

Hist 3394: History of Tex-Mex Music in the 20th Century

Section 05197 TTh 1:00-2:30 303 AH Spring 2007

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Course Description

This class explores and explains the origin, evolution, and consequences of Tex-Mex music or musica Tejana in the 20th and 21st century. Some of the themes discussed in this class include the process of cultural adaptation, music and ethnic identity, the causes and evolution of musica tejana, issues of race, class and gender in Tejano music, and the consequences of this music on Latino life in particular and American culture in general.

Learning Outcomes

Attain and be able to demonstrate knowledge about the historical development of Texas Mexican music in the United States.
Provide an interpretation of this music's evolution in twentieth century America.
Conduct historical investigations utilizing a variety of library and archival research techniques and improve writing, reading and thinking skills.

Readings

1. Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr., *Tejano Proud: Tex-Mex Music in the 20th Century* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002)
2. Manuel Pena, *Musica Tejana* (College Station: TAMU Press, 1999) 0-89096-888-8
3. David Reyes and Tom Waldman, *Land of a Thousand Dances: Chicano Rock 'n' Roll from Southern California* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University of New Mexico Press, 1998)
4. Juan Tejada and Avelardo Valdez, eds, *Puro Conjunto! An Album in Words and Pictures* (Austin: Center for Mexican American Studies, University of Texas Press, 2000)
5. Lydia Mendoza, *Mal Hombre*, Arhoolie Records, CD 7002

Recommended readings

1. Steven Loza, *Barrio Rhythm: Mexican American Music in Los Angeles* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
2. Yolanda Broyles-Gonzalez, *Lydia Mendoza's Life in Music/La historia de Lydia Mendoza: Norteno Tejano Legacies* (NY: Oxford university Press, 2001) 0-19-5161831 (paper)
3. Jim McCarthy, *Voices of Latin Rock* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2004). 0-634-08061
4. Eric Zolov, *Refried Elvis: The Rise of the Mexican Counterculture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999)
5. Lalo Guerrero and Sherilyn Meece Menten, *Lalo: My Life in Music* (Tucson, AZ: university of Arizona Press, 2002) 0-8165-2214-6 (paper)

Course requirements

% of grade

1. Class attendance/participation	15
2. Abstracts (7)	20
3. Written Assignments (2 X 5)	10
4. Final	25
5. Research Projects (3 X 10)	30
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	100

1. Class attendance/participation

You are expected to attend class at all times and to do several class assignments. Class participation is worth a total of 15 points.

2. Abstracts

You are required to do seven abstracts. See syllabus for details.

3. Written assignments

You will be required to do two essays in this class—a comparative essay of two Mexican-based nightclubs and a descriptive essay of one Latin nightclub. The former essay will focus on your detailed observations and comments of a Tejano and a norteno nightclub with a live performance. The second one will be a descriptive essay of a Latin or a non-Tejano, non-norteno nightclub. This essay can be of a nightclub or performer that does salsa, merengue, Latin rap, or any other type of Latin music. Make sure that your essay includes descriptions of the performers and nightclub atmosphere, the audience attending the nightclub and their way of dressing, the type of dancing being done, and the types of music played at this location. Each essay will be three single-spaced typewritten pages and is worth five

points. The first one is due on 03/22 and the second one on 04/19.

4. Final

You will be required to take one final exam during the semester. This exam will be worth a total of 25 points.

5. Research project

You will be required to do three small research projects on musica Tejana and present a summary of your findings to the class. (See requirements for research project). See syllabus for due dates.

The research paper needs to have the fundamental elements of any good essay, including a thesis statement in the introductory paragraph alerting the reader to your main claim or argument and clear organization, including an introduction, conclusion for the entire essay and topic sentences for each paragraph. It also needs to have footnotes or endnotes and an annotated bibliography. You should adhere to the rules of documentation in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. (See *Chicago Manual of Style: The Essential guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers*. 14th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Further information on sources and citations will be provided later.

LECTURES AND READINGS

Introduction

- 01-0116 Discuss syllabus
- 02-0118 Music, Ethnic Identity, & Place: An Introduction
- San Miguel, *Musica Tejana*, 3-19 (Recommended)
- Ragland, "La Voz del Pueblo Tejano: Conjunto Music and the Construction of Tejano Identity in Texas," In Tejeda and Valdez, 211-228.
- Reyna, "Tejano Music as an Expression of Cultural Nationalism," In Tejeda and Valdez, 191-198.

Part 1: Music in the Indigenous, Colonial, Mexican and American Period, Pre-1500 to 1920s

- 03-0123 History of Mexican Settlements
- 04-0125 Music in Indigenous America and in the Northern Spanish Frontier, 1500s-1820s (no readings)
- 05-0130 Music in the Northern Mexican Frontier & in the American Southwest, 1820s-1920s
- Pena, "Vocal Music: The Cancion & the Corrido," 37-43
- Pena, "The Fandango and the Baile," 27-34
- Pena, "Instrumental Dance Music," 43-47
- Turn in abstract #1** Provide a summary of Pena's readings [pgs 27-34 and pages 43-47]. Also answer the following questions: When did the fandango and baile acquire class distinctions and why? Describe what Pena means when he says that instrumental dance music represents the incipient differentiation of the Tejano population. How is this argument developed and do you think that he makes a compelling case? Does Professor San Miguel make the same argument? Explain.)

06-0201 Research presentations 1
Part 2: The Initial Recordings of Mexican Music, 1898-1941

07-0206 History: Immigration, citizenship, and Gender roles

Ballad of an Unsung Hero (28 mins)

08-0208 The Initial Recordings

San Miguel, "Diversity and Change in the Original Recordings, 1927-1941," 20-36
(RECOMMENDED ONLY)

Pena, "The Cancion before Mid-century," 50-59

Carlos Guerra, "Accordion Menace..Just Say 'Mo!" in Tejada/Valdez, 115-120

Ramón Hernandez, Jr., "An Informal History of the Bajo Sexto," In Tejada/Valdez, 127-130.

09-0213 Themes and Images of Women in Musica Tejana

Lydia Mendoza, Mal Hombre, Arhoolie Records, CD 7002

Abstract #2 (Select "Mal Hombre" and two additional songs in the Mendoza CD. Answer the following questions: What themes are covered in these songs? How are men and women portrayed in these canciones (in disparaging ways?) and what do they tell us about male-female gender roles in Mexican culture? How are these themes similar to or different from the treacherous woman theme discussed by Pena?).

Part 3: Post-WWII Developments, 1946-64

10-0215 History

11-0220 Vocal singing, the Rise of Female Vocal Duets and the emergence of conjuntos regional and norteno

GSM, Post-WWII Developments, 37-45

Pena, "The Cancion after WWII," 60-82, 1999

Abstract #3 (Pena argues that the cancion ranchera and the cancion romantica represent contrasting and contradictory ideological

poles. What does he mean by this? How do the concepts of ranchero and jaitón relate to this ranchera/romantica dichotomy? What is the Texano-centric ranchera and in what way does it differ from the cancion ranchera? Where does the Texano-centric ranchera fit in the dichotomy discussed by Pena?

GSM, Post-WWII Developments, 52-59 (RECOMMENDED)
Carlos Jesús Gómez Flores, "The Accordion on Both Sides of the Border," in Tejeda & Valdez, 71-80.

12-0222 The Emergence and Evolution of Orquestas Tejanas

GSM, Post-WWII Developments, 46-52
Pena, "The Emergence of the Modern Orquesta," 127-148,

Abstract #4 (Answer the following questions:
Discuss Pena's notion of the "ranchero/jaiton" polarity in musica Tejana and how both Gonzalez and Lopez "fractured" it. In what ways do the orquestas reflect the contradictions of tradition and modernity facing upwardly mobile Mexican Americans? Explain. Finally, does Professor San Miguel agree with him? Elaborate.)

13-0227 Mexican music in other parts of the country

Video: Zoot-Suit, 1981 (1 hr. 44 min, VS 1804)
Reyes/Waldman, "Lalo, Chico, & the Pre-Rock Era," 3-10

14-0301 Finish watching video

15-0306 Research Presentations 2

Part 4: Transformations, 1960s-1989

16-0308 History

17-0313 Spring break

18-0315 Spring break

19-0320 Changes/Continuities in Conjunto Music and women in conjuntos (discussion)

San Miguel, 61-69.

Pena, "Conjunto and the Chicano Movement," 115-117.

Cuéllar, "El Saxofón in Tejano and Norteno Music," in Tejeda & Valdez, 135-154

Valdez & J. A. Halley, "Why are There So Few Women Conjunto Artists?," in Tejeda & Valdez, 229-249.

Ramiro Burr, "Women in Conjunto Music," in Tejeda/Valdez, 85-96

Abstract #5 (Discuss some of the factors that have discouraged women from the recording industry. What role did gender discrimination play in this?)

20-0322 The Rise and Fall of the Modern Orquesta

San Miguel, 69-77

Reyes and Waldman, "The Founding Fathers of Chicano Rock 'n' Roll and R&B," 19-34

Pena, "La Onda Chicana," 150-183, 1999

Start watching La Bamba, (108 min, CMAS)

Written Assignment #1 is due.

21-0327 La Bamba, part II

22-0329 Discussion: Mexican American Music in California and the Chicano Movement

Chicano Power, in Reyes/Waldman, 103-111

Rock in Spanglish, in Reyes/Waldman, 111-125

Abstract #6 (provide a summary of one article)

23-0403 The Emergence of New Ensembles: Progressive Conjuntos, Grupos & Country Bands

San Miguel, "The Emergence of New Ensembles," 77-91

Pena, "Conclusion," 210-215.

Part 5: The 1990s and Beyond

- 24-0405 History: Immigration, Tejanos, and Music
- 25-0410 Musica Tejana at the Turn of the Century
San Miguel, The Era of Corporate Involvement,
1989-99, 92-112
- 26-0412 Additional Trends in the 1990s
San Miguel, Trends in Musica Tejana, 113-128
Jumping Jess, "Is Tejano Dying?"
**Abstract #7 (Provide a summary of the article and
discuss the factors indicative of the
decline of musica Tejana. Do you agree with
the author? Is there another possible
interpretation? Explain)**
- 27-0417 Musica Tejana in the 21st Century
- 28-0419 Mexican/Latin Music in the 21st Century

**Written assignment #2 (Attend a Latin nightclub
and do a critical review of its atmosphere, music,
clientele, and if possible bring a picture/s of the
club.)**

- 29-0424 Research presentations 3

Conclusion

- 30-0426 Summary of Historical Developments
Pass out Final Exam

Research Projects

For each research project you will select one topic and do a 3-5 page single-spaced paper. Discuss the origins and evolution of this topic. Also get a picture of the object/person under discussion. Use at least three different sources such as books, articles, internet articles, newspaper clippings, or interviews.

I. Research presentation 1 (session 6)

dance rhythms (polkas, redowas, chotis, waltz, mazurkas, one-step, two-step, huapango, ballads)

instruments

organ-synthesizer, harp, violin

guitars (bajo sexto, classical, psaltry, vihuela, mandolin, zither, tololoche/upright bass)

tuba, trumpet, trombone, clarinet, flute

saxophone (alto, tenor, bass)

accordion [piano, one-two-three-row button],

percussive instruments [drums, bells, bongo, conga, timbales]

II. Research presentation 2 (session 15)

R&B, R&R, rock, pop music

Song types (Cancion ranchera, Cancion romantica)

Trio music, mariachi

Blues, Boogie-woogie, Doo-wop, Be-bop

Swing, Big band music

Dance rhythms (boleros, danzon, mambo, porro, tango, guarachas, cha-cha-cha, rhumba)

III. Research presentations 3 (session 29)

Duranguense, tierra caliente, banda, grupos (onda grupera)

Rock en espanol, Reggaeton, Vallenato, Sonidero

Musica romantica, norteno, urban regional/Spanish rap

Dance rhythms (cumbias, rancheras, Salsa, Meringue, bachata)

Guidelines for research project

A small research project of between 12-15 double spaced typewritten pages is due at the end of the semester. The research project is worth 35% of your total grade. Suggested topics include the following:

1. An annotated bibliography of Ramiro Burr's writings for two consecutive years from 1994 to 2004. (Mr. Burr has been writing weekly articles on musica Tejana in particular and Latin music in general for over a decade.) The research project is group-based. Each person will be placed in a group of two or three individuals. The group will develop a list of Burr's writings for the selected years it has chosen to do. Its task is to find, read, and do an abstract of these articles. For each article you will state the purpose of the article, its structure or themes, and its major point or argument. Each abstract should be between three and six sentences long. The group also will do a collective assessment of the writings they read and summarized. This assessment (a maximum of one single-spaced typewritten page) will be turned in with the final draft of the annotated bibliography. The research project should be turned in as a hard copy and as a file in a floppy disk. The research project is due on Nov 10.
2. An oral history of an individual who has been involved in the Tejano music industry for at least ten years. (artist, dance promoter, DJ, song writer, dancer, record producer, record store owner, etc). My preference is to focus on a Tejano/norteno/Latin dancer.
3. A history of a particular Tejano/Mexican musical group or artist.
4. Analyze the lyrics of all the songs in two Spanish language album for any of the following groups: Selena, La Mafia, Mazz, Emilio, Shelly Lares, Intocable, Limite, or any other group approved by the faculty member.
5. A list of mini-biographies with discography and pictures of five current Tejano/Mexican groups. You also need to discuss the major themes covered in their lyrics and focus on their portrayals of women in them.
6. Develop your own research project and get faculty approval.

II. Research Timetable

Keep in mind the following deadlines.

<u>Research Assignments</u>	<u>Due date</u>	<u>Points</u>
selection of topic & major question you plan on investigating	8/30	2%
Selection of specific individual, group(s), CDs, or years	9/08	3%
An annotated bibliography of 5 sources or a set of questions/songs and a possible thesis statement	9/22	2%
A thesis statement and an outline of paper	10/13	5%
3 Examples of footnotes/endnotes	10/18	3%
Final paper	11/10	20%