

**Transnationalism and Borderlands**  
**Ethnic Studies 260**  
**Spring 2006**

Roberto Alvarez  
SSB 223  
[oloberto@ucsd.edu](mailto:oloberto@ucsd.edu) .  
534-1739

This is an advanced graduate seminar designed to explore the concepts of transnationalism and borderlands as they relate to globalism. 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  
1994 Nations Unbound. Gordon and Breach .
2. Appadurai, Arjun  
1998 Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalism.  
U Minnesota Press.
3. Sharma, Aradhama and Akhil Gupta  
2006 The Anthropology of the State. Blackwell
4. Barndt, Deborah  
2002 Tangled Routes: Women, Work and Globalization on the Tomato Trail.  
Rowman and Littlefield.
5. Wright, Angus  
2005 The Death of Ramon Gonzales: The Modern Agricultural Dilemma  
U Texas Press.
6. Ana Tsing  
2004 Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections. Princeton University Press.
7. Sassen, Sakia  
2002 Global Networks: Linked Cities . Routledge.

**Required articles** (to be placed on reserve).

Alvarez, Robert R.

1995 The Mexican-US Border: the Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands Annual Review of Anthropology 24:447-70. Winter .

2001 Beyond the Border: Nation State Encroachment, NAFTA, and Offshore Control in the U.S. Mexican Mango Industry@. Human Organization. Vol. 60, No.2, 121-127.

2006 The Transnational State and Empire: US Certification in the Mexican Mango and Persian Lime Industries. Human Organization. Vol.65, No.1, Spring 2006

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.

2001 Supply Side Sushi: Commodity, Market and the Global City. American Anthropologist 103(1):76-95

Flynn, Donna K.

1997 We are the Border! Identity, Exchange and the State Along te Benin-Nigeria Border. American Ethnologist 24(2):311-330.

Kearney, Michael

1995 The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism. Annual Review of Anthropology 1995.24:547-65.

Winichakal, Thongchai

1996 Maps and The Formation of the Geo-Body of Siam. In Stein Tonneson and Hans Antlov, eds. Asian Forms of the Nation. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon. PP. 67-92.