

# UNIVERSIDAD SIN FRONTERAS

## UNIVERSITY SIN FRONTERAS LIBERATION SPRING SEMESTER

### Revolutionary 'Corridos' Impact of culture & music on movement Class 4 -----4/30/13



Class starts on time at 6 pm with Joaquin conducting our Tex-Mex Corridos.

Joaquin-Adjunct faculty

I will share what I know what I have learned from being around corridos.  
Let's do a round robin as to what we want to get from the class

Chavel-One thing I want to learn from this class is the different corridos from the different times, corridos for Catarina Garza, and the different men and women of that time. That we can learn from them. Corridos are shared knowledge

Irasema- I am excited and am here to enjoy. I have zero musical or artistic talent but I do enjoy the talent of others. I love to hear the music, hear the stories, and enjoy the artist's ability to tell a

story in such a colorful way. I hope to learn about the corridos of the past and how they are still with us.

Lucha- I want to learn about corridos because as little I had to sing them and I did not enjoy it.

Guerrero- I want to learn because as an art form. The corridos the ones that make it to the radio are not the same as the ones sung by the people, the real tellers of the stories. To learn how we can get more millage from the music without resorting to commercializing the art.

David Cruz- I am interested in the history of the corridos because it tells us about the sentiment of the time about the revolución. They are interesting to me similar to ballades it tells you what people were thinking at the time.

Isidro Cruz- I am interested in that time in the history.

Jose Cordero- I am here to watch my friend just to learn about the history of the art of music.

Luis Valdez- I am interested in the patterns so I can write my own corridos. I have written one before I don't know what I patterned it after and I need to learn because it speaks to me. It is poetry and I wish I could talk in a poetic way.

Martha- I know a lot of the history from the border. I don't know of the ones from here, people would remember from that time through corridos. I need to learn to express myself in a similar way. A lot of people read poems but with music si se pega.

Mary Lou- the reason I am really interested in the class about corridos. There was this man, Fred Gomez Carrazco, he escaped from prison. They said he was bad. And I heard a corrido about him. What that corrido said about him was different than what the TV news said. That is when I realized the news did not always tell the truth.

Sandra- I wanted to hear about corridos about what they were about and hear the stories they told of our people. The truths in them are important to me.

Joaquin- One of the first things I heard was that "you are a musician a person who tells a story" they told me "with the body you will have to sound what will be handed over to you. You see something is given to you, it is entrusted to you. Like a cat that brings you a mouse. People bring you things. When you sing you play and with your body you are resounding you and those listening are shaking the core. Like the spinning of the molecules inside you and those that are listening. When you sing or play the vibrations you share with each other help spin the molecules, share your electrons. That is why in choirs the sharing helps congeal friendships. Some of the Azteca, Mechica, and danzante leaders were those that brought messages in song. This picture of what is mistaken as Alcoa (picture) it may look like a space traveler, and some think is Jesus Christ because of the cross, in actually he is a singer of corridos, he sings news from village to village. We learn the messages from other people. When we hear hip hop, the message comes from NY. Like Narco corridos they are supper popular I got information from the internet. Corridos are linked with the pop music of hip hop. They come from something other than Narco. They tell the stories of towns, shared knowledge. Music is a form of cultural communication, created close to the ground; linked to the community. When music and text are combined they are a guide to the community, a message; it becomes a community identity.

The Cumbia originated from Africa, Kumbé, which you can tell from the dance rhythm. The sound we all know as the sound of a cumbia comes from the sound made from the slaves walking with shackled feet. Slave ship message they would play on boxes to hide their rituals, a cajon, now we have that in the popular music percussion sound. The accordion is not originally from Texas or Africa they are made in Germany or Italy. We listen to these rhythms in the Narco corridos, cumbias, and other music.

Chicano rock, surfer rock and other types of music from local bands are taking what corridos were and what Cumbias were and changing them to the music for today.

I printed some of this material. A lot of these were destroyed because they were revolutionary. People in the Rio Grande where some of these corridos were being created were called the Inditos. They were abandoned because of the conflict. A lot of these were destroyed. During the civil war these were not performed because of the hardship of the time. Music is left behind during rough times. The material is written after the rough time is passed and it is usually glorified instead of what was really happening.

A lot of these places shown on the map did not exist before the treaty of Guadalupe. The corridos that were sung during that time 1836- 1930 reading of some of the first corridos were of the Indian raids of 1824. People wrote about Nuevo Santander and the oppressive time linked to that.

The drain of the economy was being caused by Indians rebelling and the oppressors investing time and money in putting down the rebellions. To put down the unrest they focused time and money. The battles between the oppressors and the oppressed made the people set aside the writing of corridos until there were better times.

During the Civil War there were no accounts of corridos being written. There were a lot of soldier involvement between the Mexican Government and the Union Soldiers. The US gave the federalist enough aid to block the South's access to the shipping of goods through the Rio Grande, but this caused a lot of strife and struggle in the area. The early corridos of that time were lost, but they were composed later, those that were memorable enough to survive. The real corridos of that time will not be recovered though.

It was the Indian raids that motivated the establishment of communities in the Rio Grande Valley. The corridos would relate the encounters that happened in the area you hear-----With his pistol in his hand---relating to one of those encounters. Since this was a way to preserve history and record what happened they would even make corridos of land grants as proof of the grant.

There were border outlaw corridos that tell a different story than what was generally told by the law of the time. These men symbolized resistance. If you fought against what you considered a racist leader or oppressive regime, like Gregorio Cortez, they would make you the hero in a corrido.

There were a lot of corrido styles, like waltz style popular in that style; others were written polka style. A lot of these were written on the guitar or the bajo sexto. If a woman played she was only allowed to play inside the home in family functions. Those that played outside they played in bars and were usually considered a taboo figure, considered women of the night. Demonstration of bajo sexto, those women who played this instrument were considered powerful, very rebellious.

Lydia Mendoza was one who stepped out of societies boundaries, she was rebellious, and a lesbian; which was not acceptable at the time. Especially her playing the bajo since the guitar was what the majority of the women played. There was one called La chemuscada which means the burnt one or piece. This made reference to a lot of the women in the revolution who were considered the hard ones.

A lot of corridos were written about Cheno Cortina, Catarino Garza, Richardo Flores Magon. I studied classical music with mostly white kids. It was weird for a chicano, and that is chicano and straight. He is obviously not going to make it. The struggle people have seen crossing the genre it has had a decolonizing effect. Realizing my chicano, indio background. I was being exposed to very Christian Westernized music that had oppressive roots, with a purpose to colonize what they considered uncivilized people. I had to learn all this in order to succeed in that course.

The first chicano music that ever came out of the 1836-1930's era. After that the big bands, Latin jazz, mambo influencing the late corrido style and then the salsa. Salsa was also from the slaves, brought into what was later the 1950s NY Latin jazz. The slave trade also brought reggae to Jamaica, then to NY.

You can handle the bajo sexto I brought to class today. I was taught by Chucho Peralez the bajo sexton but I quit the class and I have to get it back. The guitar has 6 strings while the Quinto and requinto, bajo quinto have 10 stings. Chucho Peralez can do great music with anything.

### **Round robin:**

Martha- what I know is the sharing of history according to the writer it is something that when shared in the corrido form se queda.

Mary lou-

Fred Carrasco the story told about what he did. Drawing on what Joaquin said. About the people about what the conventional media told and what was told in corrido form were different.

Sandra- I know I can relate with some of the songs and as you go through them you see how they can help you out. Like an elder telling you what to do.

Chavel

What I know is that they tell a story of an injustice that happened about oppression or war that is happening.

Like the revolution of 1920 I would hear the song "El 7 Leguas" about the horse of Pancho Villa corrido de Jacinto ranchero from the south of the Rio Grande in Brownsville that relates the story of when in a bar he and the rangers would get into it. Justicia and injusticia. Mi mama is 91 years old now but cuando jovens she and her sister entere familia cantaban nunca escuche que ellas haigan compuesto un corrido yo compuse unos cuantos corridos. El corrido de Rojelio Lopez que lo mato el polecia en hondo.

Ano del 84 presente lo tengo yo.....

What the people did and so on

One about the union is probably written somewhere if you don't write it down it can be forgotten.

Irasema-It is amazing information that can be shared through the corridos and to know that some were lost because they were not written down or recorded it is a shame. Such a wealth of history can be found in the corridos.

Lucha- Corridos tell an important story that is all I know.

Guerrero

I can get beyond the popularity about the corridos. The evolution of the genre the 1800's the original style the revolución and then the Chicano movement. About the man they killed in Houston. Torres there was a corrido. There is a corrido relating about a Vietnamese killed by the curas of that area.

There was an English corrido about the raza that went to Vietnam that didn't come back. I find it interesting that every time and every region uses an appeal that people are used to. If you use music style that is not from that epoch you will not relate.

I find that the corrido like the one about Jose Alfredo Jimenez using a mariachi. Mariachi has a French link not a Mexican link. One of the things we cannot overlook is that like other things it can be appropriated. Like the symbiotic Patty Hearst (Tanya) all over the streets you heard viva Tanya. La raza got on the band wagon, and then a man wrote a corrido that she was a bad daughter disrespectful of her parents. He used the corrido as a counter point. The tool of the oppressed co-opted by the oppressor.

Commodified to make money. Same with the corrido. The commercial company makes it for money, exploitation.

Cruz-

What I like about the corrido is like everybody else has said; it is a story told with music, but in my mind it is the underdog sought after on the run or hurt unjustly. The audience is rooting for that individual. Te da animo de luchar. Me inspira un corrido. Like Chavel was saying my mom played the guitar and played with my tios. They recorded but when the other men came she left and did not play. Only when they were with the family alone.

Isidro- I don't know much about this, but I feel it is the situation of the time.

Jose-like every one said corridos are told by the oppressed. Hip hop are like the corridos of the 80s and 90s people from the slums expressing themselves. Like corridos the Hip Hop movement has become more about making money. We have to be conscious that the corridos tell our history our struggles.

Valdez-

I remember about corridos growing up I was not allowed near them because there was a lot of drinking involved. I remember a lot of celebrating and it was not too often in my family, working in the brick yard no "te quedan ganas" so I knew it was something to celebrate.

Arturo Fuentes-

Sorry I was not able to make it to the previous classes, but I'm here now.

Corridos was music that touched the social issues of the time. In the 80s there was a big gang problem in the city. After a particular movie many gangs sprang up with that being the case of course we had the formation of the Bexar county gang dealing with the youth of the time. They sensationalized the gangs. My great grandmother on my dad's mom's side said how you heard every day someone was killed. The news made it seem they were less than human. I learned your life was not as valuable as those that lived on the north side. The corridos fought against the power of the time. Even though I was not black or African American yet I remember the police stopping me to ask who I was. Arrest me or let me go I would tell them. Racial profiling, they were what made me conscious of the local and national or international situation. The police get the people to tell on others, depending who you are, you can be arrested. Once it is out, the knowledge about the unjust treatment, like Pandora's Box, how can you put it back?

Joaquin

Los Pronunciados, they were using sarcasm acting like being the oppressor but putting down the oppressor; using reverse psychology. The corrido uses different cords which are very popular like the g cord for a man's voice. The corrido is mostly sung in a man's voice. A lot of the styles you had to sing very loud a form of showing you were being restrained in the corridos. When you first play and you first sing you whisper, you learn to be loud. The corridos were sung like in a grito, so

you have to learn to sing louder. It was a natural call, a style for corridos, mariachi, as example we have, Eva Garza, Lydia Mendoza.

Guerrero

That Lydia Mendoza was a lesbian has me troubled. The corridos of the time were very powerful.

Joaquin

There are also the corridos written by the people in trouble before they died; their last moment; their last writings; the words written while they were in the jail cell. We have examples of Hip hop recording from the phone inside the jail cell. These were put on an album and these were very powerful.

Mary Lou- the Anglo or black version is the hip hop has been commercialized to a great extent instead of being as it was supposed to be.

Joaquin-The corrido is the voice of the people, it does not matter what color you are, the feeling you get when you are real hungry is the feeling of the corrido and the feeling of hip hop. We can also look at Texas country or Texas corridos, they have a certain twang it is the same as our corridos.

Mary Lou- The corrido is the people's version of hip hop or country music. Narco corridos capitalized hip hop for profit. Like what Dr Dre's versions or Krs1 are one is very commercialized while the other is the version of the homeless who kept the corrido style alive.

Dr Dre is the sellout.

Narco corrido is also the multi million dollar sellout for profit, not to tell a story.

Cruz- Any corrido has a message and can be sold for gain. Unless you copyright it you can't make money out of it. Any corrido can be used for gain.

Guerrero- Nueva Trova is a good example. You don't hear this in any commercial radio, corridos and love stories, it is underground, you buy entre la raza. Like Camilo.

Break out into 3 groups to write a verse or two on the university sin Fronteras:

Think about what you are feeling, express yourself. Have it rhyme or it doesn't have to rhyme.

Let me share with you a corrido. Ramón Ayala and his versión of el corrido de Gregorio Cortez was shared.

It is important that we listen to a song completely. It bothers me when someone changes the station when the song is playing. I was named after Joaquin Murrieta his story was a fighter for justice. And there was a corrido written about him and you had to listen to the story completely to the end to get it.

### **One page Reflections:**

We have 10 min to write your one pager

***How do we use corridos today to decolonize?***

One Pagers

Jose Cordero

4/30/13

How can we use corridos to decolonize today?

There are several ways that we can use music as a tool of liberation. Oppressed people throughout history have always used music as a means of spreading stories and or making the voiceless have a

voice. I relate corridos to Hip Hop in the way that they were formed. Of course there are always the capitalist sides to everything. We have to keep our feet grounded.

Martha I Castilla

4/30/13

How can we use corridos to decolonize?

Write corridos to warn our youth about falling into the systems that have been established to make someone richer. That it is important that we continue to honor our family to preserve our greatest treasure. That if we continue trying to fit in to something that we don't understand, we will break as a people. We must continue our stories of the past to prevent a repeat in the future. Teach them how as a group we have strong faith, culture, heritage, language, and rhythm. We have a little bit of African, Spanish, Indigena, and German in our music, language, and rhythm.

We must record our present story to share how our young men spend time in jail, our young families are separated, children of our race in systems of Gringos.

We have hot blood and heats up our hearts.

They have cold blood and cold hearts.

Arthur Fuentes

4/30/13

How do we use corridos to decolonize today?

We use corridos to decolonize our minds today by expressing our life histories!

What we internalize, we must speak out loud and let our voices be heard whether it is through social media, the internet, e-mail, or just a good old fashioned "Huelga".

We begin this process by questioning certain social institutions and practices in our contemporary American society.

We begin by questioning all aspects of society whether it is the quality or type of education our children are receiving to the local politician, whether it is the city councilman, mayor, elected congressman/woman, senators.

We must question the need for social justice.

We must take our humanity back from the corporations, multi-nationals that just seek to profit at human expense/suffering like Monsanto.

We decolonize our minds when we start showing genuine concern for the physical wellbeing of our fellow Raza (Mexicanos) who are being killed by the Narcos, or the Mujeres in Juarez, Mexico and the countless immigrants who die crossing La Frontera to seek a better life.

To decolonize our minds is to begin to pressure our elected officials to act in the special interests of economically disenfranchised peoples; to stop government agencies like ICE to stop separating families.

David Cruz

4/30/13

How we can use corridos to decolonize today?

Corridos are very important in helping, especially young people, in understanding the struggle of our past and present generations. It can help directly by connecting us and our familias that struggled in the past; our abuelos, abuelas, tios, tias etc.

Corridos give many examples of courage, of our people overcoming great odds. It gives the academic study of decolonization, flesh, life. It connects us to our concrete daily struggles.

Julio Cesar Guerrero

4/30/13

How do we use corridos to decolonize?

Story telling through music in the form of El Corrido is probably the most effective way of reclaiming our history, culture and traditions. This type of popular expression has been around in different forms or styles since before the time of the colony.

The main factor today is that popular expression can be easily commodified by the capitalist consumerism system used by oppressive elements of society.

Community initiatives should aim through poetry, corridos, storytelling, etc, at counteracting the colonization messages we get from the mainstream media. This could be a group therapeutic exercise where people could reflect on identity, race, and class issues.

Mary Lou

Corridos

Corridos need to be used to relate the truth of our enslavement—to decolonize—today - sharing the story and history, traditions, heroes—empowerment.

We keep the history alive in corridos so we don't forget the things done to us in the past to conquer and oppress us as a people and as individuals.

Corridos need to be mainstreamed without the trappings of capitalism; the “sell-out” or “get rich” scheme of making money out of our pain.

Corridos—por la gente—de la gente!

Sandra

4/30/13

How we use corridos to decolonize today?

In the current music that I listen to that I feel share a story that empowers me and I'm sure others, is through Hip Hop. Before I knew about the Union I remember listening Manu Chao, I feel he was modern “Revolutionary” or “Story Teller” of my time. I sometimes wonder if I would have been present in the struggle if it wasn't for them or Macacchi.

But other songs that were stepping stones were “Take the Power Back” from Rage Against the Machines even Muse. In the end I don't think it matters what genre that you listen to as long as the message, the story, is being told and the people are listening, understand, and want to fight. Continue the struggle and fight. We are that folks that are being affected.

DECOLONIZE NOW THROUGH SONG!

Chavel Lopez

4/30/13

How do we use corridos to decolonize today?

Peoples of the social movements must constantly and continuously be writing corridos or music about the struggle against injustice and oppression with an intension to decolonize oppressed people way of thinking.

Corridos or songs are shared learning about injustices which is what emancipation education is about. It is la cultura de los pueblos which is needed for liberation.

Irasema

4/30/13

How do we use corridos to decolonize today?

The corridos have a wonderful potential to tell our stories. As we know the telling of stories can move hearts. It is well known that people can be considered strangers and dealt with suspicion until you hear their story and begin to relate. The same can happen with the corrido.

When we are watching a movie with a protagonist who we initially don't relate to, we may even think the worst of that character and yet as the movie progresses we begin to relate to the character. We start to see what makes that character do and behave as he or she does. By the time the movie reaches the climax we find ourselves rooting for that character. We are no longer



strangers. That is what can be accomplished with the corridos. It tells the story at times of a character considered by the conventional history writers as a bandit or villain and yet the corrido helps us see his humanity and what led him to the actions he took. That is the power of the corrido to decolonize. Liberate us from the misinformation of the conventional history writers.



