The lecture presents an empirical examination of contemporary US network television news stories about immigrants that is informed by myth and film genre scholarship. A review of a full year of network news programs – ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN evening news reporting about unauthorized immigrants crossing the US border – determined that two age-old story-types constituted the base narrative of all the news reports regarding immigrant voyages and apprehensions. One ancient story-type, currently manifest as the American Western, occurs when the news story protagonist border patrol agent portrays the American cowboy archetype. A US foundational myth is based on this story-type. The second story-type derives from a journey myth of Inanna, a Sumerian goddess. These two millennia-old story-types accounted for all the network evening news stories immigrant reports. Western news stories rearticulate nationalism, while the Inanna news story contests the nation’s foundational myth. Thus, on this topic, journalists write about immigration to entertain and indoctrinate, as much as to edify. At the same time, US news viewers are entertained by epic narrative myths – as much as they are edified – are set to consume television news stories in which they recognize the characters and resolutions of stories that reaffirm cultural values.

Bio
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Further info: http://www.chavez.ucla.edu/content/otto-santa-ana
Background paper: http://das.sagepub.com/content/27/1/95