Chicana and Chicano Culture and Thought, Fall 2014
San Diego State University
Professor Adelaida R. Del Castillo, PhD, delcast1@mail.sdsu.edu
Office Hours: TTH: 12:30-1:30pm & by Appointment

Course Description
This course examines Chicana/o cultural and philosophical constructs of identity and world-making by interrogating notions of culture, society, and subjectivity with particular attention to ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, agency, power, and popular culture. The course begins with a look at the life and cultural hybridity of Martin Cortes, son of Hernan Cortes and his native interpreter, Malinche. Due to his lineage, Martin’s life underwent circumstances, which we would probably consider unusual for a mestizo. Next, notions of mestizaje and hybridity on the crafting of identity and sexuality are traced contemporarily through the works of John Rechy and Gloria Anzaldúa. The course then turns to artistic and spiritual expressions of Chicana/o personhood. Finally, through the lens of alterity, Chicana/o cultural and spiritual expressions of being in the world allow examination of discursive and material artifacts that speak to socio-political expressions of difference in Chicana/o popular culture.

General Education (GE) and Course Objectives
CCS 376 comes under the GE category Explorations of Human Experience for the Humanities and Fine Arts and meets all of its four GE goals, which are: Goal 1) Analyze written, visual, or performed texts in the humanities and fine arts with sensitivity to their diverse cultural contexts and historical moments. The course meets this goal by having students read the history, literature, philosophy, and cultural criticism of people of color authored for the most part by people of color and through the analysis of Chicana visual art productions. This goal is assessed through exams, quizzes, reading responses, art reviews, and class discussion. Goal 2) Develop a familiarity with various aesthetic and other value systems and the ways they are communicated across time and cultures. This goal is met by having students read about Chicana/o culture and agency; seeing samples of artifacts resulting from Chicana/o notions of identity, spirituality, and sexuality; and viewing media on Chicana/o art. It is assessed through exams, reading responses, art reviews, and class discussion. Goal 3) Argue from multiple perspectives about issues in the humanities that have personal and global relevance. This goal is met through examination of Chicana feminism, Chicana lesbian feminism, and Chicano queer sexuality and consciousness. It is assessed through exams, reading responses, and question-driven discussions. Goal 4) Demonstrate the ability to approach complex problems and ask complex questions drawing upon knowledge of the humanities. The goal is met by introducing students to the theories and application of Chicana/o cultural studies conceptual thinking regarding notions of difference, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, power, agency, and popular culture. It is assessed through exams, reading responses, art reviews, and question-driven discussions.
**Course Requirements**

You are expected to attend class on time, stay current with the assigned readings, and demonstrate familiarity with course material through class participation and passing grades on assignments, exams, and quizzes. Critical thinking and writing skills are basic course requirements and are encouraged through reading assignments, critical viewing of media, class discussions, and exams. More than three unexcused absences or leaving class early will adversely affect your final grade by dropping it half a letter grade. If you are ill a doctor’s note will be required.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon course completion, students should be able to:
1) Be aware of one’s thinking on matters such as race, ethnicity, identity, gender, and sexuality;
2) Deliberately practice critical thinking about controversial issues through focused, question-driven discussions;
3) Evaluate reasoning, evidence, arguments, and creative thinking pertinent to work on socio-cultural, political, and sexual subaltern subjectivity;
4) Write critically about cultural and ideological value systems and artistic artifacts that are linked to identity and different ways of experiencing the world, and;
5) Utilize Chicana/o cultural studies concepts to engage in the process of interrogating popular culture, difference, ethnicity, racialization, mestizaje and hybridity, power, and agency.

**Course Policies**

**Plagiarism = Zero and/or Course Failure:** Academic misconduct through falsification of a student’s written work is unacceptable. Plagiarism can be described as the taking of another’s (or the Internet’s) ideas or writings and publicly presenting these as your own through unethical or unauthorized behavior. If you quote material word for word (verbatim) you should follow appropriate MLA formatting such as using quotation marks at the start and end of such material AND cite the appropriate source(s). Plagiarism may result in a grade reduction and/or course failure. For more information see the SDSU General Catalog or go to web links such as [http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9](http://www.wpacouncil.org/node/9) This course makes use of Turnitin and their database to which course writing assignments will go for detection of plagiarism; no student identifying information is required. To learn more about plagiarism go to [http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28](http://library.sdsu.edu/guides/tutorial.php?id=28)

**Grade Confidentiality:** Student grades as well as the evaluation of and feedback on all student work is confidential.

**Accommodations for Disabilities:** In compliance with university policies and equal access laws, I ask that students with disabilities speak with me to arrange appropriate academic accommodations. Student Disability Services advises: “If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at (619) 594-6473. To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations... contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible...accommodations are not retroactive, and [are provided once] an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services [is received]...”
Cell Phones: Please turn them off and store them away before class begins!

Laptops: When possible laptop users should sit at on the last classroom row.

Blackboard: Check Blackboard and your email on a regular basis for your grades, course documents, and announcements.

**EXAMS AND WEEKLY QUIZZES**

**Weekly Quizzes:** Quizzes are meant to keep you abreast of the historical content of the book *The New World of Martin Cortez* and may consist of T/F questions, multiple choice, fill-in responses, or short essay questions. Quizzes will be given at the beginning of class.

**Discussion Sessions:** Hopefully these will allow the confident expression of what you think the readings are attempting to convey through their specific structure, form and codes used to negotiate meaning. Cultural studies frameworks will serve to guide us.

**Reading Responses:** Your reading responses should be 1-2 double-spaced pages in length. They allow me to understand your familiarity and comprehension of the reading material. As you prepare your work you may want to take into consideration the following questions:

1. What do you think is the focus and/or argument of the assigned reading?
2. What do you think is significant about the reading(s) given your demonstrated comprehension of them?
3. What would you say is the relation of this/these reading(s) to other readings in the course and/or other readings you are already familiar with?
4. What in the readings seems new or unusual to you? Explain.
5. Can you suggest a different *conceptual* perspective or resolution to any problems or questions raised in the reading(s)?

**Exam #1: Group Critical Task (200 pts):** On the day of the exam, I will go from group to group to discuss with each of you the question below, for which you will have prepared notes to help your response to the question. I will approach you as a panel of 5 experts on the topic and you will each have 2 minutes to answer the question. This task encourages critical and imaginative thinking through informed conversation. By the end of my visit, which should take 15 minutes, you should know your individual exam scores. If you don’t agree with your score and if your score is below a B- grade, you are welcome to make your case once I have met with all the groups.

The historical figure Martin Cortes is often referred to the first symbolic mestizo of the Americas because of his ancestry, but his lineage is more than a metaphor and had specific consequences for the individual. 1) Discuss one of the most important events in the *adult life* of this individual, but do not repeat the same events as part of your panel; 2) What would you have done differently regarding the event you cited if you had been him? And, lastly, 3) What in Martin Cortes’s life impressed you that you were unfamiliar with until you read *The New World of Martin Cortes?* This answer should be different from your response to point 1).
Midterm Essay Exam

Option A
In this essay discuss John Rechy’s deployment of narrativity in *City of Night* to reveal 1) ethnicity and restlessness experienced by the book’s anonymous protagonist by contrasting his 2) complex childhood to 3) the “youngman’s” heterosexual posturing to score male clients in urban sites of sexual adventure coded as “cities of night.” Also discuss Rechy’s use of humor, satire, and pathos to evoke iconic queer figures such as 4) Miss Destiny and 5) Skipper and their failed dreams. Lastly, 6) discuss what the author means to suggest by having the protagonist return home by the end of the book to view the world from a “place by the window.”

Option B
In *Borderlands/La Frontera* Gloria Anzaldúa discusses the complexity of several themes having to do with 1) mestizaje (racial and cultural mixture); 2) cultural identity; 3) sexual orientation; 4) homeland and family; 5) borderlands (geo-political and metaphorical); and 6) intuition and spirituality. Discuss what she conveys to the reader through her discussion of each of these themes.

Aesthetic Reviews: Here the notion of “aesthetic” reflects some of the themes discussed by Laura Pérez in your book *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities*. It also reflects attempts to link the material with the spiritual through aesthetic objects such as artwork and literature or linking material form with conceptual ideas. For a sample of an aesthetic review for this course see Del Castillo’s book review of the “50th Anniversary Edition of John Rechy’s *City of Night*” on Blackboard under Documents.

Final Aesthetic Review

Option A
In your book *Chicana Art: The Politics of Spiritual and Aesthetic Altarities* go to the section titled “Defamiliarizing the Racialized Body: Yreina D. Cervantez’s *Big Baby Balam*” (pp. 81-85) and take a close look at figure 17 (p. 83) and 1) describe what you see; then 2) discuss Laura Pérez’s explanation of the tattooing on Balam’s face, and 3) the purpose of its jaguar symbolism. Now go back to the three *Nepantla* works by the same artist discussed in Chapter 1 (pp. 37, 41, & 44-45) before 4) defining “nepantlism” and 5) explaining whether or not *Big Baby Balam* is itself a manifestation of nepantlism. Explain your answer.

Option B
The *Codex Espangliensis*, a Mexicano/Chicano “comix/codex” written in English, Spanish, Spanglish, and Mexican Spanish dialectical variants depicting ancient Aztec pictography, Mexican iconography, American super heroes and commercial icons, foreign conquest and occupation, contemporary popular culture, and transnationalism. The codex is the creation of performance artist Guillermo Gomez-Peña, illustrator Enrique Chagoya, and book designer and publisher Felicia Rice. Decode the *Codex* by explaining some of the 1) historical; 2) cultural; 3) political; and 4) economic criticisms implied in this text. Also, 5) discuss how the United States and that which is American is represented; and finally 6) compare this with how Mexico and things Mexican are symbolized. The *Codex Espangliensis* is on Reserve at Love Library. Please let me know in advance if you plan on answering Option B for your final paper.
Directions for Writing Essay Exams: (points will be deducted if directions are not followed):

On the first page of your essay on the upper left-hand corner type in single space your name, course and section # (e.g. Memo Ochoa, CCS 376), professor’s name, semester, and year (e.g., Del Castillo, Fall 2014). Title your essay “Midterm Essay Exam” or “Final Aesthetic Review.” The essay questions have been structured to encourage critical thought and examine how conversant you are with the reading material. Give yourself time to write a draft and reflect about what you have written, and then revise accordingly. In addition, please do the following:

-Use an Arial 11- or 12-point font and left-right, top-bottom 1-inch margins.
-Use Standard English, no slang please!
-Use no more than 3 quotes, but do not block them off from the rest of the paragraph.
-Avoid the casual use of absolute words such as all, always, completely, each, every, everybody, everyone, everything, anything, never, no one, nobody, none, nothing, only, totally, etc. as well as the use of the phrase “in fact.” For help on this click on http://www.slideshare.net/donnakv/avoiding-absolute-words-7055706
-This is not a book report; so don’t retell incidents unless they are key to your argument.
-Proofread your essay. Poor grammar and poor writing skills will hurt your grade. If you need help go to the SDSU Writing Center and schedule an appointment by going to their website at http://writingcenter.sdsu.edu/appointment.html
-Your essay should not be under 4 pages or exceed 5 pages (I will stop reading at the end of page 5). Since the essay is solely based on the assigned readings, please do not include a Works Cited, References, or Bibliography page.
-Number ALL pages and submit through Blackboard’s Turnitin.

Please note: Plagiarism may result in a grade of “F” in the course and/or on the exam.

Grading Summary | Points | Assignment Due Dates & Exam Dates
--- | --- | ---
6 Quizzes/Reviews | 150 |  
4 Read Responses | 100 |  
4 Disc Sessions | 100 |  
Exam: Grp Crit Task | 200 | Sept 24
Midterm | 200 | Nov 5
Aesthetic Rev Final | 250 | Dec 17
1000 pts.

Grade | Score | Grade Point Value
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A | 990 - 1000 | 4.000
A- | 910 - 989 | 4.000
A- | 900 - 909 | 3.667
B+ | 890 - 899 | 3.333
B | 810 - 889 | 3.000
B- | 800 - 809 | 2.667
C+ | 790 - 799 | 2.333
C | 710 - 789 | 2.000
C- | 700 - 709 | 1.667
D+ | 690 - 699 | 1.333
D | 610 - 679 | 1.000
D- | 600 - 609 | 0.667
F | 0-599 | 0.000
Course Plan and Required Readings (required)


**Please Note:** Read assignments (and their footnotes or endnotes) by the dates below. The syllabus may be subject to change.

**Week 1**  
Aug 27  
Lecture: Introduction and Overview  
Readings: None

**Week 2**  
Sept 3  
Lecture: Becoming Other in an Old World  
Readings: Lanyon, *Martin Cortes*, Thou Art an Ocelot, p. 3-14  
Quiz #1 (25 pts)

**Week 3**  
Sept 10  
Lecture: Hybrid Subjectivity in a New World  
Readings: Lanyon, *Martin Cortes*, Mexico, p. 121-47  
Quiz #2 (25 pts)  
Discussion Session #1 (25 pts)

**Week 4**  
Sept 17  
Lecture: Nomadic Moorings  
Readings: Lanyon, *Martin Cortes*, Thy Home is Not Here, p. 204-21  
Lanyon, *Martin Cortes*, Tepozlán, p. 239-60  
Quiz #3 (25 pts)

**Week 5**  
Sept 24  
Lecture: Sexuality’s Textual Tactics  
Readings: PART ONE: EL PASO to NEW YORK  
Rechy, “City of Night,” pp. 9-19  
Rechy, “City of Night,” pp. 30-35  
Rechy, “City of Night,” pp. 53-57  
Rechy, “The Professor,” pp. 58-80  
Rechy, “City of Night,” pp. 81-84  
Discussion Session #2 (25 pts)  
Exam #1: Group Critical Task (200 pts)
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<tr>
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<td>Rechy, “Miss Destiny,” pp. 94-119</td>
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<td>Rechy, “Skipper,” pp. 149-68</td>
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<td>Rechy, “City of Night,” pp. 236-44</td>
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<td>Lecture:</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Anzaldúa, Preface</td>
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<td>Anzaldúa, Chapter 2: “Movimientos de rebeldía…”</td>
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<td>Reading Response #1</td>
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<td>Lecture:</td>
<td>Different Sensibilities and Altered States</td>
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<td>Essay Midterm Due</td>
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<td>Lecture:</td>
<td>Spirit Work, Social Justice, and Chicana Art</td>
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**Week 13**

**Nov 19**

Lecture: Artifacts of Hybrid Spiritualities, Part 1  
Readings: Pérez, Chapter 3: “Altar, Alter,” pp. 91-116,  
Aesthetic Review #1 (25 pts)

Nov 26 No Classes – Campus Open  
Nov 27-28 Thanksgiving Recess – Campus Closed

**Week 14**

**Dec 3**

Lecture: Artifacts of Hybrid Spiritualities, Part 2  
Readings: Pérez, Chapter 3: “Altar, Alter,” pp. 116-45,  
Aesthetic Review #2 (25 pts)

**Week 15**

**Dec 10**

Lecture: Aesthetic Creations of Personhood  
Readings: Pérez, Chapter 6: “Face, Heart,” pp. 257-96  
Aesthetic Review #3 (25 pts)

**Finals Week**

Aesthetic Review Final - December 17 (250 pts)  
Wednesday, 4-6pm  
SSW 2500

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1 The General Catalogue description for CCS 376 is the following: “Prerequisite: Completion of the General Education requirement in Foundations of Learning II C., Humanities required for nonmajors. Intellectual history of Chicanas and Chicanos as a synthesis of different cultural traditions and perspectives. Philosophical concepts from pre-Cortesian times to the present” (174).