

**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
judeleon@UCSD.edu**

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:

Anzaldúa, Gloria. 2007. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books. Pgs. 1-113.
Mohanty, Chandra T. 2003. *Feminisms Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing, Solidarity*. Duke University Press.

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) (<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

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

presentation OR (2)
artistic expression, 3
page paper and
presentation

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)

* * *

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

Read: Newman, David. 2006. The Lines That Continue to Separate Us: Borders in our 'Borderless' World. *Progress in Human Geography*. Vol. 30. No. 2. Pgs. 143-161.

Friday, Oct. 7, 2016

Read: Mohanty (2003) *Under Western Eyes*, Chapter 1: "Under Western Eyes," Pgs. 17-42.

Read: Mohanty (2003) *Under Western Eyes*, Chapter 2: "Cartographies of Struggle," Pgs. 43-84.

Week 3: Border as a Framework of Analysis III

Monday, Oct. 10, 2016

Read: Mohanty (2003) *Under Western Eyes*, Chapter 3: "What's Home Got to Do with It?" Pgs. 85-105.

Read: Mohanty (2003) *Under Western Eyes*, Chapter 5: "Genealogies of Community, Home, and Nation," Pg. 124-136.

Wednesday, Oct. 12, 2016

Guest Speaker: Desert Angels

Friday, Oct. 14, 2016

Lecture and Discussion

Critical Response #2 due before class

Week 4: Personal and Political

Monday, Oct. 17, 2016

Read: "Los Desaparecidos" of the Border: Testimonies by Migrants and Their Families. 1996. *Race, Poverty and the Environment*. Summer/Fall. Pg. 34-36.

Read: Vila, Pablo. 2003. The Polysemy of the Label 'Mexican' on the Border. Found in *Ethnography at the Border*. Chapter 4. University of Minnesota Press. Pg. 105-140.

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

Read: Rosas, Gilberto. 2006. The Thickening Borderlands: Diffused Exceptionality and Immigrant Social Struggles During the War on Terror. Found in *Cultural Dynamics*. Vol. 18. No. 3. Pgs. 335-349.

Read: Andreas, Peter. 2003. Redrawing the Line: Borders and Security in the Twenty-First Century. *International Security*. Vol. 28. No. 2. Pgs. 78-111.

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

Read: "Profile: Tijuana, Mexico." 1996. *Race, Poverty and the Environment*. Summer/Fall. Pgs. 3-5.

Read: Popescu, Roxana. 2016. Border Wall a Fact of Life for Border Neighborhoods: Residents have contrasting opinions about the impact of security fences. *San Diego Union Tribune*. May 28.

Read: Kramer, Paul. 2014. "A Border Crosses." *The New Yorker*. Sept. 20.

Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2016

Film and discussion

Friday, Nov. 4, 2016

Read: Hays, Rachel. 1996. Cross-Border Indigenous Nations: A History. *Race, Poverty and the Environment*. Summer/Fall. Pgs. 40-42.
Lecture and Discussion

Week 7: Indigeneity and Borders

Monday, Nov. 7, 2016

Read: Luna-Firebaugh, Eileen M. 2002. The Border Crossed Us: Border Crossing Issues of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. *Wicazo Sa Review*. Vol. 17. No. 1. Tohono O'odham Nation.

Read: Ellingwood, Ken. 2000. Tribes are Caught on the Border. *Los Angeles Times*. May 8. <http://articles.latimes.com/2000/may/08/news/mn-27815>. Tohono O'odham Nation and the Kumeyaay of San Diego.

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

Read: Corchado, Alfredo. 2015. "Faces from the Border." Three Part Series. News Desk. *The New Yorker*. Nov. 11, 18, 25.

Read: "Impunity and the Border Patrol." 2014. NYT Editorial Board. The Opinion Pages. *The New York Times*. May 11.

Read: Foley, Elise. 2016. "Family Seeks Justice At Human Rights Panel For Man Who Died After Border Patrol Altercation." Politics. *The Huffington Post*. March 31.

Critical Response #4 due before class

Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2016

Guest Speaker: Vero Glezqui, Tijuana artist, www.glezqui.com

Friday, Nov. 18, 2016

Read: Solís, Ruben and Cipriana Jurado. 1996. Las Fronteras The Borders: U.S./Mexico. *Race, Poverty and the Environment*. Summer/Fall. Pgs. 1-2.

Lecture and Discussion

Week 9: Creation of the "Other"

Monday, Nov. 21, 2016

Read: Ross, Luana. 1998. "Introduction" and "Colonization and the Social Construction of Deviance." Found in *Inventing the Savage: The social construction of Native American criminality*. Introduction and Chapter 1. University of Texas Press. Pgs. 1-10.

Read: Stern, Maria. 2005. "Exploring In/Security" and "Theorizing Security and Identity." Found in *Naming Security – Constructing Identity: Mayan Women in Guatemala on the Eve of Peace*. Chapter 1 and 2. Manchester University Press.

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

Read: Alexander, Jacqui M. 2005. "Pedagogies of the Sacred: Making the Invisible Tangible." Found in *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*." Chapter 7. Pg. 287-332.

Read: Tuck, Eve. 2008. Re-Visioning Action: Participatory Action Research and Indigenous Theories of Change. *Urban Rev.* Vol. 41. Pgs. 47-65.

Wednesday, Nov. 30, 2016

Read: Barndt, Deborah. 2010. Remapping the Americas: A transnational engagement with creative tensions of community arts. Found in *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*. Eds. Amanda L. Swarr and Richa Nagar. Chapter 8. SUNY Press. Pgs. 166-191.

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