CHSTU 340 Latina/o Theater
Spring 2004
Professor Habell-Pallán
Take Home Mid-Term Essay
Due: 4/29
Length: 1250-1750 words

General Paper Requirements

This paper requires at least four different references to an outside source (an academic periodical/journal or chapter from a book in English or Spanish) that not been assigned as a class reading.

You are required to document your findings using the Chicago Manual of Style format for your bibliographic citation.

You will not receive full credit without documentary citation.

Grading criteria is located at the end of these instructions.

Essay Requirements

*1 Underline your thesis statement.
*2 Have paper proof-read at one of the writing centers. Staple your first version to your final draft. See page 4 of these instructions for contract information on writing centers.
*4 The paper should be no less than 1250 words and no more than 1750 words (each page = 250 words).
*5 The paper should be typed and double-spaced. If you can, please print it on recycled, unbleached paper, or blue-paper.

Library Research Workshop

Library research that is required to find your outside source might be quite familiar to you, or might be a brand new experience. Either way, I have consulted with librarian Harry Murphy and he is prepared to help you with your library searches for this paper. He is extremely helpful.

Attendance is mandatory for a library research workshop. Facilitated by Harry Murphy on Friday April 16. 1:30-2:20. Suzzallo Library Instruction Room.

In addition, Mr. Murphy will accept your email request to make an appointment to consult with him. His email is: maurice@u.washington.edu.

Specific Page Requirements
Select a play, performance, or acto assigned from Week I to Week V.

Your paper is an exercise in dramaturgy. Throughout the course we have emphasized the need to take account of the importance of the historical context of each play/performance/acto. Historical context involves the time period and place of action.

Dramaturgy is the research about the historical and cultural context of a play/performance/acto or for a play, or a specific element within a play/performance/act.

One needs to do this type of research in order to relate the historical context to the play, so that you may perform an informed interpretation of it. In other words, it is your job to make the link between the historical and cultural context of the play and the themes of the play.

Remember to quote directly from the play/performances/actos to support your argument and point of view. In class we have focused mostly on background information: this is your chance to focus on the scripts.

Paper Ideas

The following are a list of suggestions for the topic of your paper. Please do not copy my suggestions word for word. I want to you select a play and an issue that is important to you.

(1) If you are interested in Zoot Suit, one way to approach the play is to research what Zoot Suits symbolized during World War II to Mexican American /Chicano youth and what it meant to soldiers (both Anglo and Mexican Americans). Or you might investigate who and why Hollywood actors during the trial formed a Sleepy Lagoon defense league. Another way to approach the play would be to examine why the character Hank Reyna is torn between the decision to remain a "zooter" or to enlist in the military service. Then, investigate the historical reasons that would both compel or repel a young Mexican American to enlist during the 1940s. Using that information, write a character biography that will help to explain his motivations. For instance, tell us where and when he was born, was his family rich or poor, what was his relationship to his parents, how did he do in school, etc…*explain your thinking along the way*. Base that biography on information you find about the "real" enlistees in your search. Or you might choose to write a biography of the Pachuco character, or perhaps the women characters. You can then research about gender norms of young Latinas during that historical moment to provide material for your character biography. You might to the same for any of the characters in Vietnam Campesino. Then you will need to research about Chicanos in the Vietnam War.

An excellent place to start that research is the UW library's Information Gateway database. Look under the catalog index AMERICA: HISTORY and LIFE and type in Hispanic Americans and military service. That will get you started.
(2). If you are interested in writing about \textit{Latins Anonymous} you might start with identifying and examining the characters who struggling with assimilation vs acculturation. What did these character have to gain or lose by acculturating. Again, you might choose to write a character biography using information from a search based on "The Decade of the Hispanic" (use this phrase in your library search to get started). You might want to investigate how social attitudes towards young Latinos that would compel them to assimilate or "lose" their ethnicity. Why would need a Latins Anonymous group to help the characters through their "Latin Denial"? You might want to focus on "Las Comadres" and describe and question what each of the Latina immigrants have to gain or lose by being so close-minded about Latino immigrants different from them. Investigate what some of the forces that compelled them to immigrate to the U.S during the 1980 from places like Central America. Why did they end up in Los Angeles? Give us some general information on Latino immigration and population growth during the 1980s. How did that growth create tension between new immigrants and Chicanos, Mexican Americans, and Latinos that where U.S born in Latins Anonymous. For instance, what were the differences between their hopes and desires in the play?

(3). A compelling essay might examine any of the Guillermo Gomez-Pena performance pieces in the reader ("Freefalling Toward a Borderless Future"; "Glossary of Borderismos"; "The Free Trade Art Agreement/El tratado de libre cultura"; "News from Aztlan Liberado") through the lens of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The characters that Gomez-Pena performs are caught in the cultural implications of NAFTA. In order to shed light on those characters and their motivations, and to write a character biography, one needs to understand what NAFTA refers to and to the way the national borders between Mexico, the U.S., and Canada are reconceptualized. His characters embody "hybrid" or mestizo identities that often complicate simple understandings of "multiculturalism." Investigate the pros and cons of the multiculturalism debate that began in the 1980s and continues through the 1990s and describe how that informs the characters's points-of-views. The characters also refer to the struggle of the Zapatistas. Investigate the relation between NAFTA and the Zapatistas and how that relationship informs the performance pieces.

4) Another compelling essay would discuss why the women characters \textit{Fat-Free Chicana} and the \textit{Snow Cap Queen} are obsessed by their relationship to food. One interpretation of the play illustrates they way in which women are constantly under-pressure to ensure that their bodies meet the standard dictated by mass-media. You might want to investigate the way young Latinas's conceptions about their bodies have changed over time. You may choose to write a character biography for Amy (or any other character) with this information. Another way to interpret the play is to understand it as a class conflict embedded within a generational conflict. When Amy's mami says "I need a dictionary to talk to you" she is implying more than I can't talk to you. What is shy implying? In addition, the character also must make a choice about entering middle-class life (via her college education) and either leaving behind or taking her working-class cousin. Either way, it will be helpful to you to understand the history and experiences of Mexican Americans and Chicanos in New Mexico (since it is quite different from experiences in Washington, California, Texas, and the rest of the southwest). You might want to research into the recent controversy about teaching "Chicano history" in public
schools in New Mexico in order to write a biography of the character of Rumaldo whose "murals" with their bold and pruned Chicano aesthetic, cause a stir in his home town (which can be read as veiled reference to the controversy in the New Mexican public schools).

***Note: You can mix and match topics with plays I haven't explicitly mentioned in the suggestions. Just be sure to explain yourself as you go along. In other words, whatever your topic or and your thesis, your paper ought to be an analytical one and not merely a report on historical data.

¡Buena Suerte! I know you have the potential to write a great paper. Please come by office hours to talk about your paper.

**GRADING CRITERIA**
The excellent paper will have a precise focus, it will have a clear thesis statement (in this case your thesis statement will be in the form of a response) it will be based on close consideration of extracts from the readings, revealing clearly the relationship between themes and social context. It will convey points clearly and effectively. It will reveal a thoughtful analysis of literary, video and historical texts. It will offer an interpretation, rather than simply summarizing sources. It will have been proof-read at one of the writing centers. It will have your first version stapled to your final version. Finally, it will cite clearly and logically from directly from the articles and other readings and it will have few or no typos. It will also footnote the library research article. (Grade=A)

The average paper will have a fairly precise focus, it will have a fairly clear thesis statement, and it will be based more often than not on close consideration of extracts from the readings. The paper will convey points clearly and effectively. It will reveal an attempt at thoughtful analysis of literary, video and historical texts, and it will endeavor to offer an interpretation, although it may spend too much time simply summarizing sources. It will not have been proof-read at one of the writing centers. It will mention the articles and other readings (but not cite them directly) and it will have typos. It will attempt to footnote the library research article. (Grade=C)

The below-average paper will not be well-focused, will have an unclear thesis statement, and will be supplemented with apparently random details from a few of the literary, video and historical texts. The paper itself will either be too short or much too long, and will not convey supporting points clearly or effectively. It will NOT reveal a thoughtful analysis of both the critical and literary texts, nor will it offer an interpretation, it will most likely focus on summarizing a few random passages. It will not have been proof-read at one of the writing centers. It will have many typos and will omit the library article footnote. (Grade=D/F)

**WRITING CENTER INFO**
I. AES Writing Center
   Email for appointment: writing@u.washington.edu

II. OMA Instructional Center - Writing Center
   Address: 1307 NE 40th between Brooklyn and University Way
Phone:  (206) 543-4240/ Hours:  8:30am-5:00pm

III. Dept of English Writing Center
Address:  B-12 Padelford Hall
Phone:    (206) 685-2876/ Hours:      10:30am-5:30pm

IV. CLUE (Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment).
Address:  Mary Gates Hall
Times:  7pm to midnight.