



Hello,

Thank you for booking our inaugural tour of *The Circuit* based on the book by Francisco Jiménez ! We are extremely proud of this work and are thrilled to be able to share it with you. As artists at Santa Clara University, we have assumed a responsibility to examine our culture and move it forward, and at SCU Presents Arts for Social Justice, we take that responsibility very seriously.

We began with the question, “How can we be a catalyst for change?” After listening to both our local and national community, we feel that at this moment it is by discussing immigration, particularly the experience of undocumented immigrants. It is an extremely divisive issue in today’s political climate. But despite how often it is discussed, it is an experience that is unfortunately rarely humanized. In 1997, Dr. Jiménez courageously opened up his life to the world by publishing *The Circuit*, and it has since become a part of the curriculum of many schools in the South Bay and Central Valley. At a time when the world feels unsafe to the children of undocumented immigrants and children who are undocumented themselves, we have decided to support this community by bringing them a story with heart and determination.

Through our touring presentations, SCU Presents bring timely topics that are important and worthy of discussion to our community. With *The Circuit*, we deliberately present the voice of the undocumented community to all communities and broadcast a message of hope, compassion and understanding. We affirm these experiences, as well as introduce them to students who may not be familiar with them. Live theatre is a powerful experience, and it can change someone’s life to be in a room with their peers and see a story that says “you matter.”

In the following packet, you will find a post-show study guide, further information about Dr. Jiménez , and a statement from us addressing concerns about ICE. Please reach out to us freely if there is anything else we can do to support you and your students’ experience of this play.

In solidarity,

SCU•Presents Arts for Social Justice

Examining Theatre

The Circuit Post-Show Study Guide

Theatre serves many different purposes: to strengthen our community, to introduce new ideas and challenge old ones, to give us space to feel things we might not allow ourselves to feel in our day-to-day lives, and to ask important questions.

- 1. Raise your hand if you have seen a movie before. Raise your hand if you have read a book before? Raise your hand if you have seen live theatre before.**
 - a. If you have seen live theatre before, what did you think of it?
 - b. If you have not seen live theatre before, what ideas did you have about it before seeing the show?

- 2. What is the difference between seeing a movie and seeing a show on stage?**

- 3. *The Circuit's* source material is a book – what do you think difference is between reading the story and seeing it on stage?**

- 4. Think of a moment that stuck with you (ex: a scene, a line, a character). Describe it.**
 - a. Why did it stick with you? Did it make you feel something (good or bad)? Did it remind you of something (good or bad)? Did it bother you? Discuss.
 - b. Were there any moments that were difficult to watch? Why or why not?
 - c. Were there any moments in the show that you identified with? Why or why not?

- 5. Discuss the use of Spanish in the show. English speakers: could you understand what the Spanish words meant?**

- 6. At many points, Pancho's teacher Mrs. Scalapino insists his name is "Frank," not Francisco or Pancho. Why do you think this is?**
 - a. Imagine yourself in Pancho's position. How might it feel to have someone try to take your name away?

7. While life was difficult for the Jiménez family in Mexico, they still face a lot of hardships after coming to the United States. Roberto says, “I thought we crossed la frontera to get away from all that.”

- a. What might motivate a person to face hardships in a different country? What opportunities could they be working toward?
- b. Applying for immigration papers is a process that often takes years. Living conditions in a person’s home country can be so difficult that they do not have that long to wait, leading to the decision to immigrate without papers.
 - i. Why might this decision be difficult? What conditions would cause someone to make this decision?

8. Discuss how different elements of the show helped tell the story.

- a. What could you tell about the characters from their costumes?
- b. What feeling did you get from the set?

9. This production of *The Circuit* uses non-realistic movement – that is to say, there were sections where our actors moved in a way that people usually don’t in real life. This is something asked for in the script.

- a. What did you think of this? Was it interesting to you? Did it feel silly? Why?
- b. Why do you think the playwright thought this was the best way to tell the story?
- c. How did the sections with movement feel? Was it different than the sections without movement? Why or why not?

10. How did you feel before seeing the show? How do you feel after?

11. What thoughts did you have about immigration before seeing the show? What thoughts do you have after?

12. If you have read *The Circuit*, is there anything you understand better now that you have seen it on stage? Why or why not?

13. Think of the comments of your classmates. Do you feel the same as them, or different? Why?

Activities

The Circuit Post-Show Study Guide

1. ***The Circuit* is a memoir, made up of stories from Dr. Francisco Jiménez 's childhood.**
 - a. Write a short story or play about an event in your life.
 - b. Ask someone in your family to tell you about an event in their life. Write a short story or play about it.
2. **Draw your own costume/set designs for *The Circuit*.**
3. **Draw your own picture of a butterfly.**



BRIEF SUMMARY OF JIMÉNEZ 'S WORK

Visits to our schools and community represent one of many contributions Dr. Jiménez has made through his scholarly, civic, and literary work. As one of a small community of scholars who understood the educational barriers faced by Mexican-Americans from experience, he has been an agent for change in academia and public education for the last thirty years. Through his roles with the Modern Language Association (MLA), the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the California Council for the Humanities, the Western Association Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities (WASC) and Santa Clara University (SCU), he has been a dedicated and effective voice for multi-cultural dialogue in the arts and education.

Francisco's work to develop a more inclusive literary canon means that today's Mexican American students can see their stories represented as part of the American narrative. His advocacy for a multi-cultural education at SCU and elsewhere ensures that students of different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds can appreciate the perspectives of all kinds of people. Today, Francisco's life – chronicled in four autobiographical books – is an inspiration to thousands of students across the United States. His books and author visits are often the best motivators for encouraging students to take an active role in their own education.

NARRATIVE

Born in San Pedro, Tlaquepaque, Mexico, Francisco immigrated to the United States with his family as a child seeking a better life. He worked to support his family and attended schools in Santa Maria, California, eventually graduating from Santa Maria High School where he was student body president. After earning an undergraduate degree from Santa Clara University in 1966, he attended Columbia University on a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship and received a master's degree and Ph.D. in Latin American literature. Dr. Jiménez returned to SCU in 1973 and retired in 2015. He is currently Professor Emeritus in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures.

Soon after earning his Ph.D., Francisco urged the MLA to create an ongoing forum on Mexican American literature to bring more Mexican-American literature into the commonly identified American canon. The MLA agreed and asked him to organize the effort. These discussions brought together a small community of leading critics in Mexican American literature, who worked to better define the genre and establish scholarly outlets for Latino writers. Out of this effort, Francisco helped found and edit the *Bilingual Review* and *Bilingual Press*, where he is editor for the west coast region. In 1976, he was appointed to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing by then California Governor Jerry Brown, serving as chair for two of his ten years of service. He was influential in the development of high credentialing standards for teachers and school administrators for the State of California. His work has been recognized by the California State Senate and the Minister of Culture of the State of Jalisco, Mexico. He was selected U.S. Professor of the Year by CASE and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching in 2002, and is the recipient of UCSB's Luis Leal Award for Distinguished Chicano/Latino Literature and the John Steinbeck Award. He holds honorary degrees from De Anza College and the University of San Francisco. In 2015 a new school in Santa Maria, California was named in honor of his late brother and him: The Roberto and Dr. Francisco Jiménez Elementary School.

As a professor and administrator at Santa Clara, Dr. Jiménez was one of the first faculty members to call for a community-based learning program. Today, the Arrupe Partnerships for Community-based Learning engage more than 1,100 students – almost a quarter of the undergraduate population – each year in service learning placements throughout the Silicon Valley region. Francisco also worked to establish the University's Ethnic Studies Program, which he directed for many years. Among the other initiatives

brought to fruition under his leadership were a yearlong Institute of Poverty and Conscience, held in 1985, and the Eastside Future Teachers Project. The latter is an ongoing program that provides college preparatory mentoring and, after college admission, scholarships for approximately thirty East San Jose high school students interested in pursuing teaching careers. As director of the Division of Arts and Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences and later as associate vice president for academic affairs, he helped to establish university teaching grants and the development of a university-wide academic advising plan. Francisco's work at SCU has been recognized by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and CASE, which selected him as one of four national recipients of the 2002 U.S. Professors of the Year Award.

During the past decade, Dr. Jiménez has focused more on his teaching, writing, and outreach activities throughout California. He is the author of four award-winning autobiographical books about his youth. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, completed in 1997, began as a short story published by the *Arizona Quarterly* in 1973. While expanding the short story had always been in the back of his mind, it was not until a sabbatical in 1995 that Francisco had time to complete the work. Since that time, he has published three more books *Breaking Through* (2001) and *Reaching Out* (2008) and *Taking Hold: From Migrant Childhood to Columbia University* (2015). All have been well received, winning many national literary awards, including the John Steinbeck Award, the Americas Award and the Boston Globe Horne Book Award.



The Circuit, *Breaking Through*, *Reaching Out* and *Taking Hold* are regularly assigned in classrooms across the country, providing inspiration for a generation of students, especially Latinos and children of recent immigrants. Francisco is frequently sought after by county offices, districts, and community reading programs like the Napa County Reads. It is not uncommon for him to spend a week in residence visiting six or seven schools in a county prior to holding a community-wide presentation. In addition, he has collaborated with the PEN International Foundation to facilitate extended visits to rural Oregon and Florida and continues to appear at benefits for non-profit organizations, including the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA). He also serves on the Board of ALearn.

When Francisco discusses the significance of his work, the conversation always returns to the transformative power of education—both for individual students and the future vibrancy of our American democracy. His vocation as an educator is grounded in respect for the teachers who shaped his life and animated by a desire to empower a new generation of students.

*It was brought to SCU Presents attention that there were student concerns about ICE during the previous performances of *The Circuit*. Specifically, there is a scene at the end of our show where the principal of Pancho's school enters with an ICE agent, saying that the Immigration Department has been authorized to remove him from school and that his family is being deported back to Mexico. Students raised concern that this meant they might be reported to ICE, and that it meant support for the deportation of undocumented immigrants.*

We would like to share the following statement with you all. Please feel free to share with your students if any similar concerns are raised.

To our community,

We are so happy to have been able to share Dr. Jiménez 's story with you. We recognize *The Circuit* contains many themes that are familiar to students who have dealt with undocumented immigration, and it may bring up very real fears for these students about deportation.

We acknowledge that many feel less safe in American society and social media have broadcast many stories of violence or aggression that people of diverse backgrounds have experienced. We believe it essential to repeat and reinforce a message of inclusion and respect for people of all traditions, orientations, gender, and legal status. We are members of a community, a family, and we embrace strong Jesuit values of concern for those who suffer, the quest for a better world, and a respect for each individual. These beliefs permeate our programs, our services, and our actions.

For many years, Santa Clara has welcomed undocumented students to our campus, and we will continue this practice. For example, the Jesuit Community for many years has worked with many of you to educate and support undocumented students. We will continue to devote resources to these valued members of our campus.

While on our campus or in our programs, we will do everything in our power to keep you safe. If there are further concerns, we have provided your teachers with a list of resources.

Art is where we begin to discuss what moves, inspires, and challenges us. We are moved by Dr. Jiménez 's determination, inspired by the undocumented people in our community, and challenged by a government that has incorrectly stated that undocumented immigrants do not belong in this country. We hope that by showing you *The Circuit*, you might begin to think about what immigration means to you and how it shapes your life, as well as recognize that it is a topic well worthy of deep discussion.

This is a world that can feel frightening and hostile. As a young person, you may feel powerless to change it. Please know that this is not the case. There is a network of support behind you should you choose to come forward and play a part in making this world better.

In solidarity,
SCU•Presents Arts for Social Justice