our class discussions.

*I reserve the right to change any of the above policies, depending on the needs of the class.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading/Assignment
1/14	Introduction	
1/16	Foundations: History & Power—What is history? How is it written? Who writes it?	Schwartz & Cook, "Archives, Records, & Power," pp. 1-19 (Blackboard)
1/21	War, Conquest & The Invention of Border	Watch "Foreigners in their Own Land" (Blackboard)
1/23	*Visit Special Collections* → go directly to <i>Special Collections</i> , 3rd floor, Daley Library. Please be on time!	Review notes on "Archives, Records, & Power" article and class discussion from 1/16
1/28	The First Mexican Migrants	Innis-Jiménez, pp. 1-27; visit Special Collections (SC) to identify primary source(s)
1/30	Policing the Border: Creation of Border Patrol	Innis-Jiménez, pp. 28-47; visit SC to identify primary source(s)
2/4	Becoming Mexican American: Chi, CA, TX	Innis-Jiménez, pp. 49-75; visit SC to identify primary source(s)
2/6	Americanization & Intra-Ethnic Relations: Mexican Americans—Mexican Migrants	Innis-Jiménez, pp. 76-101; *Decide what primary sources you'll use; share in class*
2/11	The Great Depression & Repatriation Movement	Innis-Jiménez, pp. 102-131; work on migrant letters
2/13	Labor, organizing, women workers & unions	Innis-Jiménez, pp. 133-157; work on migrant letters
2/18	Mexicans in Chicago, pre-1945 (Discuss Innis-Jiménez)	Finish Innis-Jiménez, pp. 158-186; work on migrant letters, <i>due in 1 week</i>
2/20	WWII & Zoot Suit Riots	Work on migrant letters project, <i>due next class</i>
2/25	*Migrant Letters Project Presentations*	*Migrant letters project due at noon; submit via Blackboard*
2/27	Braceros & "Wetbacks"	Pawel, pp. ix-40
3/5	Migration & the Bracero Program's Impact on Mexico	Pawel, pp. 41-79
3/7	Deportation Mexicans, Creating "Illegal" Immigrants	Pawel, pp. 80-120
3/12	Chicana/o Movement, pt1 (Nationwide)	Pawel, pp. 121-156
3/14	Chicana/o Movement, pt2 (Chicago)	Pawel, pp. 157-196
3/17	Chicana/o Movement, pt3 (Primary sources)	Pawel, pp. 197-237; *bring copy of primary source to class; be prepared to share*
3/19	Chicana/o Movement, pt4 (Fighting racism and racist institutions)	Pawel, pp. 238-275
3/24	SPRING BREAK	Continue reading Pawel, pp. 276-314
3/26	SPRING BREAK	Finish Pawel, pp. 315-334

3/31	Chicana/o Movement, pt5 (UFW & Farmworkers; Discuss Pawel)	Answer questions based on Pawel (distributed by Professor Goodman); be prepared to discuss
4/2	Chicana/o Movement, pt6 (Legacy)	Outline/write your take-home essay
4/7	Border Walls & Anti-Immigrant Backlash, 1990s-Present	*Submit take-home essay via Blackboard by noon*
4/9	"The Other Side of Immigration": NAFTA & Migration's Impact on Mexico	Bacon article (Blackboard)
4/14	*Mural tour & discussion at the LCC* → go directly to LCC; please be on time!	Article on Héctor Duarte (Blackboard)
4/16	*No class* → start reading Herrera	Herrera, pp. 1-40
4/21	Mexican American Popular Culture	Herrera, pp. 41-82
4/23	Between Two Worlds (Or one world united?); Discuss Herrera	Finish Herrera, pp. 83-114
4/28	Undocumented immigrants, Dreamers & Los Otros Dreamers	Truax, pp. 61-79, 159-183 (Blackboard)
4/30	Wrapping Up & Looking Ahead	Review notes from semester; identify key themes

Additional UIC Policies

Academic Integrity: As an academic community, UIC is committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. All members of the campus community—students, staff, faculty, and administrators—share the responsibility of ensuring that these standards are upheld so that such an environment exists. All Ideas expressed in written assignments must be your own or acknowledged through a citation. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Instances of academic misconduct by students will be handled pursuant to the Student Disciplinary Policy found at <https://dos.uic.edu/community-standards/academic-integrity/>.

Religious Holidays: Students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the faculty member by the tenth day of the semester of the date when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the faculty member at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The faculty member shall make every reasonable effort to honor the request, not penalize the student for missing the class, and if an examination or project is due during the absence, give the student an exam or assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. If the student feels aggrieved, he/she may request remedy through the campus grievance procedure. <http://oae.uic.edu/docs/ReligiousHolidaysFY20152017.pdf>.

Disability Accommodation: The University of Illinois at Chicago is committed to maintaining a barrier-free environment so that students with disabilities can fully access programs, courses, services, and activities on campus. Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access to and/or participation in this course are welcome, but must be registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). You may contact DRC at 312-413-2183 (v) or 773-649-4535

(VP/Relay) and consult the following: <http://drc.uic.edu/guide-to-accommodations>. Please let the instructor know if you require any such accommodation.

Campus Resources

If you find yourself having difficulty with the course material or any other difficulties in your student life, don't hesitate to ask for help! Come to me, or if it is about an issue beyond this class, please contact your college advisors, or get help from any number of other support services on campus. You can get a referral to the right place, or help on the spot, from concerned advisors in the Undergraduate Success Center (USC) at usc@uic.edu.

The Writing Center, located in Grant Hall 105, offers one-on-one consultation with student writers who need help developing ideas, or need advice, guidance or additional instruction on any aspects of writing in any class. Tutors are prepared to spend fifty minutes per appointment, and there is no limit to the number of tutoring sessions you can have each semester. Make an appointment and be on time! Bring the paper on which you're working, as well as any related drafts or notes, and information about the assignment. For an appointment, call the Writing Center at (312) 413-2206, or stop by room 105 of Grant Hall. Visit the Writing Center website at www.uic.edu/depts/engl/writing for more information.

The UIC Library is located both on east and west campus, provides access to resources, study rooms, and research support both online via chat and in person. At Daley Library on the east side of campus, stop by the reference desk in the IDEA Commons, or make an appointment for research help on either side of campus. Learn more about library policies at <http://library.uic.edu/>. To find research materials in specific subject areas view the Research Guides at <http://researchguides.uic.edu/>.

Public Computer Labs are available throughout campus where you may write and/or print out your work. For a list of labs and the hours they're open, go to www.accc.uic.edu/pclabs. NOTE: Do not wait until the last minute to print out papers. Sometimes labs have long lines of students waiting for access.

The Academic Center for Excellence can help if you feel you need more individualized instruction in reading and/or writing, study skills, time management, etc. Phone: (312) 413-0031.

Counseling Services are available for all UIC students. You may seek free and confidential services from the Counseling Center www.counseling.uic.edu. The Counseling Center is located in the Student Services Building; you may contact them at (312) 996-3490. In addition to offering counseling services, the Counseling Center also operates the InTouch Crisis Hotline from 6:00 p.m.-10:30 p.m. They offer support and referrals to callers, as well as telephone crisis interventions; please call (312) 996-5535.

Campus Advocacy Network: Under the Title IX law you have the right to an education that is free from any form of gender-based violence and discrimination. Crimes of sexual assault, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and stalking are against the law and can be prevented. For more information or for confidential victim-services and advocacy contact UIC's Campus Advocacy Network at 312-413-1025 or visit <http://can.uic.edu/>. To make a report to UIC's Title IX office, contact Rebecca Gordon, EdD at TitleIX@uic.edu or (312) 996-5657.