

**Humanities Seminar**  
**Introduction to Mexican American Popular Culture**

**Tuesdays 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon**

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We are immersed in popular culture during most of our waking hours. It is on the radio, television, our computers, iPads, and phones when we access the Internet. We see it on the streets and highways in the form of commercial outlets, advertisements, and billboards. It is in newspapers, movie theaters, and shopping malls. It is at music concerts and sports events, themselves forms of popular culture. It is found throughout our homes in popular magazines, photos, and toys. The popular culture that surrounds us can tell us a great deal about ourselves. This is especially true when we examine popular culture analytically--that is, when we pause to study it in a socio-historical context.

This course will examine some but not all of the very rich and varied popular cultural practices, forms, and traditions of Mexican Americans, by far the largest component of the U.S.' burgeoning Latino/a population. Areas that will be covered are: music; cinema; newspapers, radio, and television; popular literature; art including photography; and celebrations, rituals, and other popular traditions. Some course sessions will cover different forms and practices of Mexican American popular culture in Tucson and Arizona. Because of our limited time together, other forms and practices of Mexican American popular culture such as food and sports will not be covered.

Dr. Charles Tatum is Emeritus Professor of Spanish at the University of Arizona where he taught for almost thirty years and served as Head of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese and Dean of the College of Humanities. His research and teaching interests for his entire career have been Mexican American literature and culture and Latin American and Mexican popular culture and narrative fiction. He has published extensively in the area of Mexican American and Mexican popular culture and literature. Most recently, he served as Editor of a three-volume *Encyclopedia of Latino Culture* (2014). Tatum is co-founder and co-senior editor of the journal *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*.

**Required reading:**

Charles Tatum. *Chicano Popular Culture: Que hable el pueblo. (Second Edition)*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017. Also available as an etext.

Session 1 (September 19)

Reading: Introduction and Chapter 1. *Chicano Popular Culture*

Introduction and overview of the course

Labels and terms

Historical background

Definitions and theoretical approaches to popular culture

Session 2 (September 26)

Reading: Chapter 2. Music: *Chicano Popular Culture*

Popular Hispanic Folk Music of the Southwest

Música Tejana

Chicano Music on the West Coast

Transregional Chicano Music

Popular Music in Tucson (Mariachi, Corridos, Lalo Guerrero, Linda Ronstadt)

Session 3 (October 3)

Reading: Chapter 3. Cinema: *Chicano Popular Culture*

Race and Ethnicity in U.S. Cinema

Hollywood's Portrayal of Mexicans and Mexican Americans

Chicano Cinema

Chicano Feature-Length Film

Hollywood Hispanic Films

The Current state of Chicanos in U.S. Cinema

Session 4 (October 10)

Reading: Chapter 4. Newspapers, Radio, and Television: *Chicano Popular Culture*

Newspapers

Radio Television

Popular Media in Tucson

Session 5 (October 17)

Reading: Chapter 5. Popular Literature: *Chicano Popular Culture*

The Chicano Movement and the Forming of an Artistic Consciousness

The Ascendancy of Popular Writing by Chicana Authors

Current Chicano Popular Literature

Reading: Chapter 7. Celebrations and Other Popular Traditions: *Chicano Popular Culture*

Celebrations

The Popular Oral Tradition: *Corridos* in Tucson

Session 6 (October 24)

Reading: Chapter 6. Art: *Chicano Popular Culture*

Popular Art

Muralism

Muralism in Tucson