

ETHN 116:
The United States–Mexico Border in Comparative Perspective
Spring 2020
MWF 3:00-3:50pm

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Office Hours: email me to set up Zoom appt (available afternoons M-F)

Course Description

This class explores the border as a concept, a place and state of mind. The 'comparative' in the course title underscores the fact that these frames of reference are neither monolithic nor static, on either side or across the US-Mexico border.

I have organized the course according the following four sections:

Part I: Constructing the Border – first presents some current issues at the border and then transitions to the history of the border

Part II: Life in the Borderlands – begins with Chicana@ thinker Gloria Anzaldúa's conceptualization of 'the Borderlands', which we will use to think through anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican sentiments

Part III: The Spatial Dimensions of the Border and Mobilities – this section considers changes in the following: the limits of the border, how people move across the border and the regulation of migration

Part IV: Rethinking the Border – at the end the course we will read letters from migrants detained at the border and reflect on how to change or rethink the border

I am very excited about the final project for this class, which is to construct a [storymap](#) in which each person can research and illustrate a specific aspect of the US-Mexico border that they are interested in.

Readings and other Requirements

You are not required to purchase texts for this course. All required readings – PDFs and links to articles– will be available online on Canvas in the modules on a week-by-week basis.

Expectations

While this course will be taught asynchronously (lectures and readings will be available on demand), it will be very important to keep up with your readings and assignments. Each week of the course builds off the previous week. Make sure to submit your assignments and assessments in on time because that is the safest way to keep up with the material.

Communication

I encourage you to reach out to through email whenever you need to talk about ideas or concerns in this class. Make sure you read over the syllabus and any instructions I have shared via e-mail announcements or Canvas carefully before you ask any questions. I will not respond to e-mails asking me for any information that is readily available on the syllabus.

Make sure to follow proper email etiquette when sending me an email:

- a) include ETHN 116 in the subject heading of the email
- b) provide a salutation (e.g., “Hello Alex”)
- c) end the email properly (e.g. “Sincerely”, “Kind regards”...etc.)

Please check your email regularly to keep up to date with any possible changes to our schedule.

Assessments (100 points total)

Weekly Discussion Posts: 30 pts (submitted every Sunday by 11:59pm on Canvas)

Midterm Exam: 30 pts (submitted on Canvas during Week 5)

Storymap: 40 pts

- Proposal: 5 Points (submitted on Canvas by April 24)
- Bibliography: 5 Points (submitted on Canvas during Week 7)
- Storymap: 30 Points (submitted on Canvas during Week 10)

Online Resources

ARCGIS STORYMAPS - [Overview](#)

NPR PODCAST SERIES - [Borderland: Dispatches From The U.S.-Mexico Boundary](#)

THE FRONTERA COLLECTION - [Mexican and Mexican American Music Recordings](#)

DISCLAIMER:

THINK OF THIS SYLLABUS AS AN ORGANIC DOCUMENT THAT WILL INEVITABLY CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER. ALWAYS CHECK FOR THE LATEST VERSION OF THE SYLLABUS IN CANVAS

PART 1: CONSTRUCTING THE BORDER

Week 1	The US-Mexico Border Today
Mon 3/30	Introduction and Syllabus
Wed 4/1	<p>Website Article – “Trump announces partial US-Mexico border shutdown to combat coronavirus” (Solis and Fry 2020) https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/border-baja-california/story/2020-03-20/u-s-mexico-border-partial-shutdown</p> <p>Article - “Construction of US Border Proceeds Despite Coronavirus Pandemic” (Lakhani 2020)</p> <p>Article – “Calls for Trump administration to release migrants from detention increase amid COVID-19 pandemic” (Aguilar 2020)</p>
Fri 4/3	Article – “Burlando la migra: Shifting Conceptions of the U.S.–Mexico Border” (Walsh 2018)

Week 2	History of the US-Mexico Border
Mon 4/6	Chapter 1 from <i>Operation gatekeeper: The rise of the "illegal alien" and the making of the US-Mexico boundary</i> - “On Gate Keeping and Boundary Making” (Nevins 2010)
Wed 4/8	Chapter 2 from <i>Operation gatekeeper: The rise of the "illegal alien" and the making of the US-Mexico boundary</i> – “Nation Building in the Borderlands: Constructing the U.S.–Mexico Boundary” (Nevins 2010)
Fri 4/10	Chapter 3 from <i>Operation gatekeeper: The rise of the "illegal alien" and the making of the US-Mexico boundary</i> – “Generating Difference in San Diego–Tijuana” (Nevins 2010)

Week 3	History of the US-Mexico Border (Part II)
Mon 4/13	Chapter 4 from <i>Operation gatekeeper: The rise of the "illegal alien" and the making of the US-Mexico boundary</i> - "Sharpening the Divide: from Border to Boundary" (Nevins 2010)
Wed 4/15	Article - "The Thickening Borderlands: Diffused Exceptionality and 'Immigrant' Social Struggles during the 'War on Terror'" (Rosas 2006)
Fri 4/17	Article - "Beyond Trump's Big, Beautiful Wall" (Miller and Nevins 2017)

PART II: LIFE IN THE BORDERLANDS

Week 4	Theorizing 'The Borderlands'
Mon 4/20	Chapter 1 from <i>Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> - "The Homeland, Aztlán" (Anzaldúa 1987) Chapter 2 from <i>Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> - "Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan" (Anzaldúa 1987)
Wed 4/22	Chapter 5 from <i>Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> - "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (Anzaldúa 1987) Chapter 7 from <i>Borderlands: La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i> - "La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness" (Anzaldúa 1987)
Fri 4/24	Chapter 4 from <i>Entre Mundos/Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa</i> - "Daughter of Coatlicue: An Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa" (Lara 2005) Chapter from <i>Critical Ethnic Studies: A Reader</i> - "Checkered Choices, Political Assertions: The Unarticulated Racial Identity of the Asociación Nacional México-Americana" (Pulido 2016)

Week 5	Anti-Immigrant/Mexican Sentiment(s)
Mon 4/27	READ PAGES 1-22 of Chapter “Scorpion’s Tale” from <i>City of Inmates Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965</i> (Lytle Hernández 2017)
Wed 4/29	READ PAGES 22-40 of Chapter “Scorpion’s Tale” from <i>City of Inmates Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965</i> (Lytle Hernández 2017) Article - “The Lemon Grove Incident” (Álvarez 1986)
Fri 5/1	Article - “Genderacing immigrant subjects: ‘anchor babies’ and the politics of birthright citizenship” (Kim et al. 2018)

PART III: THE SPATIAL DIMENSIONS OF THE BORDER & MOBILITIES

Week 6	Where does the Border End?
Mon 5/4	Chapter from <i>Critical Ethnic Studies: A Reader</i> - “The Thickening Borderlands: Bastard Mestiz@s, ‘Illegal’ Possibilities, and Globalizing Migrant Life” (Rosas 2016) Guest Speaker: Amy Work (UCSD GIS lab)
Wed 5/6	Website Article “‘3 Mexican Countries’: When All Latin American Migrants Become Mexicans” (Hernández 2019) https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2019/10/3-mexican
Fri 5/8	Article – “‘He used to be a Pollero’ the securitisation of migration and the smuggler/migrant nexus at the Mexico-Guatemala border” (Galemba 2018)

Week 7	Migration, Violence and Privilege
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Mon 5/11	Article – “Crossing Mexico: Structural violence and the commodification of undocumented Central American migrants” (Vogt 2013)
Wed 5/13	Article - “Child Migration and Transnationalized Violence in Central and North America” (Swanson and Torres 2016)
Fri 5/15	Article – “Rooted in relative privilege: US ‘expats’ in Granada, Nicaragua” (Croucher 2018)

Week 8	Migration Control
Mon 5/18	Article – “Automobility, Immobility, Altermobility: Surviving and Resisting the Intensification of Immigrant Policing” (Stuesse and Coleman 2014) Guest Speaker: Amy Work (UCSD GIS lab)
Wed 5/20	Article – “Sensors, Cameras, and the New ‘Normal’ in Article Clandestine Migration: How Undocumented Migrants Experience Surveillance at the U.S.-Mexico Border” (Newell et al 2017) Guest Speaker(s): US Border Patrol
Fri 5/22	Article – “The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants” (Frelick et al. 2016)

PART IV: RETHINKING THE BORDER

Week 9	Detention
Mon 5/25	Memorial Day (No Class)
Wed 5/27	Article - “‘Catch and Remove’: Detention, Deterrence, and Discipline in US Noncitizen Family Detention Practice” (Martin 2012)
Fri 5/29	Letters from Asylum-Seekers in Detention

Week 10	Thinking Beyond the Border
Mon 6/1	Article – “Defying U.S.-Sanctioned Violence at the Border” (Pavey 2017)
Wed 6/3	Article - “Thinking Beyond Humanitarian Borders” (Ticktin 2016)
Fri 6/5	TBD