



El Llano: The Making and Remaking of a Mexican Homeland on the Southwest-Great Plains Borderlands

Joel Zapata, Oregon State University

**Tuesday, November 29 • 2:00 PM MT • Register to attend at: bit.ly/3SI4M3u
Latin American and Iberian Institute (801 Yale Blvd NE) or on Zoom**

The United States' Mexican population has come to the forefront of public and academic exchanges amidst the past two presidential campaigns and ensuing political debates regarding immigration policy and border security. Yet, these discussions consistently neglect Mexicans' long-term history in what is now the United States, along with their enduring social influence throughout the nation. A prime example of this neglected history is the ethnic Mexican past of the Southern Great Plains, a vast transregional grassland larger than California that stretches from southeastern Colorado and southwestern Kansas, down across eastern New Mexico and western Oklahoma to central Texas.

Using manuscript materials, personal papers, hundreds of archived and original oral histories, combined with art, photographs, print media, archeological studies, songs, and folklore, this research follows the physical, economic, cultural, and even emotional connections ethnic Mexicans have long had with the plains. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Mexican people crossed ethnic and national borders and exchanged goods, gifts, captives, and bloodlines with Indigenous plains peoples. Moreover, Mexicans hunted bison and grazed livestock on the plains. They formed their foodways and various parts of their folk culture via the plains. When the U.S. Army dispossessed Southern Plains tribes of their territory in the 1870s, ethnic Mexicans from New Mexico were among the first to establish communities deep in the region. Then, throughout the twentieth century, Mexicans became the laboring class of much of the Southern Plains. Overall, this research counters the depiction of Mexicans as recent arrivals to the United States and asserts their long-term presence beyond the Southwest.

Joel Zapata is currently a Mellon Fellow at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe. He is also an Assistant Professor of History and the K. Smith Faculty Scholar at Oregon State University.

This is a hybrid event that will be held in person at the Latin American and Iberian Institute (801 Yale Blvd NE, campus building 165) and via Zoom. Please register here if you would like to attend via Zoom



This lecture is free and open to the public. Individuals of all abilities are encouraged to attend LAII-sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in one of our events, please visit lail.unm.edu/events/accessibility.html. You can find more information on available accommodations on the UNM Accessibility Resource Center website. For more information, visit lail.unm.edu or contact [lailioutreach@unm.edu](mailto:laiioutreach@unm.edu).