TIMELINE OF MEXICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE, HISTORY AND CULTURE

THE HISPANIC PERIOD (THROUGH 1821)
1527  Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca becomes the first European to explore North America and leave a written record
1540  Explorers from Mexico first enter the Southwest
1598  Spain plans permanent missions, military posts, towns, and ranchos in New Mexico
1700  Spanish settlement of Arizona begins
1716  Spanish settlement of Texas begins
1769  Spanish settlement of Alta California begins; the first California mission is built
1810  Mexico’s struggle for independence against Spain begins

THE MEXICAN PERIOD (1821-1848)
1821  Mexico wins independence from Spain
William Becknell opens the Santa Fe Trail, tying the Southwest to the United States
1825  Mexico gives land to American land agents who bring settlers to Texas
1835  The Texas Revolution begins. Battle of the Alamo
1836  Texas gains independence
1842  Mexico twice attempts to invade Texas
1845  Magazine editor John L. O’Sullivan uses the phrase “Manifest Destiny” to describe American expansion.
The United States annexes Texas and offers Mexico $5 million to recognize the Rio Grande River as Texas' southwestern boundary, $5 million for New Mexico, and $25 million for California
1846  The Mexican War begins
1848  Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed on February 2. Mexico cedes nearly half of its original territory to the US

THE TRANSITION PERIOD (1848-1910)
1849  California’s first constitutional convention held.
Gold discovered at Sutter’s Mill, leading to a tremendous influx of Anglo prospectors
1850  From now through the 1870s, upper-class Mexicans in Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and California lose most of their lands
1851  All native Mexicans are excluded from the California State Senate
1852  Tiburcio Vásquez begins his raids in California
1853  In the Gadsden Purchase, the US acquires 30,000 acres in southern Arizona and New Mexico from Mexico
1855  The Bureau of Public Instruction in California orders that all schools teach exclusively in English. California passes a law against vagrancy, known as the “Greaser Law.” Mexicans already represent 16-20% of inmates at San Quentin.
In Los Angeles, Francisco Ramirez published El Camor Público, a newspaper defending Mexican rights
1859  Juan N. Cortina leads a raid on Brownsville, Texas
1860  Congress creates Colorado territory out of New Mexico
1862  Congress creates Arizona territory out of New Mexico
1860s  Numerous memoirs, diaries and testimonies written by US-Mexicans, such as José Arnaz, Mariano Vallejo, Apolinaria Lorenzana, Pio Pico, Miguel Antonio Otero, Eulalia Perez (housed at Berkeley’s Bancroft Collection, discussed in Genaro Padilla’s My History, Not Yours: The Formation of Mexican American Autobiography and Rosaura Sanchez’s Telling Identities: The Californio Testimonials)
1872  Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton writes the first English-language “Mexican American” novel, Who Would Have Thought It?
1878  Andrew Garcia publishes his autobiographical Tough Trip Through Paradise, 1878 – 1879
1880s  An active and vociferous network of Spanish-language newspapers continues in the Southwest
1884  Helen Hunt Jackson publishes Ramona
1885  Ruiz de Burton writes The Squatter and the Don
1890 Unionization begins in the Southwest, but is largely anti-Mexican in practice
1891 A court of private land claims is established in California to examine confusing land grant claims; most Californio resources shift to Anglo control
1894 Alianza Hispano Americano formed in Tucson, AZ
1892 Eusebio Chacón writes his two novelettes El hijo de la tempestad and Tras la tormenta la calma
1897 Wealthy Mexicans in Texas found El Colegio Altamiro to preserve Mexican culture for their children
1903 Mexican beet workers carry out a successful strike in Ventura, California
1904 Creation of the first Border Patrol, largely to keep out Asian immigrants who were passing as Mexican in order to enter the US
Mexican revolutionaries Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón establish their newspaper, Regeneración, in San Antonio, TX

THE INTERACTION PERIOD (1910-1942)
1910 Start of the Mexican Revolution; over the course of the next twenty years, nearly 900,000 Mexicans (10% of Mexico's population) cross the border—the largest wave of migration the US has ever seen
1911 The first large convention of Mexicans for action against social injustice, El Primer Congreso Mexicanista, was held in Laredo, Texas
1912 Arizona and New Mexico achieve statehood
1913 María Cristina Mena begins publishing her short stories in mainstream US magazines such as Century, Cosmopolitan and T.S. Eliot's Criterion
1916 Political exile Julio Arce (aka “Jorge Ulica”) begins writing his “Crónicas Diabólicas,” humorous columns about Mexicans living in the US, in San Francisco's Hispano-América newspaper. Other cronistas include Benjamín Padilla (“Kaskabel”), Adolfo Carrillo and Daniel Venegas (“El Malcriado”)
1917 Adina de Zavala publishes History and Legends of the Alamo and Other Mission in and around San Antonio, writing Texas history from a Mexican American and woman's perspective
Immigration Act passed, making literacy a condition of entry to US during WWI; Mexican farmworkers waived
1920s Public schools begin implementing Americanization programs to acculturate Mexican immigrants
1925 Fray Angelico Chávez begins writing his religious poems, collected in Cantares: Canticles and Poems of Youth
1926 La Opinión newspaper founded in Los Angeles (still in circulation today)
Jovita González, Tejana educator, writes Dew on the Thorn
1927 La Confederación de Uniones Obreras Mexicanos is formed and holds its first convention in Los Angeles
1928 Venegas writes Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o cuando los pericos mamen, published in installments in Los Angeles’ El Heraldo de México newspaper
1929 League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is formed in Corpus Christi, Texas
1930 The U.S. government requires Mexicans to obtain visas to enter the country
1932 Repatriation (sometimes voluntary, often illegal) of 400,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans begins
1933 The El Monte Strike, possibly the largest agricultural strike up to that point in history, led by Mexican unions in California
Mexican and Mexican American workers in Texas organized one of the broadest unions in the history of Hispanic labor in the United States: La Asociación de Jornaleros, which represented everyone from hat-makers to farm workers
College students form the Mexican American Movement and create a monthly newspaper, La Voz Mexicana
1934 Jorge Ainslie writes Los pochos, which sets a precedent in the structure and themes of later Chicano novels (such as Villarreal’s Pocho, below)
San Antonio community leader Eleuterio Escobar forms La Liga Pro-Defensa Escolar in response to the gross inequity in spending he discovered between Mexican American and Anglo public schools
1935 The New Deal’s Federal Writers Project sent agents into the Southwest to collect folklore and stories from Mexican American communities; see Tey Diana Rebolledo and Maria Teresa Márquez’s *Women’s Tales from the New Mexico WPA*

John Steinbeck writes *Tortilla Flat*, about the Mexican community of Monterey, California

Elena Zamora O’Shea writes *El Mesquite*

1936 Ámérico Paredes writes *George Washington Gómez*

1937 Jovita González, with Eve Raleigh, co-authors *Caballero* (unpublished until 1996)

Many Mexican workers join the United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing and Allied Workers of America

San Antonio Pecan Shellers’ Strike, the largest Mexican workers’ strike of the decade

1941 Through 1945, approximately 350,000 Mexican Americans serve in World War II, suffering casualties far above their proportion in the population; they become the most decorate ethnic group, winning seventeen medals of honor

1942 Bracero program begins, providing for Mexican laborers to enter the United States as short-term contract workers (program ends in 1964)

Sleepy Lagoon incident in Los Angeles

1943 Zoot Suit Riots take place in Los Angeles (case continues through 1944)

Bracero Program begins

**THE CHICANA/O PERIOD (1945 – PRESENT)**

1945 Josefina Niggli writes *Mexican Village*

1947 *Mendez v. Westminster* decision prohibits school segregation on the basis of Mexican descent, setting an important precedent for *Brown v. Board of Education* (1955)

Mario Suárez publishes his first “Chicano Sketches” in the *Arizona Quarterly*

1948 Mexican American veterans of WWII found the American GI Forum in Corpus Christi, TX

1950 Between now and 1955, Operation Wetback deports 3.8 million Mexicans and Mexican Americans

1952 Actor Anthony Quinn is the first Mexican American to win the Academy Award for Best Actor

Marlon Brando stars in *Viva Zapata!* as the Mexican revolutionary war hero

1954 The film *Salt of the Earth* (blacklisted in Hollywood) is heralded by many as a true representation of Mexican Americans and their struggle

In *Hernández v. Texas*, the Supreme Court recognizes that Mexican Americans have equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment

1956 Paredes writes the classic *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and its Hero*

1958 Ritchie Valens becomes first Mexican American rock star

Charlton Heston portrays a Mexican American laywer in Orson Welle’s film noir, *Touch of Evil*

1959 José Antonio Villarreal writes *Pucho*, considered the first “Chicano” novel

1960 Viva Kennedy clubs spring up in support of the Democratic ticket of Kennedy and Johnson

1962 César Chávez and Dolores Huerta co-founded the National Farm Workers Association, which would evolve into the United Farm Workers (UFW), in Delano, CA

1963 In New Mexico, Reies López Tijerina incorporates La Alianza Federal de los Mercedes (later known as the Alianza Federal de Pueblos Libres)

Bracero Program ends

1965 The UFW begins its grape boycott

Luis Valdez founds El Teatro Campesino in Delano, CA

1966 Rodolfo Acuña teaches the first Mexican American history class in Los Angeles

1967 The Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) is founded in San Antonio

Tijerina takes over the Tierra Amarilla County Courthouse in New Mexico

250 students representing seven Los Angeles colleges and universities meet to form the United Mexican American Students (UMAS)

Corky González writes the epic poem, “I Am Joaquin”

*El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought* first appears

1968 The Brown Berets form in Los Angeles and eventually become one of the largest non-student organizations in the country
More than 10,000 high school students in California and Texas stage walk-outs to protest educational and military draft policies.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) is organized in San Antonio, TX. Between now and 1973, more than 50 departments, centers and institutes for Chicano studies were established in California.

1969
González organizes the Chicano Youth Liberation Movement in Denver, CO, where participants craft the classic manifesto, “El Plán Espiritual de Aztlán”

A three day conference is organized at Santa Barbara by the Chicano Coordinating Council of Higher Education yields the formation of El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA).

1970
Jose Ángel Gutiérrez establishes the Raza Unida Party in Crystal City, TX.

On August 20, the Chicano Moratorium Against the Vietnam War draws the largest demonstration of Latinos in American history up to that time; later that day, Rubén Salazar, an Los Angeles Times columnist who covered the event, is killed by a sherrif’s tear-gas projectile.

1971
Tomás Rivera writes Y no se le tragó la tierra
Ernesto Galarza writes Barrio Boy

The Chicana’s Conference held in Houston, TX; it aimed to analyze women’s roles in the Movement.

1972
La Raza Unida holds its first national convention in El Paso.

Patricia Rodriguez organizes Las Mujeres Muralistas in the San Francisco Bay Area, with members Consuelo Mendez, Irene Pérez, and Graciela Carillo.

Peter Rodriguez inaugurates the Mexican Museum in San Francisco.

Music group Little Joe y la Familia release Para la gente, which combines Tex-Mex music with jazz and rock, a style known as La Onda Chicana.


Rudolfo Anaya writes Bless Me, Última.

Nicolás Kanellos starts La Revista Chicana-Riqueña, a literary and academic journal, in Gary, IN.

1973
Rolanda Hinojosa writes Estampas del Valle y otras obras.

The Southwest Voter Registration Education Project is established.

Artist Judith Francisca Baca founds the first City of Los Angeles Mural Program.

Jose Luis Ruiz produces The Unwanted, a film about undocumented immigrants in the US.

Artists Harry Gamboa Jr, Gronk, Patssi Valdez and Willie Herron form the conceptual art group Asco.

1975
The Voting Rights Act of 1965 is extended to “Hispanic Americans”.

Angela de Hoyos publishes Chicano Poems for the Barrio.

1976
Bernice Zamora writes Restless Serpents.

Chicano film Chulas Fronteras debuts.

1978
The Supreme Court upholds the decision in favor of Bakke v. the UC Board of Regents by a vote of 5-4, in an act that seriously undermines Affirmative Action.

Robert M. Young directs Alumnistra, a film about an undocumented worker’s journey across the border.

1979
Valdez’s Zoot Suit is the first Chicano play on Broadway, and becomes a film in 1981.

Kanellos founds Arte Público Press (currently at the University of Houston).

The Reagan Administration comes to power, accelerating the dismantling of most social programs initiated in the 1960s.

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Arturo Islas writes The Rain God.

1981
Poet Lorna Dee Cervantes publishes her collection, Emplumada.

1982
Floricanto Press is founded.

1983
Gregory Nava directs El Norte, a film about immigration.

1984
Lucha Corpi writes Delia’s Song.

Pat Mora publishes Chants and, in 1986, Borders, two collections of poetry.

Ballad of Gregorio Cortez become a film starring Edward James Olmos.

1986
Ana Castillo writes Mixquiahuala Letters.

1987
Luis Valdez directs the feature film La Bamba, the biopic of Ritchie Valens.

Gloria Anzaldúa writes Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza.

Chicano comedian and actor Cheech Marin writes, directs and stars in Born in East LA.
1988  Sandra Cisneros publishes *The House on Mango Street*

1989  Immigration from the Americas rises from 44.3% in 1964 to 61.4%; Mexico accounts for 37.1% of total documented immigration to US

   Denise Chávez writes *Face of an Angel*

1990  Chicano rapper Kid Frost hits the charts with “La Raza”

1991  Cisneros publishes *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*

   Gil Cuadros writes *City of God*

1992  Cartoonist Lalo Alcaraz begins his strip, *La Cucaracha*, in the LA Times newspaper

1993  Castillo publishes *So Far from God*

1994  Filmmaker Lourdes Portillo makes *The Devil Never Sleeps*

   California ballot initiative Proposition 187 seeks to deny undocumented workers social services, health care and public education; although it passes with 58% of the vote, it is overturned in federal courts

1995  Tejana singer Selena is tragically murdered in Corpus Christi, TX

   *My Family/Mi Familia* is a major feature film

1997  Gregory Nava films *Selena*, starring Jennifer López, which tells the story of the late singer

1998  Rock en español gains popularity in the US

   Michelle Serros writes *Chicana Falsa and Other Stories of Death, Identity and Oxnard*

2002  Comedian George López begins his eponymous TV show