Interethnic diversity … there is no better place to study it than L.A. In addition to the fact that most of the LA’s four million residents are ethnic minorities, the region is a major gateway for immigrants to the U.S. and also boasts an intermarriage rate three times the national average. LA is also diverse in many other ways—class, language, religious affiliation, as well as lifestyle practices.

Because of its unique history and status as a “global city,” as well as the fact that motion picture and television production are two of its major industries, Los Angeles is also the setting and sometimes one of the “main characters” of numerous films and TV programs.

Through a close analysis of filmic texts that feature LA and its inhabitants, we will investigate the course theme. What can we learn about interethnic diversity in these movies? How are ethnic interactions portrayed in films set in Los Angeles? How is the city itself characterized—its landscapes, architecture, and topography? And how well does the fiction match up with the reality?

**texts**

- George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*
- Pierrette Hondagneu Sotelo, *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadow of Affluence*
- Josh Sides, *L.A City Limits: African American Los Angeles From the Great Depression to the Present*
- Anna Deavere Smith, *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*
- Robert Gooding-Williams (ed), *Reading Rodney King, Reading Urban Uprising*
- Mark Vallianatos, *The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City* [optional]
- Handouts + Reader
course requirements

• **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION** (10%)  
  You are allowed one excused absence, without notification. The material and assignments for both lecture and screening are closely linked to one another. Hence, it is to your benefit to attend all lectures and screenings. *(Note: Coming to class/section LATE will adversely affect your grade. Also, absences due to illnesses will only be excused with a doctor's note.)*

• **WEEKLY REFLECTION AND CONTRIBUTION > ON-LINE DISCUSSION** (15%)  
  You are responsible for contributing to an on-line discussion of the week's movie and readings <blackboard.usc.edu>. Your post must:
  - Be at least 500 words
  - Address the primary film (and readings) for the week
  - Respond to the posts already up for that week
  - Include at least one question you have about the materials
  All reflections are due **4:00pm on Friday** on the week the film is screened.

• **POP QUIZZES** (10%)

• **PAPER** (20%) Due Wednesday 2.21 in my box > ACB 130

• **MIDTERM EXAM** (10%) Monday, 3.26

• **CLASS PROJECT** (20%) *More details to follow*

• **CLASS PRESENTATION** (15%) Friday, 5.04, 2-4pm

policies | resources

• **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**  
  At USC, academic dishonesty includes: *plagiarism, cheating on exams, unauthorized collaboration, and falsifying academic records.* In AMST 202, I have adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards such acts. Any student caught engaging in any of these behaviors will be reported to the Office for Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards; and will receive an automatic “Fail” for the course. For more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty and USC’s ethical standard, see: *Trojan Integrity: A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Academic Dishonesty; and Trojan Integrity: A Guide for Avoiding Plagiarism.* Both documents can be downloaded at <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/acadresources.html>.

• **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**  
  Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSPO. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSPO is 213-740-0776 <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/asn/dsp/index.htm>.

• **STRESS**  
  Students are under pressure. If you feel overwhelmed, contact the USC Student Counseling Services office at 213-740-7711. This free service is confidential. <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/Health_Center/cs.index.shtml>
<table>
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<th>Schedule</th>
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| **0108** | Introduction  
*Screen* Double Indemnity |
| **0115** | Holiday  
*Read* Howard Winant, *TITLE*  
Mike Davis, “Sunshine or Noir?”  
| **0122** |  
*Read* George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*  
Richard Rodriguez, “Hispanic”  
*Screen* My Family, Mi Familia |
| **0129** |  
*Read* Pierrette Hondagneu Sotelo, *Doméstica*  
*Screen* El Norte |
| **0205** |  
*Read* Josh Sides, *L.A City Limits*  
*Screen* Devil with the Blue Dress |
| **0212** | Open day |
| **0219** | **PAPER DUE**  
There is no class this week. However your midterm paper is due  
**Wednesday, February 21st** > my box, ACB 130 |
| **0305** |  
*Read* Keith Osajima, “Asian Americans as the Model Minority”  
Lucie Cheng and Philip Q. Yang, “The ‘Model Minority’ Deconstructed”  
Claire Jean Kim, “Racial Triangulation”  
*Screen* Better Luck Tomorrow |
| **0312** | **Break** |
| **0319** | **Midterm Review**  
*Screen* Falling Down |
| **0326** | **Midterm**  
*Screen* Crash |
| **0402** |  
*Read* Jeff Chang and Sylvia Chan, “Can White Hollywood Get Race Right?” |
| **0409** |  
*Read* Mark Vallianatos, *The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City* [excerpts]  
*Screen* Bread and Roses |
| **0416** |  
*Read* Anna Deveare Smith, *Twilight*  
*Screen* Twilight |
| **0423** |  
*Read* Gooding-Williams, *Reading Rodney King*, 1-3, 12, 13, 15 |
| **0430** | **Class Project DUE**  
**FINAL PRESENTATIONS** & Wrap Up |
| **0504** | 2-4pm  
**FINAL PRESENTATIONS** |
Compare either *My Family/Mi Familia* or *El Norte* or *Devil in a Blue Dress* with one of the films above/below. Questions you might want to consider in your analysis include:

- How do the two films differ in their portrayal of Latinos or Africans Americans in a Los Angeles setting? What similarities (if any) do they share?

- In terms of the politics of representation, what intervention(s) do these films make? Or do they simply reinforce cultural stereotypes? How so?

- What do these movies have to say about interethnic diversity in LA? What do you believe to be the filmmaker’s prognosis?

Be sure to pay attention to genre (e.g., comedy, drama) and historical context. I am not looking for a summary of the movie plot. In other words, only summarize when it is absolutely necessary, e.g., to draw attention to certain details in a scene. I am more interested in smart observation(s) linked to a detailed analysis of certain themes, symbols, characters, or techniques, than a paper that tries to be comprehensive and cover too many bases.

**SPECS**

- 4-5 pages
- double-spaced
- original title
- all sources properly cited