

# "CAPTAIN CHICANO" AND THE ARCHIVE

Dr. José Alaniz  
University of Washington, Seattle

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**MONDAY, APRIL 17TH**  
**3:00 - 4:00 PM**  
**MODERN LANGUAGES 402**



Derived from a monograph-in-progress titled *Chicomix: Graphic Narrative and Chicanx Art (1960s-1990s)*, this talk examines the superhero strip *Captain Chicano* by David Torrez, at least ten episodes of which appeared in *El Renacimiento* (a newspaper serving the Mexican-American community in Lansing, MI starting) in 1974.

The project attends to some major streams of postwar US arts practice (Chicanx art, independent/alternative publishing, social activism, collecting) and examines their remarkable intersections. Case studies explore the ways Mexican-American artists appropriated graphic narrative throughout the Chicanismo era, and how this overlap complicates the history of comics as a 20th-century US artistic and literary form. *Chicomix* considers in depth how fine art and mass culture interact, fusing and proliferating images in complex and unexpected ways in the works of such art collectives as *Asco*, the *Royal Chicano Airforce* and *Con Safos*, as well as in the output of figures like Andy Zermeño, cartoonist for *El Malcriado* (the newspaper of the United Farm Workers labor union).

Among other things, the talk will highlight the process of discovery and incorporating of this obscure regional example into the larger implications of the study.

Dr. Jose Alaniz, professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures and the Department of Cinema and Media Studies (adjunct) at the University of Washington, Seattle, has published three monographs, *Komiks: Comic Art in Russia* (University Press of Mississippi, 2010); *Death, Disability and the Superhero: The Silver Age and Beyond* (UPM, 2014); and *Resurrection: Comics in Post-Soviet Russia* (OSU Press, 2022). He has also co-edited two essay collections, *Comics of the New Europe: Reflections and Intersections* (with Martha Kuhlman, Leuven University Press, 2020) and *Uncanny Bodies: Disability and Superhero Comics* (with Scott T. Smith, Penn State University Press, 2019). He formerly chaired the Executive Committee of the International Comic Arts Forum (ICAF) and was a founding board member of the Comics Studies Society. In 2020 he published his first comics collection, *The Phantom Zone and Other Stories* (Amatl Comix). His current book projects include *Comics of the Anthropocene: Graphic Narrative at the End of Nature*.

