

Dr. Alyson Buckman HRS 162: American Space and Identity Fall 2008
Area: C4, Discussion

Office: 2020 Mendocino Hall

Office Phone: 278-5335

Office Hours: TR 10-11am,

e-mail: abuckman@csus.edu

T 4-4:30, R 4:30-5pm & by appt.

Required:

1. Texts available at bookstore:

- a. Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction*
- b. Paredes, Americo. *George Washington Gomez*

2. Packet, available at University Copy and Print. Materials from packet also on reserve

3. WebCT materials

4. Materials presented in class

Texts on Reserve (2HR): (alternative to buying course pack and/or textbooks)

a. Books:

- i) Anzaldua, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*
- ii) Paredes, Americo. *George Washington Gomez*
- iii) *Urban Latino Cultures/ La vida latina en L.A.*, Eds. Michael Dear, et al.
- iv) Zukin, Sharon. (4) *Whose Culture, Whose City? And After the World Trade Center* (required); *Point of Purchase, Landscapes of Power* (recommended)
- v) Cresswell, Tim. *Place* (if I'm able to get another copy to put on reserve)
- vi) Recommended: Simpson, John W. *Visions of Paradise*; Tompkins, Jane. *West of Everything*.

b. Chapters/Articles:

- i) Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. Pages 1-67 from *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*
- ii) Marback, Richard, Editor. *Cities, Cultures, Conversations* (Jim Burklo and bell hooks articles, pgs. 61-76)
- iii) Zukin, Sharon. *The Cultures of Cities*, pgs. 1-46

Catalog Description: Examination of the ways in which physical spaces and places within America contribute to the formation of American identities and vice versa. Interdisciplinary and topically organized, analyzes both exterior and interior spaces: city, suburb, regions, body, mind, and the borderlands, to name a few. Also studies the interaction of race, class, gender, and sexuality with space and identity.

Course Description: Fundamental to this course is the way in which physical spaces within America contribute to the formation of American identities and vice versa. Both historical and contemporary interactions between Americans and their environment will be examined. Topically, we will be exploring exterior spaces, including those of the city and suburb; interior spaces, including those of the body and mind; as well as those which cross interior/exterior boundaries, such as the borderlands. The ways in which popular culture and race, class, gender, and sexuality impact upon the construction of particular spaces also will be a part of this examination. A variety of fields will be included in our assaying of the territory: cultural geography, landscape studies, gender studies, history, literature, sociology, and art are only some of the fields with which we will connect.

Course Objectives: The goals for your learning in this course include:

- An understanding of:
 - o the ways in which multiple disciplines come together to create meaning

- o how particular disciplines construct meaning
- o the ways in which the construction of space within America constructs us as individuals and vice versa
- o the ways in which the both internal and external spaces are represented
- A demonstration of visual literacy
- The ability to compare and contrast the experiences of diverse populations within the United States in relationship to space and place
- The ability to apply the techniques of formal analysis to a variety of texts
- The ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written formats

Coursework: Your grade will consist of participation, multiple short essays, a presentation and a long essay. Work is to be turned in at the beginning of the class in which it is due (exception: see presentation, below). If you have problems completing an assignment, please talk to me. Otherwise, late assignments will be penalized 5 points starting on the day they are due (if not turned in at the beginning of class) and each day thereafter. Exams may not be made up or rescheduled unless a compelling and verifiable emergency occurs.

▪**Presentations:** You will sign up for one presentation. This presentation will consist of an outline of the main points of the assigned reading, a discussion of the ways in which space and identity are explored in the reading, commentary about the arguments involved, and discussion starters. Above average presentations (i.e. A and B grades) will do more than summarize and will actively engage the class in critical thinking. You will need to produce visual aids (ex. PowerPoint) for your presentation, and these are due by the end of the class prior to the class in which they are being presented so that they may be uploaded onto WebCT prior to class. Points will be taken off for tardy submission. (If your presentation is due on a Thursday, your visuals are due on Tuesday)

▪**Essays:** Essays should be typed, double-spaced, and have 1” margins. The font and its size should be normal. Please staple your essays. Don’t bother with plastic or cardboard covers or folders. At the top of the first page, single-spaced, include a descriptive title for your paper in addition to tagging information (your name/the date/essay #).

Research Essay. The research essay will consist of an analysis of the construction of space in a particular piece of film, music, literature, or other artwork. Use specific evidence from the text with which you are working, including direct quotes or visual references. Do not simply summarize or describe the piece! Students will present their papers to the class. Demonstrate why these references or quotes support your argument. You will need to use a specified number of sources for this essay. More information will follow.

Common courtesies: Please do not come to class late, since it disrupts both the other students and the professor. If you know that you are going to be late or have to leave early, you should inform the instructor prior to class in order to minimize disruption. Due to the recent proliferation of inappropriate use of laptops in the classroom, laptops are not allowed in class without prior approval. Cell phones should be turned off, and no texting should occur in class.

Academic Integrity: Please turn in work that is solely your own. Appropriate credit must be given to the work of other authors that is used; this includes the proper use of paraphrasing and quoting as well as citation within and at the end of the paper. If you are unsure about what this means, please come and speak with me. Plagiarism is not an option: it can mean failure of an assignment, failure of a class, and/or expulsion from the university. In this class, it will mean a zero for the assignment. If you are uncertain what plagiarism is, please see me. Additionally, you should examine the following URL: <http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353>

****10/9 Short Essay 3 due;** TBA

10/14 Fernandez and Chornesky, "Bars and Belonging" *Urban Latino Cultures: La Vida Latina En L.A.*, 35-44; Alcaraz, Lalo, "L.A. Cucaracha Urban Sketch Journal." *Urban Latino Cultures*, 83-90; Gonzalez, Robert Alexander, "Learning from East L.A." *Urban Latino Cultures*, 185-198;

Purpose: what are the patterns of inclusion and exclusion in cities, bars, and art? How do specific cultures produce art and narratives in regard to the space around them? How are cities constructed in our imaginary productions?

Weeks 7-10 (10/16-11/6): Suburban and Small Town Spaces

10/16-****10/23** *The Gilmore Girls* and the American Dream

****10/23 Short Essay 4 due**

10/28 TBA

10/30 no class

11/4-11/6 TBA

Purpose: Examine how suburbs and small towns function. How do people relate to each other and what are the social, economic, and cultural parameters in and of them? How do master statuses exert influence upon the suburban experience? Do they? How have filmmakers critiqued the suburbs?

****Weeks 11-12:** (11/11-11/20) *Student Presentations of Research*

Week 13 (11/25-11/27):

11/25 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ la Frontera*, chaps. 1, 2, 5

11/27 No class

Week 14: (12/2-12/4): Borderland Spaces/ Space as Resistance:

12/2-12/4 Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*

Purpose: To analyze how Others relate to the margin and the center, using Mexico-US relationship as example. Can the margin be a space of liberation as well as constriction or exile?

****Week 15 12/9-12/11:** Wrap up. ****12/9 Short Essay 5 Due**

Turn in Research Essay by 12/16 at noon.