ETHN 116: The United States-Mexico Border in Comparative Perspective
UC San Diego

MWF 2:00-2:50pm
Office Hours: MW 2:50-4pm
Office Location: SSB 243

Dr. Justin de Leon
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Course Description:

This course is a critical examination of the US-Mexico border as both a geographic political construct and an analytical space to interrogate the role of borders in the political, social, and cultural imagination.

The border provides a means to think about socially constructed binaries, difference and the so-called “other,” securitization, and nation-building. Though they act as physical spaces of separation, their logics extend well beyond political demarcations to shape everyday borders created through institutions, social conventions, and politics. We will explore how we come to understand what the boarder is and how they shape our identities.

This course is a critical examination of “borderlands” and how they play an integral role in the creation of our various social, cultural, and political realities.

Course Objectives:

The main objective of this course is to two-fold, to gain a deep knowledge of the current debates around the US-Mexico border and to gain a better critical understanding of what the roles of borders are in the construction of who we are and who we imagine ourselves to be.

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

• Grasp the historical and contemporary legacy of the US-Mexican border,
• Understand the continued significance of borders in the shaping of American modern society,
• Gain critical analytical tools to theoretically situate political, social, and cultural issues related to borders, and to
• Further develop reading, annotating, writing, and powers of expression.
**Required Materials:**

I am sensitive to the costs of reading materials and their prohibitory nature. As a result, I will limit the material needing to be purchased and do my best to make sure necessary coursework (articles, book chapters, etc.) will be accessible through the library and/or will be supplied to the student throughout the course. Two books are required for purchase:


We will be drawing from a wide range of resources from ethnic studies, gender and women's studies, Native American studies, international relations, anthropology, history, and media studies. Please note, the course syllabus and covered material is subject to change in accordance to direction of student interest.

**Student Obligations:**

Students will be expected to participate the course in an active and engaged manner. Much like any endeavor taken up at UCSD, meaningful and full participation is necessary for success and is expected.

An aim of this course is to engage themes in an academic and practical manner. We will be dealing with issues that have significant individual and community implications, aside from theoretical understandings. Bringing outside understandings and experiences is necessary and encouraged.

The class will have a Twitter handle (#UCSDborders) that we will use throughout the course to share resources, comment on readings, and keep an ongoing dialogue throughout our course. I will also be making a documentary film about migration and borders during the quarter and will, at times, bring this content into the classroom – the film’s Teaser can be found [here](http://tinyurl.com/thejournalist2016).

There will be no midterm or final in-class examinations. Grades will be comprised of (1) participation, (2) critical responses, and (3) a final project.

1. **Participation** consists of class attendance, course readings, twitter participation, and classroom participation. Students are expected to
contribute to ongoing discussions and explorations of class material and themes. This requires a deep reading of assignments (through annotating, summarizing, and noting questions that arise) and participation in class discussions (recall in both quality and frequency). Because of the number of students in the course, class attendance will be taken. This is 30% of the student’s grade.

- Come to class with two questions concerning readings for each class (where readings are required). Engagement of material and thorough review of assigned readings is necessary for proper class preparation. Questions should be handed in before or at the beginning of class.

- Please be in attendance at every class, attendance will be taken. If there is an unexpected occurrence and/or excused absence (University activities, medical reasons, and/or religious holidays), inform me as soon as possible in order that proper changes can be made.

2. **Critical Responses** (4) are 3 page papers submitted throughout the quarter, varying in topic. The first Response will be premised on previous experiences with the US-Mexico border (and borders more generally), reasons for taking this course, and desired outcomes. The remaining Critical Responses will be spread throughout the course in response to relevant course material. Each Critical Response will be 10% of grade (40% total).

3. The **Final Project** is a culmination of the semester and can take the form of two options: (1) a 6 page final essay or (2) an artistic project with an accompanying 3 page paper. Both options require a brief class presentation. Option 1 is an engagement and analysis of one or two significant themes throughout the semester and requires outside research. It is a deeper exploration of a theme or issue throughout the course. Option 2 can be either a collaboration with another student artist or a student created piece of artistic expression – this includes short films, poetry, song, posters, t-shirts, etc. The accompanying 3 page essay will explore the student’s intentions, process, and desired outcomes with the artistic expression. Students choosing an artistic expression must get their project approved prior to submitting their Final Project. This will be 30% of student’s final grade.

**Grading**

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<tr>
<th>1. Participation/Attendance</th>
<th>Regular questions and attendance</th>
<th>30%</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Critical Responses (4)</td>
<td>2-3 pages, throughout course</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>3. Final Project</td>
<td>(1) 6 page paper and</td>
<td>30%</td>
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Critical Reflection/Response and Final Project

Please submit all assignments on time, late submissions will see a one half grade deduction per day late (please email papers by midnight on specified due date). If you have any concerns about your assignments, I encourage you to contact me or see me during office hours. I would also be happy to give you feedback on early drafts.

All assignments should be the result of a single student's work alone. Collaboration is encouraged throughout the course and all sources must be properly cited – (collaboration on Final Project is encouraged though must be approved beforehand)

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Course Schedule

Friday, Sept. 23, 2016
No Class

Week 1: Border as Framework of Analysis I

Monday, Sept. 26, 2016
Introduction and review of Syllabus
Given Critical Response #1 assignment (Due Mon. Oct. 3)

Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2016
Read: Anzaldúa (2007) Borderlands, Chapter 1 and 2, Pgs. 3-46
Reading, annotation, participation, and writing

Friday, Sept. 30, 2016
Read: Anzaldúa (2007) Borderlands, Chapter 3, 4, and 5, Pgs. 47-86
Film: Zaccaria, Paolo. 2009. ALTAR: Crossing Borders, Building Bridges
**Week 2: Border as a Framework of Analysis II**

**Monday, Oct. 3, 2016**
Read: Anzaldúa (2007) Borderlands, Chapter 6 and 7, Pgs. 87-113

Critical Response #1 due before class

**Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2016**

**Friday, Oct. 7, 2016**

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**Week 3: Border as a Framework of Analysis III**

**Monday, Oct. 10, 2016**

**Wednesday, Oct. 12, 2016**
Guest Speaker: Desert Angels

**Friday, Oct. 14, 2016**
Lecture and Discussion

Critical Response #2 due before class

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**Week 4: Personal and Political**

**Monday, Oct. 17, 2016**

Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2016
Guest Speaker: Julio Romero

Friday, Oct. 21, 2016
Lecture and Discussion

Week 5: Global Borders and Militarization

Monday, Oct. 24, 2016

Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2016
Guest Speaker: Elyor Nematov, Kazakhstani photojournalist/filmmaker, www.nematov.org

Friday, Oct. 28, 2016
Lecture and Discussion

Critical Response #3 due before class

Week 6: Making the US and Mexico Border

Monday, Oct. 31, 2016

Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2016
Film and discussion

Friday, Nov. 4, 2016
Lecture and Discussion

**Week 7: Indigeneity and Borders**

**Monday, Nov. 7, 2016**

**Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2016**
Guest Speaker: Cynthia Smith, Anishinaabe scholar and activist

**Friday, Nov. 11, 2016**
No Class Veterans Day Holiday

**Week 8: Violence at the Border**

**Monday, Nov. 14, 2016**

Critical Response #4 due before class

**Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2016**
Guest Speaker: Vero Glezqui, Tijuana artist, www.glezqui.com

**Friday, Nov. 18, 2016**
Lecture and Discussion

**Week 9: Creation of the “Other”**
Monday, Nov. 21, 2016

Wednesday, Nov. 23, 2016
Guest Speaker: John Little, Director of More Than a Word documentary and Ph.D. student, http://morethanawordfilm.com

Friday, Nov. 25, 2016
No Class Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 10: Remapping, Resistance, and Moving Forward

Monday, Nov. 28, 2016

Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016

Friday, Dec. 2, 2016
Lecture, discussion, and The Journalist film review

Week 11: End of Quarter

Final Exams, Sat-Sat, Dec. 3-10
Final Project due on exam day
Fall Quarter Ends, Sat, Dec. 10