



graduate student fellows roundtable

**Wednesday, May 5, 2010, 3:00-5:00 PM**

Social Science Building (SSB), Room 107



**Long T. Bui (Ethnic Studies) – “Little Ms. Saigon: Through the Looking Glass of Art, Politics and Community”**

This talk concerns the recent “F.O.B. II” controversy in which hundreds of Vietnamese American protestors challenged and shutdown an art exhibit put on by a Viet arts organization based in Orange County, California. Insofar as the mainstream media portrayed this conflict as an ideological struggle between the anticommunism of mostly older, male war veterans who challenged the artistic freedom of younger female organizers labeling the latter communists, the presenter will discuss how this violent public contestation opened up deep divides over issues of community, identity, nationalism, cultural autonomy, sexism and home.

**Cutler Edwards (History) – “Interethnic Politics and Public Protest in 1970s San Diego”**

San Diego since mid-century has largely been written in brown and white; histories of Mexican-American struggles and of the Chicano Movement have provided a corrective to the boosterism and nostalgia that runs through literature valorizing San Diego as “America’s Finest City.” But this frame leaves out a more complex network of relations that have ebbed and flowed since before World War II. Reconsidering a pivotal moment, the founding of Chicano Park in April 1970, suggests that anti-development activism in San Diego helped spark interracial politics. But Chicano Park was only one point on a continuum of interethnic alliances that worked to reshape the city’s relations of race and power in the late 1960s and the 1970s. This talk highlights a constellation of coalitions that might allow us to consider San Diego’s history of political activism and struggles for social justice in a new light.

**Marla Fuentes (Literature) – “Traditional Sellout Narratives in *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* and *Los Vendidos*”**

*The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* (1964) is Chicano playwright Luis Valdez’s first full-length play, the first of many works as both a solo playwright and a collaborator with El Teatro Campesino where the concept of venderse (selling out) is explored. This paper examines what the presenter terms a “traditional sellout narrative” in the context of *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* and the acto *Los Vendidos* (1967). Valdez provides a traditional sellout narrative in *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* that he and El Teatro Campesino later rewrite in *Los Vendidos*. In these works, Valdez and El Teatro Campesino highlight the working and living conditions of migrant farmworkers and other working-class Chicanas/os in California preceding and during the 1960s while offering commentary on cultural citizenship, political activism, and social justice.

**Israel Pastrana (History) – “Made to Be Undocumented: Making Sense of Contradiction in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986”**

This paper investigates the enforcement and implementation of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act on the Tijuana-San Diego border. Scholarship on IRCA has focused on the law’s myriad contradictions and paradoxes; between amnesty and enforcement, policy objectives and outcomes, citizenship and alienage. This approach, the presenter argues, falls short when accounting for the many ways the law’s mandates—namely amnesty or legalization—blurred with, overlapped, and at times even bled into one another. Despite the law’s promise to vigorously and uniformly enforce immigration laws while safeguarding the rights and dignity of all, the line between citizens and aliens was easier to draw on paper than to enforce in the field. In contrast to the “immigration paradox” that frame discussions of IRCA, the examples explored here point to a complexity and ambiguity in the interpretation and enforcement of immigration law. The presenter will conclude by suggesting how cultural production—in this case, the music of norteño icons Los Tigres del Norte—might help scholars move beyond these binary interpretation and adopt a conceptual vocabulary better capable of explaining the demands of life across borders.