CHICANO PARK DOCUMENTATION PROJECT – COMMUNITY SERVICE MULTIMEDIA PROJECT

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

- The purpose of this course is to guide students toward a deeper understanding, reflection and appreciation of the Chicano/Latino experience in the United States.

- For this semester – we specifically examine the Chican@ experience in San Diego, California through the actions and expressions that established and continue to sustain Chicano Park in Barrio Logan.
April 22, 1970 marks the establishment of Chicano Park in San Diego, California. It represents a visible and concrete marker of political awareness and mobilization in the quest for self-determination by community members, both young and old, guided by the historical vision of the Chicana/o people in Aztlán, to reclaim a “piece of land” that they could call their own.

Out of this historic vision emerged a series of creative expressions that breathed life into the development and evolution of Chicana and Chicano cultural expressions that have given shape and purpose to Chicano Park.
As a Community Service Learning Course, ETHN 343 embarks on a project that captures and tells the story of some of these community cultural expressions with the people who brought them to life.

Students will be assigned a mentor/guide from the community who they will work with closely to generate a public and political biography of each of these community member’s lives. These community mentors/guides have been chosen from the membership of the Chicano Park Steering Committee and represent active agents of history who played key roles in the establishment, historical development and evolution of Chicano Park.

Students will work closely with Ms. Cara McMahon who will assist students on the community-based component of the course from the Office of Community Service Learning who has been assigned to work with this class and will assist in coordinating and advising students on the community-based component of the course.
Chicano Park Documentation Project

- Through the collection of oral histories students will document:
  - 1) the history of Chicano Park
  - 2) Chicana/o history; and
  - 3) five unique aspects of Chicana and Chicano cultural expression that emerged as a result of the vision and work that went into the establishment and evolution of Chicano Park.

- The five Chicana/o cultural expressions to be captured in this project for the 2011 Spring semester are as follows:
ETHN 343 Mentors

- **Chicano Art** as captured in the public and political biography of Victor Ochoa.
- **Chicano Music** as captured through the life of Ramon Chunky Sanchez.
- **Community Organizing** as lived through the life of Tommie Camarillo.
- **Danzant e (Indigenous Dance)** as represented in the life of Rosa Olga Navarro.
- **Chicano car culture (low riders)** as lived and experienced by Rigo Reyes.
The final product of this semester-long project will be to produce five public and political biographies of the individuals and topics (community cultural expressions) identified above. These biographies will be reviewed and approved by the Chicano Park Steering Committee and will then be uploaded to the Department of Ethnic Studies Website.

http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/es/students/chicano_park.php
The mission of the Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of San Diego is to build and sustain an interdisciplinary, integrated and academically rigorous program and curriculum that examines the intersections of race, class, gender and sexuality. It is guided by the idea of students validating their lives and theorizing their histories with creative and community-focused methodologies that can be directly applied in the local community and region.
1. Inter-subjectivity/ Reflexivity
   A. Questioning Objectivity
2. Emerging Epistemologies
   A. Reinterpretive Agenda
   B. Master vs. Counter Narrative(s) Discourse
3. Applied Research
   A. Focus on Social Change (social justice)
   B. Focus on Community (human dignity)
4. Interdisciplinary Scholarship Interdisciplinarity/Matrix
PAR creates a public space where researchers and participants can reshape their understanding of how political, educational, social, economic, and familial contexts mediate people’s lives.

PAR places an emphasis on people’s lived experiences, the individual, and on social change, the construction of knowledge, and the notion of action as a legitimate mode of knowing, thereby taking the realm of knowledge into the field of practice.
Integration of Ethnic Studies and Community Service Learning

**Applied Research:**
“Social change” and “creating community”:
Our collective responsibility

- What is it that we as a community all share in common?
- Identify perceived challenges we all identify in common?
- Identify things (issues) that we all might agree to—but if we could have our way—would wish to collectively change?
- Are we interested in embarking on the journey?
- If so, what do we do and how do we do it?
- Let’s identify and publically commit to these changes.
- How will we know that we are actually changing?
- Long-term plan
The Recursive Process of PAR

- Questioning
- Refining
- Developing Plan
- Implementing
- Investigating
- Reflecting
Outcomes: Student Voices:

- The Chicano Park Documentation Project is important to me because as a native San Diegan I feel it is my responsibility to know the true histories of communities in San Diego as told by those who took part in rewriting their history. The mentors we are working with from Chicano Park were, and still are, vital champions of the Chicano movement, and I am so honored and humbled to be working alongside them. — Bianca Bruno
Outcomes: Student Voices:

- The Chicano Park Documentation Project has made me realize the importance of each of our family's history... If we do not ask our grandparents about their stories... their narratives and stories will be lost forever. Chicano Park is trying to maintain this history of struggle, effort, community building, and collaboration. Our mentors are telling us their stories and their involvement in Chicano Park and how this place is significant for them. They want to let others know about this struggle and effort so that when they are gone they know they can trust the next generation to continue this cultural and historical tradition. — Guadalupe Abreo
Outcomes: Student Voices:

- The Chicano Park Documentation Project has allowed me to appreciate and view Chicano Park in a novel way; the history behind the inception of the park and the struggles that continue to ensue have been overcome, in part, because of the people that have stood by it. It amazed me to learn that Chicano Park Day, now going into its 41st year, is put on solely by volunteers- everyone from the organizers, to the performers, to the entertainment- so that the community may be able to come together. I now realize that Chicano Park, in a way, is a tangible embodiment of the decades of struggle, hard work, dedication, and perseverance exemplified by members of the community.— Anayensi Jacobo
Chicano Park was founded on April 22, 1970 by Chicano activists and Barrio Logan residents, who joined forces to protest the construction of a Highway Patrol station on this site. Led by community activists and artists, protesters took over the site and faced bulldozers and police while negotiations were being held with city and state officials. The outcome resulted in turning over the land to the community to create a park. And not just any park. One of the goals for Chicano Park was to transform the old gray concrete and noise-filled dirt into a beautiful, cultural and spiritual showcase honoring the Barrio Logan community and the Chicano activists who fought for the creation of a park.

With this goal in mind, the Chicano Park Steering Committee was created in April 1970 to oversee the continuing development and expansion of Chicano Park and to ensure the park would be developed in a Chicano/Mexican/Indigenous style. Another objective of the CPCSP is to stretch Chicano Park "All the Way to the Bay" from Interstate 5 to the San Diego Bay. Today, Chicano Park and the famous murals are visited by millions of visitors from all over the world. As one of the world’s largest outdoor public art galleries, the murals in Chicano Park reveal the social, political and cultural issues that symbolize the past and present struggle and self-determination of the Chicano/Mexican people. Que Viva Chicano Park!