Description
SPAN 569: Topics in Jotería Studies is a graduate-level seminar in which faculty and students work to create a space for engaging with arts, activism and scholarship emerging from queer Latin@/Chican@ experiences and consciousness. This course seeks to integrate theory, activism and performance as tools of liberation, consciousness raising, and healing. Because of the bilingual nature of cultural expression in US Latin@ communities, knowledge of both Spanish and English is highly recommended. This 3-credit course meets 3 hours per week.

Objectives/Goals
Participants in SPAN 569 should leave the course prepared to approach issues such as race, ethnicity, class, ability, sexual and affectional orientations, etc. from a queer Latin@/Chican@ perspective, to understand and value the perspectives, cultural contributions and life experiences of our Jotería, and to cultivate attitudes and skills required to support the needs of LGBTQ Latin@s/Chican@s.

Outcomes
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of semiotic systems and how they operate in written and oral language, film, and visual arts to represent and, consequently, reshape Jot@ identities and experiences.
- Describe several theoretical approaches to stereotyping and reference them when analyzing portrayals of queer Latin@ identities in different types of cultural products (film, literature, etc.).
- Identify and critique models of Latin@ masculinity/femininity found in Latin American and US societies.
- Critique specific representations of LGBTQ Latin@s in literature, TV, film or other visual media with attention to ways in which they are oppressive, stereotypical, dehumanizing or empowering and affirming.
- Read, analyze, understand, and perform work produced within the Jotería movement.
- Demonstrate understanding of the terminology used in Latino and dominant cultures to refer to concepts related to LGBTQ identities and experiences and use affirming language in all writing and class discussions.
- Produce liberating representations of Latin@ identities through creative writing, video, photography or another creative medium and explain your efforts in writing using semiotics and/or other relevant theories.
Resources
Readings are provided on Bb and are taken from a variety of sources including (but not limited to) the following:


**Films**


Cardoso, P. (Director). (2002). *Real women have curves* [DVD].


Portugal, C. (Producer & Director). *East Side story* [DVD].

Schnabel, J. (Director). (2001). *Antes que anochezca* [DVD].


**Adult Content**

It is really not possible to fully explore representations of LGBTQ identities and experiences without encountering sexually explicit content. Nearly all of what we will examine in class is readily available from mainstream sources like Amazon or Netflix, but please be aware that there will be some nudity and a great deal of very frank language in materials used in this course. I will make an effort to identify in advance when films or other assigned materials have particularly strong content (e.g. non-simulated penetrative acts, sexual violence, etc.) and allow you to propose an alternative assignment or excuse yourself for a few moments.

**Dialogic Pedagogy**

As mentioned in the course goals and outcomes, this class is structured around critical inquiry. This is a practice associated with critical pedagogy, an educational model developed in Latin America in the last century as a tool of empowerment for socially underprivileged people. The aim is not to memorize pre-determined content, but to engage in dialog with the world in order to construct knowledge that is personally relevant and socially meaningful—knowledge that may lead us toward a transformed, equitable society. The participants in the conversation are faculty, students, the experts whose work we
encounter (through film, poetry, academic writing), and others who are directly affected by
the topics that we are choosing to examine together. The success of this model depends on
each participant’s willingness to take an active part in the construction of new insights. As
we will quickly learn when we begin to look at the basic concepts of semiotics, there is no
predetermined truth about sexual identity to be found and transmitted anyway; we
construct and reconstruct sexual identities (personally and collectively) in a dynamic way.

Discussion Guidelines
We will be discussing topics that may produce strong emotional responses. In order to
create an environment that allows us to have productive discussions, please observe the
following guidelines. We can add more suggestions later if the need arises:

1) Respect your classmates’ privacy. What happens in Jotería Studies class stays in Jotería
   Studies class. Unless you explicitly ask for and receive permission, do not share
   information you learn in class about people with anybody else. I want participants to be
   able to take advantage of this opportunity for open discussion without having to pay the
   price of having their business become everyone else’s. It’s especially inappropriate to out
   someone; your indiscretion can damage relationships or subject people to violence or
discrimination.

2) Speak only for yourself. Nobody in the class has the insight or authority to speak for all
   straight people, all gay people, all Latin@’s, or even for their best buddy. Tell us what you
   feel or believe and acknowledge that others experience the world differently.

3) Take turns speaking in an orderly manner. I’d rather avoid the traditional instructor role
   of controlling access to the discussion, so please find a way to take turns so that everyone
can say what they need to say without interruption and without having a few people
   dominate the conversation.

4) Listen to what people say. The periods of time in which others are talking are not just
   meant as time for you to start figuring out what you’re going to say next. Listen first, then
   respond. If that means there’s some silence between contributions, great. While people
   are talking, pay attention not only to their words, but the emotion in their voices, their
   facial expressions and other non-verbal cues. Be aware of your own expressions, laughs,
gestures, etc. and how they may be interpreted by others in the conversation.

5) Use humanizing language. When you take issue with something said in class, respond to
   the idea without attacking the person. LGBTQ students will have the latitude to use
whatever terms they find empowering to refer to themselves, but all students will refrain
from calling others “fag,” “joto,” etc. without explicit prior permission and will avoid
using similarly derogatory terms in discussion or in their written work for the course
except in analysis or criticism.

Assessment and Grading
Assessment comes in two main flavors—formative and summative. Formative assessment
is the kind of feedback you get during the quarter that helps you plan your educational
experience. In this class, formative assessment comes from self assessment and peer
interactions as well as from the instructor. If you want extra feedback on a project or
activity please contact me by email, post a message in a discussion thread, or stop by
during office hours.
Summative assessment in our case means final course grades. In this class, grades will be reported by each student and confirmed with the instructor in a personal interview during finals week. The grade proposed by each student must be supported by the quantity and quality of work included in a final course portfolio that is due at the time of your interview. Your portfolio may contain items of personal interest, but be sure you provide evidence of having met the course objectives and outcomes listed above. There are certain elements that are required to be present in order to pass the course that you will find listed below. Anything else that helps demonstrate knowledge of the course objectives may also be included.

Although the portfolio is used for your final grade, the intended ‘audience’ for the portfolio is really you. Include enough explanation and structure so that you can pick it up in five or ten years and understand what you studied, what resources you used, and where to go next with your exploration of the topic. You will take your portfolio with you after your interview.

In the unlikely event that grade you present in your final interview is not adequately supported by the work you have collected or if there appears to have been academic misconduct during the term, I will seek additional input from colleagues in my department before reaching a decision on what grade should be entered.

In order to keep evaluations consistent, please use the following definitions to describe the quality of your work:

6 Exemplary. Work at this level is both exceptional and memorable. It is often characterized by distinctive and unusually sophisticated problem-solving approaches and solutions. (This would be a high A).

5 Strong. Work at this level exceeds the standard. It is thorough, complex, and consistently portrays exceptional control of content, skills, and learning strategies. (This would be a low A or high B).

4 Proficient. Work at this level meets the standard. It is strong, solid work that has many more strengths than weaknesses. Work at this level demonstrates mastery of content, skills, and strategies and reflects considerable care and commitment. (This would be a B).

3 Developing. Work at this level shows basic but inconsistent mastery and application of content and skills. It shows some strengths, but tends to have more weaknesses overall. (This would be a C grade).

2 Beginning. Work at this level is often superficial, fragmented or incomplete. It may show a partial mastery of content and skills, but it needs considerable development before reflecting the proficient level of performance. (This would be a very low C or D).

1 Exploring. Work at this level is minimal. It typically portrays a lack of understanding and use of appropriate skills and strategies. Work at this level may contain major errors. (This would not be a passing grade).

Required Portfolio Elements

1. Letter to the evaluator. This is where you summarize your mastery of the course objectives point by point and propose a final grade for the course that is supported by the
work you have in your portfolio. Make an extra copy of this letter to leave with me. The original should stay in your portfolio.

2. **Reading journal reflection.** You are expected to interact with each day’s assigned reading in some form of writing, whether it be note taking, outlining, formulation of questions and responses, or some other method. You do not need to include your whole journal in the portfolio, but you should write an assessment of your journaling (describing the consistency, quantity, quality, etc.) and include relevant samples of your work that illustrate how you’ve used journaling in your learning process.

3. **Formal writing assignment(s).** This includes any short essays or research papers we decide to do as a class. Include evidence of your writing process (drafts, peer feedback, etc.) . One suggestion is that each person do an in-depth analysis of one single expression of queer Latino/a identity (a single film, poem, TV character, etc.) that draws on one or more theoretical perspectives on representation examined in class.

4. **Creative representation project.** We will be sponsoring a public presentation of creative work that contributes to empowerment of queer Latino/a communities at OSU. Each student should contribute something and include it in the portfolio. This may be video, visual art, poetry, short fiction, photography, etc. You should also include an interpretive narrative that references experts and theories explored by the group.

**Students with Disabilities**
Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

**Academic Conduct**
Please read the student conduct policy at [http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm).

**Preliminary Study Schedule**

Unit I: Semiotics, stereotypes and sexual identities  
Unit II: The construction of gender in Latin American cultures  
Unit III: The iconography of queerness in visual media (film, magazines, internet, visual arts)  
Unit IV: Queer Latino/a identities in literature