Video: University Distinguished Professor Melissa Fitch

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During the month of April, Lo Que Pasa is highlighting the Regents' Professors, University Distinguished Professor and University Distinguished Outreach Faculty who were honored during the recent Pillars of Excellence Ceremony.

Melissa Fitch, University Distinguished Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, is known among her peers as "a fearless intellectual."

Fitch, a second-generation Chicana, was born in Los Angeles and raised in San Francisco. She crosses a variety of disciplines with her work, including women's studies, border studies, Luso-Brazilian culture and global and cultural studies. Her research focus is Asian representations of Latin American popular culture.

In 2015, Fitch was one of three UA faculty members to be named Distinguished Scholars by the 1885 Society, whose members serve as ambassadors and champions of the UA. She was the first faculty member from the College of Humanities to earn the award. She also has been named a Fulbright Scholar three times in six years.

Critics consider Fitch’s publications on gender studies and global representations of Latin American popular culture to be trend-setting. She has written or co-written three books, and is the editor-in-chief of the journal Studies in Latin American Popular Culture.

Fitch, who has traveled to 39 countries, has directed four UA Study Abroad programs: two in Spain and one each in Brazil and Chile. In addition to her position in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, she is an affiliated faculty member in the Center for Latin American Studies and in the Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Persian and Iranian Studies.

Fitch is the recipient of, among other awards, the UA Five Star Teaching Award, the UA’s highest teaching honor, which she received in 2008.

"I really live to teach; it is my greatest joy," Fitch says. "Meeting those students and working with those students is what is most meaningful to me."

Learn more about Fitch in the video below.

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