

Media Assignments

Instructions

The four media assignments in this course are your opportunity to do some exploration and research outside of class, either at the library, on-line or even in your own family archives/memory. Each media assignment is worth 2.5% (in total, 10% of your overall grade). Here are the instructions:

First, find an artifact that reflects Mexican American history or cultural life. This “artifact” can take any number of forms, including, but not limited to:

- A page from an interesting website
- An image from the internet or, even better, your own family
- Song lyrics
- A poem
- An object of some sort (i.e., a Texas Ranger badge)
- A document (i.e., immigration forms)

Next, you will write a 2 – 3 page (double-spaced) reflection that does the following three things:

- Briefly describes what exactly you found. Remember to attach a print-out (just the first page of a website) or include a picture of your artifact.
- Provides a short narrative of your search. Explain how and where you found it, and whether the search easy or difficult, and why. Be sure to cite the source (even if that means saying, “It is from my family photo album”) and include the web address, when applicable. *Web sources submitted without a source and address will not receive full credit.*
- Explains in detail what you find interesting about it and how it relates to a specific topic or historical figure or event that you learned about in lecture. Don’t try to get away with, “It relates because this is a Mexican American history class”—you must think more deeply than that to get credit!

You can view two samples at <http://www.sjsu.edu/people/magdalena.barrera/courses/mas10b/>, if you would like to see how past students approached the assignment. Keep in mind, though, that those examples are from an earlier version of this assignment that required a 1 – 2 page write-up; the ones you submit should be slightly longer.

Due dates:

1. 1900 – 1930 Wednesday, 2/11
2. 1930 – 1960 Monday 3/16
3. 1960 – 1980 Wednesday, 4/8
4. 1980 – Today Monday, 5/4

Again, in each media assignment, you should do the following:

- ✓ Briefly describe the artifact and provide a brief narrative of how you came across it
- ✓ Explain at length what’s interesting about it and relate it to class
- ✓ Be mindful of grammar and writing style
- ✓ Remember to attach the item
- ✓ Cite the source!

Further Suggestions

Here are five strategies to help you tackle these assignments

1. **Before you begin, look over the timeline(s) you can download online.** Reading over it will remind you of people and events that are especially notable, and help you come up with specific search terms. And the more specific your search terms, the better the results will be.
2. **Be mindful of terminology.** As you may know, we are studying people who did not always call themselves “Mexican Americans” or “Chicana/os.” Sometimes they identified nationally (Mexicana/o) or regionally (California/o, Tejana/o, Nuevomexicana/o). In earlier time periods, varying your terms may help.
3. **Avoid Wikipedia, other wikis and blogs.** Wikipedia and other collectively-written sites are notorious for incomplete and sometimes flat-out wrong information. Meanwhile, blogs are often the ramblings of a random, crazy people. Besides, you cannot write a personal reflection based on someone else’s personal reflection. Please read the “How to Evaluate a Website” handout distributed in class and/or available at our course website.
4. **Be creative.** Don’t settle for the first link that comes up in your search. Look around, vary your search terms, see what else you can find. Better yet, share something from your own family history, if and when you can. The more personal you can make it, the more fun it will be to write about. And if you’re excited about what you find, there’s a higher chance that I will enjoy reading it.
5. **Give yourself time to work, and take this assignment seriously.** The media assignments may take more time and effort than you might think. I caution you not to assume that you can do well by simply plugging “Mexican Americans before 1900” into Google the night before the due date and then writing about the first thing that comes up. Moreover, do not forget that it is a formal assignment, and as such, your grammar and writing style count in your grade.

Helpful resources at MLK library

The following works are located in the reference collection at the Cultural Heritage Center (5th floor):

Encyclopedia Latina: History, Culture and Society in the United States – E184.S75E587 2005 vols. 1-4

Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States – E184.S75O97 2005 vols. 1-4

Latino Encyclopedia – E184.S75L357 1996 vols. 1-6

Handbook of Hispanic Cultures – E184.S75H365 1993 vols. 1-4

Atlas of Hispanic American History – E184.S75O287 2001

Dictionary of Chicano Folklore – GR111.M49 R69 2000

Encyclopedia of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement – E184.M5M458 2000