# Glossary

**1965 Immigration Act:** a law representing the first major change to US immigration policy since 1924. Significant aspects the law included the elimination of national origins quotas that heavily favored Northern European countries while discouraging immigration from other parts of Europe and outright banning immigration from much of Asia. Each country would henceforth have the same yearly quota for immigrants to the US, regardless of demand. The law also established paths for individuals to sponsor close family members abroad to immigrate to the United States.

**Advertising-based video demand** (AVOD) is a streaming service that is free to consumers if they watch short ad commercials.

**Alternative media:**Media productions that oppose the institutional and social order of the mainstream media and create media with the goals of social change and to challenge dominant media portrayals beyond the commercial sphere. This media is often produced by historically excluded groups of people.

***Antihatianismo***: Based on traditional racist notions of negra/o inferiority, in the Dominican Republic those notions are structured around their views of, and in relation to, Haiti. Much of Dominican identity is therefore formed in juxtaposition to how Dominicans racialize Haitians as the ones who are truly “Black.” And in order to provide that necessary separation from Haitians, African descent is obscured under a claim of being racially Indigenous (or *indio*). For Afro-Dominicans to consider themselves Black or of African descent meant that they shared a common heritage with Haitians, a population they see as racially and socially inferior to themselves.

**Anti-miscegenation laws**: laws prohibiting marriage between individuals considered to be from different racial groups.

**Balsero crisis:** a sharp increase in the number of Cubans attempting to reach the United States on rafts or boats (totaling over 30,000) in 1994. The immediate cause was economic collapse in Cuba in the wake of the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, Cuba’s main trading partner.

**Bay of Pigs Invasion**: a 1961 attack carried out by CIA-trained and -supported Cuban exiles with the intention of overthrowing Fidel Castro’s government.

**BIPOC:** an abbreviation meaning Black, Indigenous, Person of Color.

**Boricua:** A person from Puerto Rico by birth or descent.

**Brown Berets:** a youth organization fighting for Chicano civil rights and community development founded in 1967 and inspired by the Black Panthers.

**Cable equipment:** A electronic set-up box. This piece of equipment receives TV signals from a cable television system and sends them to a television.

**Camera angle:** the orientation of the camera in relation to its subject, including high angle (the camera is tilted down at a height from the main subject of the shot); low angle (the camera is tilted up from a low position relative to the main subject of the shot) and straight-on angle (the camera is level with the main subject).

**Camera distance:** the apparent distance between the camera and the main subject of the shot, often a human figure. Common terms used to describe camera distance are extreme close-up (a detail of a face or an object fills the frame); close-up (the character’s face or another object fills the frame), medium close-up (characters are framed from the shoulders up), medium shot (characters are framed from the waist up), and long shot (the full length of characters’ bodies is visible in the frame) and extreme long shot (characters appear tiny in relation to the setting). Also known as shot scale.

**Camera movement:** visible changes in the orientation of the camera towards the objects/setting that appears onscreen created by moving the camera during filming.

**Casting:** the process of assembling a group of actors to appear in a film or television project, including not only stars, but also the rest of the cast and extras.

**Chicana/o/x** formerly a derogatory term referring to Mexican-Americans, the term was reclaimed during the Chicano Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s and refers to Mexican-Americans born in the US.

**Circular migration:** the tendency of individuals to leave their point of origin, migrate to the United States, and return to their point of origin in a cyclical manner.

**Colorism**: the practice of giving preferential treatment to individuals with lighter skin or more European features.

**Commercial broadcasting:** a form of radio and television sustained financially by advertisers and sponsors rather than through government funding or non-profit corporations, a system known as public broadcasting.

**Composition:** the arrangement of shapes, colors, and contrasts of light and shadow within the frame in a particular shot.

**Crane shot:** shots that involve the camera being lifted through space, moving freely on a device similar to a construction crane

**Creator:** in the context of television**,** a person who develops the idea for a series. The creator is often an executive producer and in some cases a writer-producer. The creator may also be the showrunner, but does not have to be.

**Cuadros de castas**: “caste paintings” that offered terms for and visual representations of specific categories of multiracial individuals, arranging them in an imagined social hierarchy.

**Cuban Adjustment Act**: a 1966 law that granted permanent residency to any Cuban who had lived in the US for a year or more.

**Data:** in the context of digital media studies, all information collected by users of online media. It is important to remember that data is not an abstract set of values that are then put through a process of categorization. Data is social. Data is produced and sorted by people—it is socially constructed.

**Degeneration:** the idea that unfavorable genetic material or social conditions can lead to physical and/or mental weakness or other problems in an individual or population; linked to flawed, now debunked ideas about human evolution and genetics.

**Diasporic:** pertaining to a dispersed group of people living outside their original homeland due to migration or forced relocation.

**Diegetic sound:** sound that we understand to be emanating from the fictional world of a film that could be heard by the characters.

**Digital divide**: unequal access to new media technologies and infrastructures. Critical Internet studies has critiqued the notion that simply increasing access serves as a solution to power disparities. Therefore, more recent work goes beyond the yes-no rhetoric of access to the social dynamics of what the types of technologies marginalized communities have access to says about power.

**Digital Video Recorder (DVR)** is a digital video recording device used to record, save, and playback television. It also has the option to fast-forward often during a commercial.

**Distribution:** the business deals, marketing, and logistics needed for films to be shown to the public.

**Division of Community Education** (**División de Educación de la Comunidad**; **DIVEDCO**)**:** an initiative of the government of Puerto Rico that aimed to educate the population about topics such as public health, economic prosperity, and participation in a democratic political system.

**Docudrama**: a type of fiction film that uses some documentary strategies, often dramatizing real-life events or issues.

**Editing:** the assembly of the many shots that make up a film or television show.

**Episodic television** refers to shows whose entire plot, conflict, and resolution unfolds in a single episode in a three-act structure. Episodic is the opposite of seriality. The TV show will reveal all the necessary information to understand the situation or conflict at hand and solve it all in one episode.

**Essential Black subject:** the assumption that there is an essence to Blackness that is shared by all of those of African descent; a “fixed transcultural or transcendental” understanding of Blackness rooted in biology or nature.

**Estado Libre Asociado**: the political status of Puerto Rico since 1952, which includes some aspects of nationhood, such as a constitution, while lacking others. Confusingly, Puerto Rico is considered a commonwealth (territory) rather than a free associated state of the US (a semi-independent nation under the protection of another), which is the status of Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands in relation to the US.

**Ethnicity:** a social category based on cultural characteristics such as religion, language, and customs.

**Eugenics:** the effort to “improve” the human race by careful control of reproduction, which was linked with deeply problematic attitudes about race and disability.

**Exhibition:** the presentation of films in theaters and on television, home video, and streaming services.

**Film cycle:** a group of films made around the same time that share thematic concerns.

**Film sound:** the dialogue, ambient noise/sound effects, and music used in a film.

**Film style:** audio and visual choices made by a film’s creative team.

**Frame:** the visible portion of a film or television image at any given moment; can also refer to the individual images on a film strip that together create the illusion of motion.

**“Freedom Flights”:** twice-daily flights operated via an agreement between the Cuban and US governments that brought about 300,000 Cuban refugees to the US between 1965 and 1973.

**Good Neighbor Policy**: a program designed to improve US-Latin American relations and draw Latin American countries into the United States’ sphere of influence used film as a key way to spread the message of hemispheric solidarity.

**La gran familia puertorriquena**: the distinct and specific Puerto Rican ethnoracial mixture consisting of Taíno Indian, Spanish, and African descents. Specifically, this construction implies the unsubstantiated idea that unlike the US, where there is racism and racial stratification, Puerto Rico has a racial democracy.

**Greaser film cycle:** a cluster of films made between 1908-1914 that featured a stereotypical Mexican male character, referred to by the derogatory term greaser.

**Great Migration:** in the context of US-Puerto Rico relations, refers toa surge in migration from Puerto Rico to the US mainland that peaked during the 1950s, totaling an estimated 470,000 individuals during that decade. The expansion of air travel and the impact of Operation Bootstrap contributed to this exodus.

**Hashtag activism**: the use of online platforms as digital public spaces for political organization, particularly the use of hashtags to enhance the discoverability of online media content.

**Hijas de Cuauhtémoc:** A Chicana feminist student newspaper founded at California State University Long Beach in 1971.

**Hispano:** a person descended from Spanish settlers in the Southwest before it became part of the United States.

**Hypodescent:** the practice of determining the classification of a child of mixed-race ancestry by assigning the child the race of their more socially subordinate parent.

**Ideology of whitening:** the inaccurate belief, often held by Latin American elites, that the genetic heritage of white people would eventually “win out” over indigenous and African heritage in national populations due to the false assumption of white superiority; often linked with efforts to encourage immigration from Europe to hasten this process.

**Indigeneity**: refers broadly to shared characteristics of global Indigenous populations, namely ancestral, historical, and cultural connections to home territories that predate colonial societies.

**Interface:** online functionalities and/or design that structures user interaction.

**Intersex:** a physical condition affecting an estimated 1-2 percent of the population in which an individual’s genetic material and anatomy do not follow the common XX/female or XY/male patterns.

**Intertitles:** slides inserted at specific points in the film that conveyed narrative information or dialogue.

**Isthmian:** an alternative term to refer to people originating from or descending from the Central American region that privileges a sense of being tied to the land rather than nation-states and geopolitical constructions.

**Jones-Shafroth Act:** a 1917 law that, among other provisions, made all Puerto Ricans born in or after 1899 citizens of the United States, a status they had not previously held. The timing of the law is often viewed as suspect, given that the conferral of citizenship made Puerto Rican men subject to the draft just as the US entered World War I.

**Latin look:** the popularly represented Latino/Hispanic identity creates a Latina/o type that is physically adherent to what Rodriguez calls the “Latin look” – characterized by tan/olive skin with dark hair and eyes –and seems to acknowledge only the Spanish and indigenous heritages of US Latina/os.

**Latinidad:** latino-ness; or discourses and subjectivities of Latina/o/x identity.

**Laugh track** is a pre-recorded soundtrack that contains the laughter of an audience, often used in sitcoms.

**Mainstream (hegemonic) media:**traditional and dominant media productions that are hierarchically organized and usually created by corporate media outlets to generate profit from mass consumption.

**Maquiladoras**: factories, usually owned by US business, built along the US-Mexico border region to avoid higher taxes and labor costs in the United States. After the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, goods made in Mexico could enter the US without paying the tariffs previously in place, making this business model highly profitable.

**Mariel Boatlift**: an exodus of approximately 125,000 Cubans who reached the US in privately chartered boats in 1980 after Fidel Castro exceptionally allowed individuals to leave Cuba without express permission from the government.

**Marimacha:** an insulting slang term for lesbian.

**Media specificity:** the ways that film, television, and digital media allow for different forms of storytelling or aesthetic expression that are particular to the stylistic and narrative properties of that medium.

**Mestizaje:** the process of racial, ethnic, and cultural mixing.

**Mestizo:** a person of mixed Indigenous and white descent.

**Mise-en-scène:** the elements of film borrowed from theater, including set design, locations, costume design, and lighting.

**Multi-sited**: involving more than one location.

**Network era:** the first period (early 1950s - mid-1980s) of broadcast television, which was dominated by the Big Three television networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC.

**Networked public**: the online space and imagined relationships that emerge from the intersection of users, technology, and everyday practices.

**New Queer Cinema:** a filmmaking movement that took shape during the early 1990s, which was characterized by an unapologetic, even nihilistic approach to LGBTQ identity and experiences and a self-referential, often ironic approach to pop culture.

**Newsreel:** weekly compilations of footage of current events.

**Niche audience** refers to a particular subset of an audience, like women, Latinx, or queer folks instead of a broader audience.

**Non-diegetic sound:** sound that is understood to originate from outside the fictional world of the film and would not be heard by the character, most notably orchestral scoring.

**Offscreen sound:** sound without a visible source onscreen.

**Onscreen sound:** sound with a visible source onscreen.

**Operation Bootstrap:** a collaboration between the Puerto Rican andUS federal government to rapidly transform the island’s economy from an agrarian system into an industrial one.

**Operation Peter Pan**: an initiative to bring 14,000 unaccompanied Cuban minors to the US for resettlement implemented by the Catholic Welfare Bureau with some backing from the US government, between 1960 and 1962

**Pachucos:** members of a Mexican-American youth [subculture](https://haenfler.sites.grinnell.edu/subcultural-theory-and-theorists/what-is-a-subculture/). The pachuco subculture arose from the social issues Mexican-American youth experienced during the later decades of the 19th century and early decades of the 20th century.

**Pan:** side-to-side movements of the camera pivoting on a fixed point, typically a tripod.

**Pan-ethnic:** referring to a social category that groups individuals of different national origins together, such as Latino or Asian.

**Pan-latinidad:** the notion that all US residents of Latin American origin share a cultural kinship that trumps identification with a particular national origin.

**Parallel editing:** An editing pattern that alternates shots of actions happening in different locations, implying that they are happening simultaneously. Also known as cross-cutting.

**Pata:** an insulting slang term for lesbian.

**Performativity:** referring to the learned, culturally coded nature of everyday behaviors that might appear natural on the surface.

**Point-of-view shot structure:** A shot of a character looking followed by a view, typically from the reverse angle, that is implied to be through their eyes.

**Post-network era:** the second and ongoing period (mid-1980s to present). Due to technological changes impacting the transmission of television, US TV transitioned from a business model controlled by only a few networks into an era where television became multi-channeled with a shift from “free” broadcast television to paid commercial content.

**Production:** the creation of a media product, broadly defined; can be further divided into the following stages: development (the process of going from an idea to a complete script and then to a viable project with a director, main actors, and financing lined up); pre-production (the completion of casting casting and other aspects of mise-en-scène); shooting (the creation of the raw footage for a film or television show) and post-production (processes like editing, color correction, and sound mixing that are necessary to assemble and polish the footage created during shooting to create a finished product).

**Race:** a socially constructed grouping based on individuals’ physical characteristics, which does not correspond to meaningful biological differences between groups.

**Ratings sweep:** a brief period each year where Nielsen, the company responsible for calculating television ratings, consults detailed records of the viewing patterns of selected households. Networks tend to concentrate exciting programming during this time to attract the largest possible audience.

**La raza cósmica/the cosmic race**: in the writings of José Vasconcelos, a future race of humans that would unite all the existing races. While praising racial mixture, the idea of a cosmic race was premised on the disappearance of African and indigenous peoples. Vasconcelos also made denigrating comments about Asians in his discussion of the concept.

**La Raza Unida**: a political party founded in Crystal City, Texas in 1970 an effort to mobilize Chicano/Latino voters to support Latino candidates rather than candidates fielded by the Republican or Democratic parties, which rarely prioritized issues affecting Latino communities.

**Reception:** the response of audiences and critics to a media product.

**Reverse angle:** an editing pattern involving a 180-degree change in perspective between two shots.

**Satellite:** a technology that allows for the simultaneous airing of programs from coast to coast and the expansion of available channels beyond network TV.

**Scientific racism**: the effort to find evidence for the imagined superiority of whites to other racial groups, based in practices such as phrenology that were considered valid in the 1800s but have been debunked as pseudoscience

**Second-wave feminism**: a surge of feminist activism in the 1960s and 1970s focused on issues such as equality in the workforce, reproductive rights, and the effort to overturn patriarchal dynamics in personal relationships.

**Serial television:** shows whose story unfolds over multiple episodes, seasons, or even during the duration of an entire length of series. A TV series may reveal parts of plot, conflict, or character developments in each new episode. Sometimes this occurs weekly or daily in a soap opera or telenovela, depending on the genre's format.

**Shot:** an unbroken run of the camera.

**Shot-reverse shot:** A common pattern in film editing that combines images of two individuals who are facing each other, each shot with a 180-degree change in the placement of the camera.

**Showrunner:** a person who has overall creative authority and management responsibility for a TV program. This person is responsible for overseeing all areas of writing and production on a television series, ensuring that each episode is delivered on time and on a budget for the production studio that produces the show and the network or platform that airs it. The word showrunner is often used synonymously with writer-producer or creator of a TV series, but these three terms refer to different roles, although an individual can hold more than one of them.

**Single reel film:** during the silent period film lengths were measured in reels of approximately 10,000 feet or approximately ten minutes each.

S**itcom**: a distinctive TV genre primarily defined by its structure and the central role of comedy.

**Slave codes:** a series of laws that assigned Black servants a lower social status than their white counterparts and progressively stripped them of rights

**Social media**: social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook, blogs, video sharing sites such as YouTube, and any other online platform that allows users to create their own content and facilitates interaction between groups of people in much of the same way as other public spaces have done and continue to do so.

**Social problem film:** a type of film made in the 1940s-1960s that tackled issues such as racism, assimilation, and inequality.

**Star persona:** the combination a performer's onscreen roles and the way they are represented in the press.

**Stereotypes:** widely held but oversimplified images of a person or group.

**Subscription video on demand** (SVOD), such as Netflix, HBO Max, and Disney +, has a flat rate per month, allowing the viewer to self-determine how much content they want to view each month.

**Technological affordances**: characteristics of online environments which make possible certain types of social interactions. Sometimes, affordances are designed to specifically encourage certain interactions. However, online practices can often develop in ways not predicted or intended through design choices.

**Telenovelas:** episodic dramas with some similarities to soap operas. However, they are typically broadcast during primetime hours and their storylines have a definite endpoint, unlike US soap operas.

**Third world cinema**: a mode of politically charged filmmaking that challenges the dominance of Hollywood by developing alternative forms of film narrative and style.

**Three-camera setup (**also known as multiple-camera setup) is a method of TV production commonly used in sports events, news, soap operas, talk and games show, and most sitcoms. It involves using three simultaneously recording cameras instead of one, taking footage from various angles, and maximizing filming time, which is essential when recording shows with a live audience like talk and game shows.

**Tilt:** upwards or downwards movements of a camera pivoting on a fixed point, typically a tripod.

**Tracking shot:** a shot involving movement forwards, backwards, or parallel to the plane of the frame using train-like tracks or a dolly with wheels.

**Transactional video-on-demand** (TVOD) is the opposite of monthly subscription video. Here, consumers can purchase content on a pay-per-view basis, such as buying a single TV series season or film.

**Transnational identity**: a multi-geographical view of identity wherein a person identifies with both the local or national identity of their place of origin and with the local or national identity of the place in which they currently reside.

**Traveling shot:** a shot that combines different types of camera movement. Traveling shots are often produced using a Steadicam (a camera mount worn on the operator’s body, consisting of a mechanical arm that helps buffer the camera from sudden movements, producing a smoother final image).

**Vertical integration:** control by one company of multiple stages in the lifecycle of a particular product, which can help maximize profit. In the context of the film industry, vertical integration refers to a single company being involved in production, distribution, and exhibition, essentially giving it a guaranteed outlet for its media products.

**Volsted Act:** the law that instituted Prohibition in the United States between 1920 and 1933, forbidding the manufacture, transportation, and sale of alcohol.

**West Indian:** the primary term used to refer to those from Caribbean Islands that have a British colonial history. As a term used to refer to the Caribbean Islands, “West Indies” is based on the legacy of Christopher Columbus’s assumption that he had landed in what is now called the East Indies (an area off the mainland of continental Asia).

**Wet foot-dry foot policy**: a 1995 change to the Cuban Adjustment Act that granted Cuban immigrants the right to stay in the United States if they made it to US soil. If they were intercepted at sea between Cuba and the US, they would be turned back.

**Young Lords:** a youth organization fighting for Puerto Rican civil rights and communities, founded in Chicago in 1968. The Young Lords modeled some aspects of their community engagement and political tactics on the Black Panthers, with whom they sometimes collaborated closely.

**Zoot suits**: Zoot suits are the custom dress of pachucos. A zoot suit consists of high-waisted pants and long blazers, with excess fabric through the width of the pants and arms sleeves. The suits are often accompanied with fedoras and chains hanging from the waist. Pachucas also had a signature style. This consisted of elements like longer coats that often reached their fingertips, draped slacks or a short skirt, and high socks.