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F'04

SS 173G/CLS 114 *Film and the Chicano Latino Community*

Fall Quarter 2004  
Monday 4:00-6:30 p.m. SSL 248

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Course Description

The course is not intended to be a study of film *per se*, rather to use film as a resource for the study of ethnic Mexican community. The course centers on the use of film (and principally, but not exclusively documentary film) for research projects. Students will glean information and insight from films, and by critically examining and analyzing the content and perspectives of the films (and filmmakers), combined with selected readings, will be better informed regarding current issues facing the Chicano community.

Although serious analysis of the Chicano community by filmmakers has only a thirty-year history, there is an abundance of material that can be incorporated into a course. Given that film provides the medium for much of current Chicano social analysis it is indeed fitting that it be utilized as a tool for university instruction.

Note that the themes center on labor and political activism related to labor.

Course Requirements

---Weekly attendance and participation in discussions

--- RESEARCH paper five pages in length on a theme based on the films, slides, readings and discussions due on the fifth week of class.

---Research paper of from ten to fifteen pages based on the films, slides, readings and discussions due on the date of the final exam (PLEASE NOTE THE WORD *RESEARCH*)

NOTE: The research papers should be based on, but not limited to, the course films, assigned readings, outside readings and class discussions. Students are encouraged to select a theme or themes emerging in the films, gather together readings, etc, and begin preparing a project as soon as possible.

Grades will be based on the mid-term research paper (40%) and final research paper (60%)

### **Course Outline, Weekly Film Presentations and Readings**

September 27            Slide Presentation on U. S. Mexico Relations and Chicano History

The instructor will present slides taken from photographs illustrating the economic domination of the U. S. within Mexico at the turn of the century. This domination continued throughout the twentieth century and is evident today by way of the North American Free Trade Agreement. The argument contends that Chicano history evolves in relation to this imperial economic relationship.

Readings: Introduction through Chapter Two from G. Gonzalez and R. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History*

“The Economics, Politics and Culture of United States Imperialism,” a series of quotations assembled by G. Gonzalez

October 4            Film: Los Mineros

Here is the story of Mexican American miners and their struggle to change the course of Arizona mining history. In a saga that spans nearly half a century, this program recounts the rise and fall of copper company towns like Clifton-Morenci. Life within the Mexican American community is seen through the eyes of the miners and their families.

Reading: Gilbert G. Gonzalez, “The Economic Conquest and Its Social Relations,”

October 11 Film: Salt of the Earth

A semi-documentary on a yearlong strike by Mexican American and Anglo zinc miners in New Mexico that occurred in the early 1950s. Three issues evolve: men against the mine bosses, wives against miners, and Mexican workers against Anglo workers. Pay particular attention to the political implications of the film.

Reading: Chapter Three from G. Gonzalez and R. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History*.

October 18            Slides on the Bracero Program and the film Why Braceros?

In 1942 the governments of Mexico and the United States signed an agreement allowing for the recruitment of temporary labor from Mexico, exclusively male, to work in agriculture and railroads of the US. The stated objective of the agreement, known as the Bracero Program, was to overcome a wartime labor shortage. By the summer of 1942 the first contingent of braceros, as the workers were known, arrived in Stockton, California to

work in various crops. During the course of the war over 200,000 braceros were employed across the United States. However, the war's end did not signal the end of the Program, agriculturalists lobbied successfully for annual extensions. In 1951 a new formal agreement was negotiated and Public Law 78 was signed in 1952, which codified a temporary labor importation program exclusively for agriculture and continued with minor modifications until 1964. Over the 22-year course of the Bracero Agreements an estimated 450,000 men were imported into the United States to labor for periods from six weeks to up to six months, many served multiple contracts. Over the course of the Agreements, Mexico served as a labor recruiter, the United States served as a labor contractor and large-scale agricultural interests served as employers.

Readings:

Gilbert Gonzalez, "Imperialism and Migration: Mexican, Algerian and Indian Labor Migrations in Comparative Perspective." (Article in progress).

-----, "The Bracero Program: Economic Imperialism and the Importation of Indentured Labor" (under review at *Pacific Historical Review*)

October 25 Film: *Chicano! Cesar Chavez and the Farmworker's Struggle*

A political biography of one of labor's extraordinary leaders, Cesar Chavez. Chavez founded the United Farmworkers Union in the early 1960s and led the union until his death at age 64.

Readings: Chapter Five from G. Gonzalez and R. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History*.

November 1 Film: *Watsonville on Strike*

Set in the frozen food capital of the world, *Watsonville on Strike* is an intimate view of the 18-month cannery workers' strike that virtually paralyzed this rural California town. Vivid scenes of workers debating strategy, demonstrating and confronting police are combined with poignant interviews with the strikers, mostly women.

Reading: Chapter Four from G. Gonzalez and R. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History*.

November 8 Film: Four Short films on California agricultural strikes.

The four films produced by various active labor unions were intended for use as organizing tools; today they provide a window on California agricultural strikes of the 30s, 40s and 80s. Leftists and communists led those of the thirties; liberals were in charge of strikes that followed.

Readings: "Labor's Ambivalent Friend: Mexican Consuls and California Agricultural Strikes of 1933 and 1934," in Fernando Alanis, Ed., *Mexico's Consulates and the Mexican Immigrant Community*.

November 15 Film: In the Land of Plenty

Documentary follows Mexican migrant agricultural laborers in the strawberry fields of Watsonville, California. With lively music and an appreciation of border culture, this video provides a human portrait of workers at the mercy of a greedy system. Note(s) In English and Spanish with English subtitles.

Reading: "Bracerismo in Disguise: The Bush Guest Worker Proposal," G. Gonzalez, (Work in progress).

November 22 Film: The Global Assembly Line

A documentary filmed in electronics and garment factories, homes, and communities in Mexico's northern border. The film follows with detail and intimacy the lives of working women and men in the 'free trade zones' of developing countries.

Reading: Victor Quintana, "Why the Mexican Rural Sector Can't Take it Anymore," from G. Gonzalez, et al, Eds., *Labor Versus Empire: Gender, Race and Migration*.

November 29 Film: Los Trabajadores/The Workers

A documentary on Mexican laborers imported to labor temporarily via a little known law known as H2. The living conditions, work, employer attitudes and perspective on their experience in the US are the subjects of this film. Note that the workers are legally temporary and bound to an employer, which is a condition that resembles in many respects the bracero workers of the earlier era.

Reading: Chapter Six and Conclusion from G. Gonzalez and R. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History*.

### **Required Readings:**

Book:

Gilbert G. Gonzalez and Raul Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History: Empire, Nations, and Migration* (Routledge, 2003)

Articles/Chapter:

Gilbert G. Gonzalez, "The Economic Conquest and Its Social Relations," from G. G. Gonzalez, *Culture of Empire: American Writers, Mexico and Mexican Immigrants, 1880-1930*, University of Texas Press, 2004.

Gilbert G. Gonzalez, "Labor's Ambivalent Friend: Mexican Consuls and the California Agricultural Strikes of 1933-1936," in Fernando Alanis, *Mexico's Consulates and the Mexican Immigrant Community*, (Mexico, 2003)

-----"Imperialism and Migration: Mexican, Algerian and Indian Labor Migrations in Comparative Perspective," (work in progress).

-----, "The Bracero Program: Economic Imperialism and the Importation of Indentured Labor" (under review at *Pacific Historical Review*)

"The Economics, Politics and Culture of United States Imperialism," Quotations assembled by Gilbert G. Gonzalez

Victor Quintana, "Why the Rural Sector Can't Take it Anymore," from Gilbert G. Gonzalez, et al, Eds., *Labor Versus Empire: Gender, Race and Migration*, Routledge, 2004.

### **Suggested Readings for SS 173G, Film and the Chicano Latino Community**

#### ARTICLES/CHAPTERS

Tomas Almaguer, "Racial Domination and Class Conflict in Capitalist Agriculture: The Oxnard Sugar Beet Workers' Strike of 1903", *Labor History* (1984).

\_\_\_\_\_, "Ideological Distortions in Recent Chicano Historiography: The Internal Colony Model and Chicano Historical Interpretation," *Aztlan* vol. 18 (1989)

Harry Bernstein, "Growers Addicted to Foreign Workers", *Los Angeles Times*, October 2, 1985.

Edna Bonacich, "Latino Immigrant Workers in the Los Angeles Apparel Industry", *New Political Science*, vol. 20, no. 4, 1998.

Noam Chomsky, "'The Masters of Mankind'", *The Nation*, March 3, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Company Unions, The Mexican Consulate, and the Imperial Valley Agricultural Strikes, 1928-1934", *Western Historical Quarterly* vol. 27 (Spring 1996).

Harley Shaiken, "NAFTA Needs More Than Fine Tuning", *Los Angeles Times*, July 7, 1997.

Robert Pear, "Illegal Aliens Aid Economy, Report Says", *Orange County Register*, January 23, 1986

Zaragosa Vargas, "Rank and File: Historical Perspective on Latino/a Workers in the U. S." in Antonia Darder and Rodolfo D. Torres, *The Latino Studies Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998).

### BOOKS

Henry P. Anderson, *The Bracero Program in California* (New York: The Arno Press, 1976, originally published in 1961)

Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979)

"Citriculture and Southern California," special issue of *California History*, vol. LXXXIV, no. 1 (Spring 1995)

Raul Fernandez, *The United States--Mexico Border* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977)

Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

Ernesto Galarza, *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story* (Santa Barbara, CA: McNally and Loftin, 1964)

Mario Garcia, *Desert Immigrants: The Mexicans of El Paso, 1880-1920* (New Haven: University of Yale Press)

Gilbert G. Gonzalez, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation* (Philadelphia: Balch Institute, 1990)

\_\_\_\_\_, *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1994)

\_\_\_\_\_, *Mexican Consuls and Labor Organizing: Imperial Politics in the American Southwest, 1920-1940* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999)

Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish Speaking People of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott and Company, 1949)

David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987)

Mark Reisler, *By the Sweat of Their Brow: Mexican Immigrant Labor in the United States, 1900-1940* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1976)

Vicki Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

\_\_\_\_\_, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987)

Dennis Nodin Valdez, *Al Norte: Agricultural Workers in the Great Lakes Region, 1917-1970* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991)

Zaragoza Vargas, *Proletarians of the North: A History of Industrial Workers in Detroit and the Mid-West, 1917-1933* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993)

Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farmworkers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

Emilio Zamora, *The World of Mexican Workers in Texas* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University, 1993)

Patricia Zavella, *Women's Work and Chicano Families: Cannery Workers in the Santa Clara Valley* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987)