

Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences Promotion (CLASP),

Title: “Finding the Sound: The Women of El Paso Punk Rock”

Presenter: Dr. Tara López, Assistant Professor of Ethnic Studies

Abstract:

El Paso punk, Barbara Anne Welch, is adamant that the “E.P” of El Paso really stands for “Endless Possibility.” For Welch and fellow punx who identify as women, punk rock in this West Texas city provided unique opportunities for fierce sonic expression and innovation, especially for the Chicanas that dominated El Paso punk in the mid-1990s. Tara López’s research talk for the Consortium of Liberal Arts and Sciences Promotion (CLASP), therefore, will shed light on the women of this transformative music culture. López’s talk, first, will address the necessity of studying popular music in scholarly research on communities of color. López will then briefly move to the theoretical grounding of her research, especially that of sociologist Nick Crossley whose concept of “music worlds” reframes participation in music cultures to help illuminate the wide array of Chicanas engaged in this El Paso punk “music world.” From girls furtively Xeroxing zines at local Kinko’s to mothers hiding their kids’ earnings when punk rock shows were busted to girls taking the stage as lead singers of central punk rock bands in the city, their activity was wide-ranging and their commitment to music and community was indefatigable. López will conclude with broader questions of how to document the lives of Chicanas when they are so often left out of official archives and scholarly narratives.