Course Description and Objectives

The intent of this course is to engage in an innovative analysis of the Chicanx educational experience. This investigation is critical because of the dramatic degree of Chicanx school “failure” today and the significant effect this has on the Chicanx community and the U.S. at large. Most important, the course is concerned with how we can create transformative educational experiences for all Chicanxs that build on their strengths and resources. The overall objective of the course is to provide students with the opportunity to apply Chicana/o Studies analyses to the real-world by focusing on the schools and on concretely addressing the needs of Chicanx educational communities as well as the strengths and resources of these communities. Our concept of education will be broad so that we can encompass a number of different types of education in our work.

You, the students in the class, and your experiences will be among our reference materials. This approach is shaped by 2 assumptions: 1) In order to truly participate in education you have to be given the responsibility to actively and fully participate, and, 2) The issues related to Chicanx school “failure” have persisted for a very long time and new approaches to addressing these issues are needed (you will help us develop and even implement these new approaches).

Finally, we will be using the class itself as a focal point of analysis. That is, we will analyze our own work and processes and how they challenge or reinforce the issues we are considering in the class.

Course Readings

I have selected 6 books that have been published in the last few years that cover raza schooling in overarching ways. We will use these as references throughout the semester, but each of you will also select at least 2 chapters [total] from these books to use for your work and teach to the class. These books are on reserve in the library. [There is a scanner on the 5th floor of the library near the reference desk where you can scan readings.]

Reference Books:
There are also a number of journals that might be of interest to you and related to your projects, including:

Journal of Latinos and Education
Regeneración Tlacuilolli: UCLA Raza Studies Journal
Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences

I have also selected a few readings that I feel are critical to understanding Chicana/o Schooling and the trajectory of research on this topic. You will need to supplement these readings with others related to your research/project interests for the class. You should begin reading research relevant to your project [discussed below] early and focus on that once our required readings have been covered. One of our goals is to build a class bibliography that can help others make sense of the issues we are analyzing. [The required readings will all be available on the course website by the third week of class.]

Required Readings:

Optional Readings: [We may create a bibliographic archive that includes these and other readings]

Course Requirements
The main objective of this class is for students to develop a project that pushes us toward greater school success for raza (which we will define individually and as a class). You will
decide what these projects will be and if they are solo or group efforts (although everyone will work in groups in some way). You can cover any topic of interest to you that involves raza and education in some way. You can, for example, focus on policy, curriculum, pedagogy, or some other aspect of an issue that interests you, and you can consider these issues in any educational arena from pre-k through graduate school, as well as community-based educational contexts. All the projects will involve: 1) reading previous research on the topic, and, 2) listening to stakeholders and their analyses of the issue you are studying, since we will be studying these issues by focusing on specific communities/sites. You can make these projects whatever you want them to be, so plan on spending the first couple of weeks of the class carefully identifying issues critical to you in any aspect of schooling. We will envision all of these projects as a process of creating a Chicana/o Studies Critical Praxis in our areas of interest. This requires that we think conceptually and theoretically about the issue, that we work with the stakeholders living with the issue, and that we continually weave the two together. Please talk with me in the first 3 weeks of class to determine your site/community and how you will work with stakeholders on the project. Each of you will take the project in your own unique direction, so we will expect that each of you will tailor the assignments to your projects. Please discuss this with me at each step in the process.

Staying up to date with the readings and assignments is critical to our success as individuals and as a group. Please submit all assignments on the due dates. If you want to come back to an assignment and develop it, we can always plan for that.

The first assignment in the class will be the Educational & Identity Autobiography/Counterstory/Testimonio. This assignment is not covered in depth here because it is due by the time of our second class when this syllabus will first be shared with the class.

We will spend most of the first half of the semester analyzing and discussing essential readings for developing a holistic understanding of Chicana/o education. For each week’s readings, a Reading Engagement Essay will be due. There are two options for these assignments:

1-Write a draft of your preliminary reactions to the questions, highlighting specific questions you want to discuss. Then, after class, finalize your analysis of the readings, finish your essay, and submit the week after our class discussion of it.

2-Write an essay that explores an issue, question, concern you have related to a theme in the reading and submit it as a final draft the week we discuss it.

Regardless of which process you choose, you also have different options for how you approach the writing:

a. striving to understand or make sense of a new or challenging concept
b. demonstrating understanding of a concept
c. making an application of a concept to deconstruct how it works

These essays should make connections to your project topic and your own educational experiences whenever possible. Your focus in the writing should be on developing your analysis and understanding related to the issues in our work that are most directly related to your project and/or are most meaningful, controversial, exciting, challenging to you. We will discuss upcoming readings briefly at the class session before the readings are due and identify key questions for us to consider as we read (a possible topic is also listed in the weekly schedule below). The Engagement Essays will be a chance for you to explore these questions or any other
issues that are important to you from the reading. As with all of the assignments we do in the class, you should always strive for excellent writing.

The Class Project will be framed as a model of Chicana/o Studies Critical Praxis. We will have at least three different options for the format of this project:

1-**Counterstory:** This approach to research is informed by CRT and involves telling a story in a narrative form that is informed by research, but which embodies a lived reality that helps readers both understand and apply the analyses that you are developing. Early on, we will read an article that explains this methodology and adapt it to our own interests if applicable (the Solorzano and Yosso article and others provide insights on different ways we can do this, and the Cammarota & Romero book on reserve also provides some chapters that will be helpful with some of the steps to the project).

2-**Blog/Opinion Article/Facebook Page/Internet Distribution:** In this option you will strive to distribute your project work to others in a way that it can be shared widely and will expose interested people to the work and the ideas you share for addressing the issues you are analyzing. This could include video production.

3-**Research Paper/Master’s Project Foundation:** This is the traditional approach to a graduate project in which you will do research and share your analysis in the form of a paper.

Plan to meet with me to discuss which path you will take. Your own autobiographical work from the first assignment may also help you think through the best options for you.

Each of us will have a partner or group who we collaborate with as we do this work. The group will consist of members whose work relates in an interesting way. The actual work on the project can be done independently or collaboratively. The Project will be broken into the following parts:

**Defining the “Problem” and the Dominant/Majoritarian Story:** Explain the issue that you want to understand and address. This begins with your own definition of the issue/problem, which you should demonstrate clearly through existing data that helps us clearly understand why this is a pressing issue. You can obtain data from school district websites, as well as county, state and national educational data websites. You can also obtain data from existing research on this issue, which may be necessary if the issue you are considering is more qualitative in nature. Explain how the Majoritarian story (the conventional explanation of this raza school issue) explains the issue/problem, including how the data is discussed as well as any “tricks” that are used to distract the public from the real issues you have identified. This may involve ideological analysis, so be sure to consider the role of ideology in shaping the Majoritarian story. [The reference texts listed above, as well as the journals are a great place to begin your search for past research.]

**Conceptual Framework of Existing Research on the Project [Literature Review]:** Develop a Conceptual Framework that deconstructs the issue you are analyzing. This framework will be broken into two parts: how to understand/explain the issue and all of the forces involved in creating it, and, how this issue has been addressed or can be addressed (which should consider applications of the Community Cultural Wealth Model). The framework will be built through your work identifying and reviewing existing research on the topic. Your goal will be to have 3-5 sections that cover distinct aspects of the issue. The draft of this assignment will be due first and will give you the opportunity to start by identifying and
exploring those 3-5 areas of importance to your project. As you move to the second part of
the framework, you will emphasize non-majoritarian research that analyzes this issue and
provides a different understanding of it. Your goal is to come to a conclusion as to how we
can most complexly understand the issue outside of dominant ideologies, and to identify the
insights that we still need to obtain in order to address the issue. The challenge you will need
to consider is how these alternative analyses can be framed in a way that counters the
Majoritarian story. This should be your ultimate objective for this assignment.

Community Based Work: Based on the insights we decide are needed, we will begin working
with those who can help us obtain those insights. You will each identify community
members who can share experiences and insights that will allow you to understand these
issues complexly and begin to strategize as to how you can address the issue. This part of the
project should be deeply informed by our applications of the Community Cultural Wealth
model. Share the key insights obtained from this work, focusing on telling the stories in the
words of those with whom we worked. You will begin this assignment with a draft and then
finalize it based on the feedback you get. The final version will connect back to the
Framework and should lead to you further developing the second (and possibly the first) part
of the framework you developed earlier in the semester.

Final Chicana/o Studies Critical Praxis Project: With that work completed we will get
feedback from those with whom we are working and finalize our vision of Critical Praxis to
address this issue. This will include final versions of all the previous project work submitted.
This project will explain your issue as complexly and holistically as possible and will focus
on the ways in which you have learned to integrate theory, research, community work,
action, and reflection into a process of working with others to address an educational issue,
referencing and building on your applications of the Community Cultural Wealth model
throughout the process. Ideally, you will develop ideas for interventions that could
realistically be done in the next few months, and which may already begin through this
process. This can involve sharing your work with key stakeholders, beginning the
implementation of the intervention itself, or passing on the plan to a colleague who is
interested in developing it. The Final Project will also include a closing narrative that
explains the lessons you took from the class and our process. These will be presented during
our final class.

Your work in this class will be much stronger if you keep a Learning Journal in which
you can write about class, the readings, and your evolving thinking and observations related to
your project. Students who want to do this as a formal part of their class work can do this for
extra credit. I will provide responses to whatever journal entries you submit. Discuss this with
me at the beginning of the semester if you would like to do this.

Even if you elect not to do the journal, I would like to get a weekly e-mail from each of
you responding to how class is going and how your work is coming along. I would also like to
speak with you once a week about your work [before, during, or after class, or during office
hours].

Last, it would really help if you would look through the news weekly, focusing on issues
related to the raza schooling.
We will discuss these assignments in class throughout the semester. The assignments are subject to change as we gain greater clarity once we begin the work. Any changes will be agreed upon in class and finalized in writing (and will not involve additional work or earlier deadlines).

Assignments and Grading

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational &amp; Identity Autobiography/Counterstory/Testimonio</td>
<td>2/6</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Engagement Essays</td>
<td>2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/6, 3/13, 3/20</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Defining the Problem</td>
<td>2/20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>3/6</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conceptual Framework</td>
<td>3/20</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary Analysis of Community Based Work</td>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Analysis of Community Based Work</td>
<td>4/24</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft of Chicana/o Studies Critical Praxis Project &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project &amp; Presentation</td>
<td>5/15 &amp; 22</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>15%</td>
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Our assumption will always be that everyone can and will do excellent work in the class. This may require each of us to both give and receive specific forms of support to achieve our goals, so it is important that we see ourselves as responsible for the success of the class and the success of every student. We will commit to doing our best work on every assignment we submit.

As a class, we will develop a rubric that defines the expectations for our class assignments and work. This will be the measure used to evaluate/grade all assignments. In addition, students will provide in-depth self-evaluations of each assignment. Explain your goals for the assignment and how well you achieved them! Whenever possible, we will also have peers evaluate the assignments to provide another level of feedback. The self-, peer-, and instructor evaluations will include honest perceptions of the amount of effort that was put into an assignment.

I will always attempt to have papers back to you the week after you submit them (although at certain points in the semester, it might take 2 weeks). I will strive to provide detailed written feedback on every assignment. Students can always do re-writes to improve grades. Discuss this option with me if you are interested in re-writing an assignment.

Class participation is an essential part of this class and it will be graded in the same way as other assignments. We will expect each other to come to class ready to teach and work!!!

Course Schedule

I developed this plan for our work based on the interests you expressed during our first class and the additional insights you sent me. It is a fairly general approach to Chicana/o Education so that it can incorporate each of your individual interests. My understanding of you and your needs will evolve as we go through this process, as will your own interests. Because of that, we will make changes to the course if needed. If this happens, we will not be adding assignments, but we may change the readings we assign, develop and clarify assignments, and change the plan for how we pursue our goals, including bringing in guests, going on field trips, and seeing films (little of which is included at this time so that we do this based on your needs and interests). Any significant changes in the syllabus will be made in writing and due dates will not be added or moved up.

Week 1: Course Introduction & Development
30 January
We will set the foundation for our work by initiating an analysis of the Chicana/o School experiences based on our own experiences and insights.
**Week 2: Autobiography, Framing Raza Schooling, & Goal-Setting**  
6 February  
We will build on the analysis of Chicana/o Education in the first class as we share our Autobiographies. We will also consider the multiple goals stakeholders have for Chicana/o Education.  
**Assignment Due:** Educational & Identity Autobiography/Counterstory/Testimonio

**Week 3: Understanding the Raza Educational Pipeline**  
13 February  
We will review the latest research breaking down the experiences of Latinx students in the educational pipeline. Plan on focusing on the aspects of the pipeline that are of most interest to you for your project.  
**Readings Due:** 1-Perez Huber et al, 2-Acevedo-Gil, 3-Covarrubias  
**Assignment Due:** Engagement Essay on Readings and the link to our own schooling and project interests

**Week 4: Critical Race Theory and the Lessons for Educational “Research”**  
20 February  
We will look at Counterstorytelling Methodology and begin to map out our processes for the class Projects.  
**Readings Due:** 1-Solorzano & Yosso, 2-Delgado Bernal  
**Assignment Due:** Engagement Essay on Readings focusing on the applications of these analysis and methods to your project interests  
**Project Work Due:** Defining the Problem Assignment  
**Class Activity:** “Stolen Education” Film Screening with Enrique Aleman (6:15pm, MLK 225)

**Week 5-7: Understanding the Evolution of Educational Research in Chicana/o Communities**  
27 February, 6 March, 13 March  
We will consider the way in which raza communities have been researched and innovations in these approaches.  
**Readings Due [2/27]:** 1-Valencia & Black, 2-Pizarro  
**Assignment Due [2/27]:** Engagement Essay on Readings and the historical forces that have shaped current issues and experiences of raza in school  
**Readings Due [3/6]:** 1-Freire, 2-Valenzuela  
**Assignment Due [3/6]:** Engagement Essay on Readings and the unique epistemological strengths of Chicana/o communities that we have seen  
**Project Work Due:** Preliminary Conceptual Framework of Existing Research on the Project Topic (Outline of Lit Review into 3-5 sections and list of references)  
**Reading Due [3/13]:** 1-Yosso, 2-Romero, Arce & Cammarota  
**Assignment Due [3/13]:** Engagement Essay on Readings and the way in which Racial Microaggressions exist in the community you are working and how you can use the Community Cultural Wealth Model in your project

**Week 8: Racial Theorizing, Revolutionary Pedagogy and School Transformation**  
20 March  
We will consider the role of racial theory work alongside revolutionary pedagogy (from the previous week) as tools of deconstructing and reimagining the schooling of raza youth.
Class Activity: Adelante Faculty-Student Dinner (6pm, Student Union Ballroom)
[See Marcos if you want to participate in other events]

Readings Due: 1-Delgado Bernal & Aleman
Optional Reading: 1-Rios
Assignment Due: Engagement Essay on Reading and the role of racial theory and its application in the community/issue you are studying.

Project Work Due: Conceptual Framework of Existing Research on the Project Topic

SPRING BREAK [3/27] - No Class

Week 9: Project Workshop – Collective Development of Critical Praxis Approaches
3 April
We will work together to map out the process for developing our approaches to the Critical Praxis project, sharing insights and ideas to support each other in the work.

Week 10: Racial Theory Building for Educational Justice
10 April
We will reflect on all of our work to this point in the semester and construct our individual and collective theories for explaining the Chicana/o school experience.

Project Work Due: Preliminary Analysis of Community-Based Work

Week 11: Project Workshop – Applying Social Justice Principles to Praxis Work
17 April
Each of us will share our first draft of the Final Project and analyze how Social Justice Principles can help us in this work.

Week 12: Project Workshop – Meeting the Challenge of Innovative Methods
24 April
We will consider the challenges of engaging in non-conventional educational justice research and intervention and how we negotiate the contradictions we face in that work.

Project Work Due: Final Analysis of Community-Based Work & Preliminary Link to Framework

Week 13: Critical Praxis in Community
1 May
We will share our Counterstories in class and use that to brainstorm processes and ideas for the intervention development work.

Week 14: Developing a Collective Model for Addressing Contemporary Educational Issues
8 May
We will share the work we have developed on interventions and identify collective themes that can help us build the work, with a specific focus on reflecting on each of the steps we took over the course of the semester.

Project Work Due: Draft of Chicana/o Studies Critical Praxis Project
Week 15: Project Work & Feedback

15 May

We will present our final insights from the projects, discuss the overall lessons from the class, and share feedback for the development of the class.

**Project Work Due:** Final Chicana/o Studies Critical Praxis Project [Presentation on 5/15 and Written Analysis on 5/22 or earlier]