

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY



MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence.

**DM 2385 — LATINO
THEATRE ACTIVISM
(syllabus extract)**

Spring 2023

**Drama Department, Treadaway Hall, 3rd Floor
Tues/Thur, 12:35-1:50 pm
300 Treadaway Hall**

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Office Hours: M- TH 1:30 -3 pm
and ZOOM by appointment
ZOOM ID: 4700780297

*The injustices of the world are like weeds,
and if you do nothing they'll choke your whole garden, man.*
Luis Valdez

Course Description

This course examines issues of power, social identity, and social injustice through the performative lens of Latino Theatre from its origins in California of the 1960s to today. Through the works of playwrights including Luis Valdez, Luis Alfaro, María Sánchez Scott, Cherrie Moraga and performance groups El Teatro Campesino and Culture Clash, we'll see how teatro is used as an "evocative irritant" to examine lifestyle, family, politics, and religion in its celebration of Latino culture.

Learning Outcomes

1. Examine Latino history and culture
2. Understand social contributions of Latino playwrights at both community and national levels
3. Examine the social, religious, and cultural context in which theatre is created and performed
4. Communicate how theatre is used as social activism to improve conditions and cultural perceptions
5. Demonstrate working together in a collaborative environment

Course Materials

Readings posted to CANVAS and the following texts:

- *Theatre of the Sphere*; Valdez, Luis; Routledge; 2022; ISBN: 978-0367619473
- *Zoot Suit and Other Plays*; Valdez, Luis; Arte Publico Press; 1992; ISBN: 978-1558850484
- *Mummified Deer and Other Plays*; Valdez, Luis; Arte Publico Press; 2005; ISBN: 978-1558854178
- *Takin' It To The Streets*; Elam, Jr., Harry; Univ. of Michigan Press; 2001; ISBN: 978-0472087686
- *Chicano Popular Culture, Second Edition: Que Hable el Pueblo (The Mexican American Experience)*; Tatum., Charles M.; Univ. of Arizona Press; 2017; ISBN: 978-0816536528

Course Requirements

Class Participation	10%
Journal Entries	25%
Short Essays (4 at 10% each)	40%
Final Project	25%

Class Participation (10%)

Attentive and contributory involvement with class discussion, both answering and posing questions.

Journal Entries (25%)

A running interactive Canvas commentary on the course material by posing questions, doubts, connections, articulating opposing viewpoints, etc. Entries should be a minimum of 500 words, posted no later than noon the day due. The journal is a place to comment on readings, class discussions, express your thoughts, investigate any cultural/sociological/historical references, and develop your understanding of theatre.

Short Essays (4 at 10% each = 40%)

Short essays allow you to critically respond to a topic addressed in class discussions or readings. While writing a two to three (2-3) page essay, you'll examine your understanding of the topic, how it relates to your personal experiences, and connect it to applicable current events/social conditions.

Final Project (25%)

Group performance of a scene from one of the plays read for class. Each group will also present a production portfolio consisting of their original dramaturgical analysis on the play and playwright, with details to be discussed in class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Changes to the following will be announced in class and posted on CANVAS.

WEEK	CONTENT
ONE	Storytelling for Social Change
TWO	Social Activism Before Social Media
THREE	Latino History and Culture
FOUR	Luis Valdez
FIVE	Teatro Campesino
SIX	Teatro Campesino
SEVEN	Valdez and Hollywood – <i>Zoot Suit</i> (1981)
EIGHT	Valdez and Hollywood – <i>LaBamba</i> (1987)
NINE	Culture Clash
TEN	Culture Clash
ELEVEN	Luis Alfaro’s Greek Trilogy: <i>Electricidad, Oedipus El Rey, Mojada</i>
TWELVE	Latina Voices – Anne García-Romero’s <i>Juanita’s Statue</i>
THIRTEEN	Latina Voices – María Sánchez Scott’s <i>Roosters</i>
FORTEEN	Latina Voices – Cherrie Moraga’s <i>Heroes & Saints</i>
FIFTEEN	COURSE WRAP-UP