Course Description and Objectives

The intent of this course is to engage in an innovative analysis of the Chicanx educational experience. This investigation is essential 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. By shifting the title to Chicanx Educación, we are flipping the script on traditional approaches to this work, emphasizing the assets within the community. The overall objective of the course is to provide students with the opportunity to apply Chicanx Studies analyses to schools and other educational contexts, and to concretely address the needs of Chicanx educational communities through the strengths and resources of these communities. Our concepts of education and educación will be broad so that we can encompass a number of different types of education and educación 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 that are based on our communities’ funds of knowledge and experience (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 recent 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 3 chapters [total] from these books to use for your projects. These books are on reserve in the library [https://reserves.calstate.edu/sanjose/]. [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:

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

I have selected required readings [based on your selected interests in Week 1] that I feel are critical to understanding Chicano 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] now and focus on that exclusively 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, interventions 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 thought partners to learn 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 Chicanx 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 and thought partners 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.

A key objective of the class that we identified in our first week is for you to be able unpack and explain the key forces (historical and contemporary) shaping the schooling of raza communities and develop tools for addressing the critical issues that matter most to each of you. This is going to require that we collectively identify what these forces/issues are, analyzing them through our assignments, and using class time to share and develop our analyses. Two ways that we will do this are: 1) sharing our understandings of insights from the class readings, and, 2) sharing our evolving work on the project in class at different phases of 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 Chicanx education. For each week’s readings, a Reading Engagement Essay will be due the class session designated for discussing those readings. This essay should: 1-Explain one key construct in the week’s readings in your own words as deeply as possible, and, 2-suggest how it might be applied in a specific educational context (if possible, connect it to your project interests and relevant personal experiences [it may be that your project and experiences do not connect, although I will likely suggest that they almost always do]). The goal for these assignments should be precision and clarity so 1-2 pages is an appropriate length to do your best analysis and writing. You may have to write more and edit carefully to achieve that clarity and precision. It is typically most helpful to take on only one concept even though you are interested in multiple (you can list the other concepts you are unable to unpack). In the past, students have suggested it would be helpful to turn in the writing a week after the discussion, so that their writing can be informed by the insights gained in class. Given our interest in developing our analytical skills and understanding of the complex issues we will be studying, we will use the writing before class to develop our individual skills. You can always re-submit an essay the following week with more depth and clarity, but it may be
preferable to simply integrate the new insights and skills into your future assignments and project work. We will discuss upcoming readings briefly at the class session before the readings are due and identify key concepts and questions for us to consider as we read (a possible topic is also listed in the weekly schedule below). 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 Chicanx Studies Critical Praxis. We will have at least three different options for the format of this project:

1-**Counterstory**: This approach to research was developed through Critical Race Theory 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/Instagram or 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 insights 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 project. 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 is more qualitative in nature. Next, 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 will likely involve ideological analysis, so be sure to consider the role of ideology in shaping the Majoritarian story. Then, identify and briefly explain the 3-5 areas of greatest importance to your project (which could include key concepts that you want to unpack and understand). Finally, share your working bibliography of the readings that you will have to analyze to understand this issue (including those from our reference texts). [The reference texts listed above, as well as the journals are a great place to begin your quest for past research.]

**Conceptual Framework of Existing Research on the Project [Literature Review]**: Develop a Conceptual Framework that deconstructs the issue you are analyzing through your work
identifying and reviewing existing research on the topic. This framework will explain the issue and all of the forces involved in creating it with the objective of helping us begin to see how the issue might be confronted. Your goal will be to have 3-5 sections that cover distinct aspects of the issue, which may be connected to or built around the key concepts you want to deconstruct in our overall work in the class. Your work on this assignment should explain how we can most complexly understand the issue outside of dominant ideologies and identify the insights that we still need to obtain in order to address the issue. Depending on your issue, you may want 1 or more of the sections of your framework to break down the issue historically. This is our version of a Literature Review.

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 (thought partners) 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 and our focus on educación as a central aspect of CCW. Share the key insights obtained from this work, focusing on telling the stories in the words of those with whom you worked. This analysis should connect back to the Framework and lead to you developing a second framework for praxis that will allow folks to address this issue in concrete and meaningful ways.

Final Chicanx 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 revised versions of all the previous project work submitted. The 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 (and our focus on educación as a central aspect of CCW) 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 or community member 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.

All of these project assignments will be submitted as Google Docs that you will share with me and allow me editing rights so that I can provide my feedback as comments in the gdoc. You will respond to that feedback as a comment in the gdoc, so that I can review your response before each subsequent assignment. This means that when you submit the 2nd, 3rd, and final assignments for the portfolio, you will include links to the previous assignments.

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 your 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
speaking 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 refinement as we gain greater clarity by engaging in 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

- Educational & Identity Autobiography/Counterstory/Testimonio [Due 2/5]  5%
- Reading Engagement Essays [Due 2/11, 2/18, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18, 4/8]  15%
- Defining the Problem [Due 2/25]  10%
- Conceptual Framework [Due 3/25]  15%
- Community Based Work [Due 4/22]  15%
- Draft of Chicano Studies Critical Praxis Project [Due 5/6]  5%
- Final Project & Presentation [Due 5/20]  20%
- Class Participation  15%

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 rubrics that define 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 emailed me. It is a fairly broad approach to Chicano 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

28 January
We will set the foundation for our work by initiating an analysis of the Chicanx School experiences based on our own experiences and insights.

Week 2: Autobiography, Framing Raza Schooling, & Goal-Setting

4 February
We will build on the analysis of Chicanx Education in the first class as we share our Autobiographies. We will also consider the multiple goals stakeholders have for Chicanx Education.

Assignment Due: Educational & Identity Autobiography/Counterstory/Testimonio

Week 3: Deconstructing Deficit Thinking and its Contemporary Implications

11 February
We will review recent 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-Valencia & Black, 2-Rios
Assignment Due: Engagement Essay on Readings identifying a foundational concept/issue related to your project interests

Week 4: Critical Race Theory and the Lessons for Educational “Research”

18 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 highlighting a key concept and the most powerful/helpful method to pursue your project interests

Week 5: Project Workshop

25 February
We will share our preliminary work on the project and do a workshop on how to do comprehensive and compelling literature searches and analyses.

Project Work Due: Defining the Problem Assignment

Week 6-8: Understanding the Evolution of Educational Research in Chicanx Communities

4 March, 11 March, 18 March
We will consider the way in which raza communities have been researched and innovations in these approaches.

Readings Due [3/4]: 1-Freire, 2-Valenzuela
Assignment Due [3/4]: Engagement Essay on Readings and praxis-based approaches that can be helpful to understanding or addressing your project topic

Readings Due [3/11]: 1-Romero, Arce & Cammarota, 2-Sosa-Provencio
Assignment Due [3/11]: Engagement Essay on Readings and the unique epistemological strengths of raza communities related to your project

Reading Due [3/18]: 1-Delgado Bernal & Aleman
Assignment Due [3/18]: Engagement Essay on Readings and a specific aspect of engaging in transformational Chicanx Studies that must be considered for your project
Week 9: Project Workshop  
25 March  
We will share our Conceptual Frameworks and then do a Workshop on how to engage with communities in Critical Chicanx Studies Praxis work, covering issues such as positionality, assets-based approaches (using CCW, and meaning-making with and not for community partners).  
**Project Work Due:** Conceptual Framework  

**SPRING BREAK [4/1] - No Class**

Week 10: Racial Theorizing, Revolutionary Praxis and School Transformation  
8 April  
We will consider the role of racial theory work alongside revolutionary praxis that focuses on CCW and educaciòn as tools of deconstructing and transforming the schooling of raza youth.  
**Readings Due:** 1-Aguilar, 2-Kohli & Pizarro  
**Assignment Due:** Engagement Essay on Reading and the role of racial theory and/or revolutionary praxis and its application to the community/issue you are studying.

Week 11: Project Workshop – Applying Social Justice Principles to Praxis Work  
15 April  
Each of us will share an aspect of our community work and analyze how Social Justice Principles can help us in this work.

Week 12: Project Workshop – Meeting the Challenge of Innovative Methods  
22 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:** Analysis of Community-Based Work

Week 13: Critical Praxis in Community  
29 April  
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  
6 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 Chicanx Studies Critical Praxis Project

Week 15: Project Work & Feedback  
13 May or 20 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 Chicanx Studies Critical Praxis Project & Presentation  
[5/20 or earlier]