Transnationalism and Borderlands
Ethnic Studies 260
Spring 2006

Roberto Alvarez
SSB 223
oloberto@ucsd.edu
534-1739

This is an advanced graduate seminar designed to explore the concepts of transnationalism and borderlands as they relate to globalization. The primary concern here is how local and regional communities and people engage and respond to transnationalism. Our objective is to interrogate state/nation-state processes in globalization. How does transnational capital work at the ground level and in what ways are nation and state hierarchies part of this global process? Transnationalism involves the interlocution of people, state power and hierarchy, and the literal crossing of national boundaries. Borders and borderlands are of paramount importance, but the emphasis in this class are not literal geo-political borders (e.g. the U.S.-Mexico Border), nor the crossing of national borders. Rather, our focus includes the creation of new social and cultural borders and borderlands that result from current global phenomenon. The fundamental questions we will explore are: What is Transnationalism and how does this process relate to current hierarchies of power, knowledge and identity? How is the nation state transnational? How do we identify newly emergent borders and borderlands? How do people and institutions at local levels engage the global-transnational process? How do these processes affect the manifestation of culture, power, ethnicity (identity) and race? And, why is this significant? Although the class will cover the primary social science definitions of transnationalism, our purpose is to seek the underlying meanings of global process and new interpretations of both transnationalism and borderlands.

Requirements for the Course: This is a seminar in which reading and discussion are the basis of our exploration. All participants are expected to be prepared each class period to discuss the assigned readings. Each of you have a specific interests—geographical, cultural and theoretical—that I expect will be utilized and contributed in the class discussions.

Course Assignments:
1) Reading response papers. For each week=s assigned reading, class participants will write a response paper not to exceed two pages (double-spaced with one inch margins). These assignments are to be handed in at the end of each class on the day that reading is scheduled for discussion.

2) Term Paper. You are responsible for a term paper of about 10 pages in length on any topic that is pertinent to the class. My expectation is that papers incorporate class discussions and readings, and focus on specific examples of transnationalism/borderlands drawn from your own interests, research and questions. The paper is due on the final week of class BFriday June 6
Schedule of Classes
April 4- Introduction

April 11- Reading assignment: Nations Unbound.

April 18- Reading assignment Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalism

April 25- Reading assignment Tangled Routes:

May 2- Reading assignment: The Death of Ramon Gonzales

May 9- Open Discussion/Research Updates

May 16- Reading Assignment: Global Networks: Linked Cities (Selected chapters)

May 23- Reading Assignment: The Anthropology of the State (selected chapters)

May 30- Reading Assignment Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections :
June 6- Summary
no reading assignment. Final paper due.

Required Texts:

1. Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc  
2. Appadurai, Arjun  
   U Minnesota Press.
3. Sharma, Aradhama and Akhil Gupta  
   2006 The Anthropology of the State. Blackwell
4. Barndt, Deborah  
   Rowman and Littlefield.
5. Wright, Angus  
   2005 The Death of Ramon Gonzales: The Modern Agricultural Dilemma 
   U Texas Press.
6. Ana Tsing  
7. Sassen, Sakia  
Required articles (to be placed on reserve).

Alvarez, Robert R.

Alvarez R. And George A. Collier
1994 (with George Collier)The Long Haul in Mexican Trucking: Traversing the Borderlands of the North and South. American Ethnologist 21 (3) 606-627.

Bestor, Theodore C.

Flynn, Donna K.

Kearney, Michael

Winichakal, Thongchai