

UC San Diego
ETHN 116:
The US-Mexico Border in Comparative Perspective
Fall 2017 | Dr. Melissa Hidalgo
TuTh 2.00-3.20pm in York Hall (Revelle College) 3050B

Dear Students,

Welcome to this section of ETHN 116, “The US-Mexico Border in Comparative Perspective.” My name is Melissa Hidalgo—you can call me “Profe Hidalgo” or “Dr. Hidalgo”—and I’m your instructor. I’m happy to be back here at UCSD teaching in Ethnic Studies.

What follows is the Course Syllabus. The bullet points below contain the classroom procedures, policies, and other important ‘ground rules’ for our class. I linked important University policies and procedures in our TritonEd pages. Please review those pages, particularly the parts about cheating (don’t do it!), student conduct, and campus emergencies.

- First things first. This **course** critically explores the histories, peoples, politics, and cultures of U.S.-Mexico borderland region, from the border’s creation in the mid-19th century to the present day issues that keep the US-Mexico border in the news. We will read, view, and listen to a variety of cultural texts that reflect the complex and often contradictory social-cultural, historical, and political-economic patterns of life in the “borderlands” from 1848 to now, including current events.
- Starting Week 2, my **office hours** are Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:30pm, location to be determined. If you know you want to see me in office hours, please **email me ahead of time to schedule an appointment**. While ‘drop-ins’ are welcome in office hours, students who have confirmed an appointment with me will be prioritized. If you have a schedule conflict and cannot make my regular OH (and also because I don’t live locally and I’m only on campus on the days I teach), I also offer Skype sessions on Wednesday mornings. As with in-person office hours, please email me if you’re interested in a Wednesday Skype session.
- Speaking of emailing me, here’s some **etiquette** to follow: when you email me, please include the course number, your name, and a **clear subject** in the subject line. Practice good email etiquette by including an **appropriate address** (for example, “Dear Professor Hidalgo,” or “Hello, Professor”) and a clearly conveyed message. If you begin your email with “hey” or write to me like ur texting ur bff (wtf!), I will not reply to u. Otherwise, if you email me properly, I will respond within the next 24 hours (excluding weekends).
- You will have to **buy three books** for this class: 1) Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987); 2) Reyna Grande, *Across a Hundred Mountains: A Novel* (2006); and 3) Domingo Martínez, *The Boy Kings of Texas: A Memoir* (2012). Please buy these in hard copy (i.e., no E-books or Kindles here, please).

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- There are **three required films** in this class: 1) *Lone Star* (1996), dir. John Sayles; 2) *Señorita Extraviada* (2001), dir. Lourdes Portillo; and 3) *Pretty Vacant* (1996), dir. Jim Mendiola. You will have to watch *Lone Star* on your own before class; the other two films will be screened in class. All other required readings, viewing, and material for this class, unless otherwise indicated, are available for download on TritonEd under “Content.” Please see the Course Schedule for details.
- In order to pass this class, all students must complete and hand in the following **graded assignments**: 1) midterm exam (20 points) 2) critical reflection paper (10 pts); 3) letter exchange and reply with peer (10 pts); annotated reading (5 pts); and a final project with proposal (35 pts.) Attendance and participation are worth 10 points; homework and other short ‘pop’ assignments are worth 10 total points, for a grand total of **100 possible points** for the class. For each assignment, I will post a handout detailing requirements, criteria, due dates, and other information. You can find all your assignments in a folder under “Content” in TritonEd.
- The **Midterm** will be a take-home exam that covers all material from Wks 1-5. The **Final Project** will be two parts. Part 1 will be multiple choice/short answers covering Wks 6-10 material. In Part 2, you will have a choice of three options: a) traditional research paper (10-12 pages) on a topic of your choice related to the course; b) annotated bibliography; or c) creative project. **Extra credit** (up to 5 additional points) opportunities are available and will be accepted until the last day of class. See TritonEd for details.
- **Late assignments** will be accepted only in verifiable emergencies, and only by arrangement with me prior to the due date. Assignments turned in late without prior approval will be graded down by one point for each 24-hour period past the due date.
- Because this syllabus is not a contract, all readings and assignments are **subject to change**. If I do make changes, I will announce it in class and post it in an “Announcement” on TritonEd; I will also update the syllabus to reflect these changes. It is your responsibility to keep up with any changes to our game plan.
- That said, I understand that sometimes things happen that prevent you from staying on top of your schoolwork and attending class. I value our classroom time together. Your **regular on-time attendance and participation** in class is important to maintaining a lively, engaging, and meaningful learning experience for all. So: everyone gets **one ‘freebie’** absence and **one excused** absence. You don’t have to explain to me your ‘freebie’ absence. However, you must provide official documentation for an excused absence. After two absences (excused or not), I will deduct points for every absence thereafter.
- Good attendance also means **arriving on time!** Late folks are disruptive. To me, constant tardiness is just as harmful to your grade as missing class. If something comes up during the quarter that affects your ability to attend class and/or be on time, please let me know sooner rather than later.

- Another thing: I understand many students use **laptops and electronic tablets** in the classroom. They're fine to read PDFs and other course material you don't want to print. However, unless you have a documented need for accommodations, please refrain from using your laptops for note taking and instead, **take notes using a notebook and a pen/pencil**. Studies show that students retain more information when they are required to listen and/pay attention to lectures and discussion and write down pertinent information. Plus, I find the tapping of a keyboard distracting. Please stow away your phones and other iDevices if you are not using them to read course-related material. And please refrain from surfing the web, checking/responding to emails, texting, and other non-course-related uses of electronic devices. I can see you!
- Regarding **class discussion and participation**: There are many ways to earn participation points. Regular involvement in class discussion is most common. I'm not saying everyone has to say something every day, but like many things in life, quality is better than quantity here. When you do say something, make sure it's a contribution: ground your insights, questions, and comments in the course materials; engage with your classmates in productive ways that advance or expand the conversation. If you are a shy person and do not feel as comfortable as others speaking in class, you can make up for this by stopping by my office hours for a chat, which also counts toward participation. You may also email me your questions or observations about the readings or lectures; post questions or comments for your classmates on TritonEd discussion boards; or bring something to 'share' in class and connect to the material. When in doubt, please ask!
- Regarding **student conduct**: ETHN 116 is a course that occasionally may delve into issues that may be uncomfortable and/or controversial. We ask that everyone be respectful of one another's viewpoints and that everyone adhere to the university's expectations for student conduct. Ethnic slurs, anti-immigrant, classist, racist, sexist and homophobic remarks, and religious diatribes/hate speech will not be acceptable commentary for this course, and appropriate action will be taken if these things occur. Students will be held to the university-wide policies established for Student Conduct.
- **Majoring in Ethnic Studies**: Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of "interest," yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Mónica Rodriquez de Cabaza, our Ethnic Studies Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu

The last thing I want to say is that you don't have to be an Ethnic Studies major to find relevance in this material. My main goals for this class, as your instructor, are threefold: 1) to present a compelling variety of texts that engage you in thoughtful contemplation of the material/metaphysical territory of the US-Mexico borderlands; 2) to expand your critical

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thinking, writing, and communication skills; and 3) to motivate you to apply your knowledge in meaningful ways once you leave here. At the end of the day, at the end of the quarter, if you learned even just one thing in this class, if you made just one meaningful connection between what you learned here and what you do in the world, then I would have done my job.

Thank you for being here. I look forward to an engaging and enriching quarter for us all.

prof. mhidalgo.

P.S. There will be a quiz on this syllabus! Read it carefully; if you have specific questions or need clarification on anything, please ask.

[SCROLL FOR COURSE READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE]

ETHN 116: READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

(Read & plan ahead: all work is due on the day it is listed below.)

KEY:

(T) = posted on TritonEd under "Content" (web links, readings/PDFs, assignment handouts, etc.)

(RB) = Required Book (you should have your own hard copy of this; no e-books here)

(E/L) = access free Ebook through UCSD Library (online)

(CR) = on Course Reserves at UCSD Geisel Library

(*) = Eligible for Annotated Reading Assignment



I. THE US-MEXICO BORDER: HISTORIES, CONTEXTS, PERSPECTIVES

WEEK 0

Thu 9/28

- First class meeting. Welcome; course introduction; overview.
- IN-CLASS: *Bordertown* (Fox) S1:E2 "Borderwall" + *WaPo* article w/Lalo Alcaraz interview
- Unpack, discuss, reflect: "Mexifornia" and other contemporary popular representations and imaginations of the US-Mexico border, border states, immigration, national security.
- REVIEW: Course Syllabus (T). There will be a Syllabus Quiz next week! And it will count.

WEEK 1

Tue 10/3

- READ: Dean, "Timeline of the Texas-Mexico Border, 1835-1920" (T)
- BROWSE: UT Arlington's website, "A Continent Divided: The US-Mexico War" (T)
- KEYS: US-Mexican War, 1846-8; Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, 1848; map of Mexico before 1848 and territories lost in 1848; "Manifest Destiny;" Gadsden Purchase, 1853; expansion

Thu 10/5

- READ: *Streeby, "American Sensations: Empire, Amnesia, and the US-Mexican War" (T)
- DISCUSS: Annotation, close reading, key terms, broader picture, connections to course
- NOTE: Office Hours begin next week. Email Profe to schedule a meeting any time.
- IN-CLASS: Syllabus Quiz

WEEK 2

Tue 10/10

- READ: *Mora-Torres, "Introduction" and "Ch. 1: The Significance of 1848" in *The Making of the Mexican Border: The State, Capitalism, and Society in Nuevo León, 1848-1910* (T, CR)

Thu 10/12

- READ: *Mora-Torres, "Epilogue" (T, CR)

WEEK 3

Tue 10/17

- READ: *Hernández, "Dedication" (incl. Lerma's "Superman" corrido lyrics) and "Introduction" in *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol* (T, E/L, CR)
- LISTEN: Lerma, "Superman Es Ilegal" (YouTube)

Thu 10/19

- READ: *Hernández, "Ch. 1: The Early Years" (T, E/L, CR)
- **DUE: Letter Exchange w/Peer Partner (bring hard copy to class)**

REMINDER: We will discuss the film *Lone Star* (1996, dir. John Sayles) in Week 5, and it will be on the Midterm. You may rent it on Amazon.com for \$3.99 and watch at your convenience. (Also check HBO, SHO, etc. if you have cable to see if it's currently playing.) The DVD of *Lone Star* is also on Course Reserves at the library. Please plan accordingly and make sure you watch *Lone Star* before Week 5. Use the *Lone Star* Viewing Guide (T), and don't forget to do the assigned reading, too!

II. WRITTEN ON THE BORDER: THEORIZING AND NARRATING THE BORDERLANDS

WEEK 4

Tue 10/24

- READ: *Anzaldúa, "Ch. 1: The Homeland, Aztlán/*El Otro México*" and "Ch. 2: *Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*" in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (RB)
- (NOTE: Anzaldúa writes mostly in English and uses some Spanish; some of it she translates, some of it she doesn't. I encourage those of you not familiar with Spanish to use your resources: dictionary, translation device, class discussion, etc. to help you when necessary.)
- READ: *Pérez, "Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible and Unheard" (T)

Thu 10/26

- READ: *Anzaldúa, "Ch. 5: How to Tame a Wild Tongue" and "Ch. 7: *La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness*" (RB, CR)
- READ: *Tragic Bitches: An Experiment in Queer Xicana & Xicano Performance Poetry* (T)

WEEK 5

Tue 10/31

- FILM: *Lone Star* (1996, dir. John Sayles) (CR)
- Discuss and unpack characters, storylines, and contexts

Thu 11/2

- READ: *Dean, "Introduction: The Texas-Mexico Border: A Mythical History" in *How Myth Became History: Texas Exceptionalism in the Borderlands* (T)
- READ: *Fregoso, "Ch. 3: Gender, Multiculturalism, and the Missionary Position on the Borderlands," *meXicana Encounters: The Making of Social Identities on the Borderlands* (T)

⇒TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM due on TritonEd by 11:59pm Fri 11/3⇐

WEEK 6

Tue 11/7

- READ: Martínez, *The Boy Kings of Texas: A Memoir* (RB)
- LISTEN: "El Rey," José Alfredo Jiménez (Vicente Fernández) (T)

Thu 11/9

- IN CLASS FILM: *Pretty Vacant* (1996, dir. Jim Mendiola)
- DISCUSS: *Boy Kings* and *Pretty Vacant* together: what do both texts together illuminate about music, cultural identity, and resistance in the Tex-Mex borderlands?
- **DUE: Letter Exchange-Reply to Peer (bring hard copy to class)**

WEEK 7

Tue 11/14

- READ: Grande, *Across a Hundred Mountains: A Novel* (RB, CR)

Thu 11/16

- READ: Grande, *AHM* novel
- READ: *Carminero-Santangelo, "The lost ones: Post-gatekeeper border fictions and the construction of cultural trauma" (T) + articles on Operation Gatekeeper, Operation Hold the Line, and other 1990s-current state and federal US-MX border-related legislation

WEEK 8

TURKEY HOLIDAY WEEK

Tue 11/21

- (open)
- **DUE: Critical Reflection Paper (submit in TritonEd)**

Thu 11/23

- no class – national holiday. Now is a good time to catch up, work on your Annotated Reading assignment, review the course material, read ahead, watch the news, watch a movie, listen to some corridos or punk music or Selena or Morrissey, think about what you want to do for your final project, or a potential extra credit assignment...

III. CURRENT CRISES, COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES OF THE US-MEX BORDER

WEEK 9

Tue 11/28

- IN-CLASS FILM: *Señorita Extraviada* (2001). (CR)
- READ: Caputi, “Afterword: Goddess Murder and Gynocide in Ciudad Juárez” in *Making a Killing: Femicide, Free Trade, and La Frontera*, ed. Alicia Gaspar de Alba (T)

Thu 11/30

- READ: Mohanty, “Ch. 6: Women Workers and the Politics of Solidarity” in *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (T, E/L, CR)
- **DUE: Final Project Proposal (bring hard copy to class for written feedback)**

WEEK 10

Tue 12/5

- Course retrospective & US-MX border and others (still/always) in the news: Brexit/Northern Ireland; India/Pakistan; Israel/Palestine; Syria/Southern Europe, US/...
- 1-minute: Share your final project with the class.

Thu 12/7

- (Open; extra office hours & conferencing for Final Projects)
- **DUE: Last day to submit Annotated Reading and Extra Credit.**

FINAL PROJECT PARTS 1 and 2 DUE ONLINE

Thurs 12/14



UCSD Student Conduct Policies are linked on TritonEd. See especially “Section VII: Conduct in Violation of Community Standards.”

Students requiring Office for Students with Disabilities accommodations should see me ASAP.