

The United States/Mexico Border in Comparative Perspective
Ethnic Studies 116
Winter 2005

Instructor: Michelle Téllez
Class: W 5-7:50; Peterson 103
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Course Description

This course explores the U.S./Mexico border as a place of political, social, economic and cultural interaction, conflict and interdependence. We will examine the variation of communities, peoples, and identities that have evolved on both sides of the international demarcation by examining the history of the region and contemporary border issues such as militarization, globalization, femicide on the border, creative border expressions and social movements. Furthermore, we will explore the ways in which boundary maintenance reinforces the power of the nation-state and the global political economy, as well as the contradictions that emerge from these processes.

Required Texts

Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora: Life Histories of Women Workers in Tijuana by Norma Iglesias Prieto

Globalization on the Line: Culture, Capital and Citizenship at U.S. Borders edited by Claudia Sadowski-Smith

Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza by Gloria Anzaldúa

Troublesome Border by Oscar J. Martinez

Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society by Leo R. Chavez

Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border by Luis Alberto Urrea

Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the "Illegal Alien" and the Making of the U.S.-Mexico Boundary by Joseph Nevins

Articles that are not in the above texts are in the Course Reader available through University Readers.

Course Requirements

You will be required to complete the weekly reading assignments, attend lectures and in-class videos/films, and regularly participate in class discussion. To pass this course and/or receive a final grade, all course requirements must be completed satisfactorily. Your grade will be based on the following assignments:

Attendance/Participation	20%
Reaction Papers	30%
Group Presentation	20%
Final Paper	30%

Attendance/Participation

The course requires extensive reading, discussion and analysis of issues. Participation is a very important factor in getting the most out of this class and out of your education. Participation means asking questions, sharing experiences and challenging ideas put forward by anyone in the class. It is assumed that students will have completed all assigned readings prior to arriving in class and will be fully prepared to discuss, analyze, and interpret the concepts, ideas, assumptions and implications of the readings. Attendance is mandatory. More than one absence will result in an 'F' in this section.

Reaction Papers:

You will be required to submit **five** 2-page (double-spaced) responses to the readings throughout the quarter and are free to choose any particular week's theme to write on. Please note that you may not submit a reaction paper after class discussion has taken place. I would suggest that you begin writing early on in the quarter so that the bulk of your work is not left for the end. This paper should NOT be a summary of the assigned readings, but instead a critical response that demonstrates that you have read and thought about the material. Responses may include but are not limited to the following:

- A critique of the author's work and suggestions for how their analysis or arguments may have been improved or expanded.
- A discussion of how the readings relate to something else you have read (a novel, poem, or article) or seen (film, current event, etc.)
- A discussion of how the readings relate to something in your own life experiences.
- A discussion of how the readings relate to something you are researching or working on in terms of your area of study, work, activism, etc.
- A discussion of how a particular reading challenged or changed your beliefs about a particular issue.

Group Presentation Guidelines:

Every student will be required to sign up for a date (given below) to conduct a group presentation. You will work with a group of 8-10 students who will be responsible for conducting brief presentations based on the following guidelines as they relate to the issue you will be working on:

Creative:

- A narrative(essay) or response in poetry to the readings.
- A dramatic response to the readings.

Personal:

- A discussion of how the readings relate to something in your own life (ex: a family photo or family story which triggers a response to the week's theme).
- A discussion of how the readings relate to something you are researching or working on in terms of your area of study, work, activism, etc.

Visual:

- A poster, video, or power point slides

Issue in the Media:

- Bring the class up to date on the issue at hand by conducting research. Some useful websites are:

1. The U.S./Mexico Studies Center: <http://www.usmex.ucsd.edu/index.html>
2. The Americas Program of the Interhemispheric Resource Center: <http://www.americaspolicy.org/>
3. The Borderlands Encyclopedia (this source has lists of dozens of relevant websites): www.utep.edu/border
4. NMSU Library Border & Latin American Information: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/subject/bord/index.html>
5. FNS is a border news site that covers nearly the entire U.S.-Mexico border. It is published by the New Mexico State University Center for Latin American and Border Studies (CLABS). <http://frontera.nmsu.edu/>

*Presenters will also be the assigned “experts” of the week who can expect to be called upon to answer questions related to the week’s readings and themes.

You will choose from the following dates:

Week 4 (January 26): Militarization of the U.S./Mexico Border

Week 5 (February 2): Border Communities

Week 6 (February 9): Borderlander Identities and Creative Expression

Week 7 (February 16): Border Economies, Maquiladoras and Globalization

Week 8 (February 23): Femicide on the Border

Week 9 (March 2): Social Movements at the Border

Reminder: You will have 45 minutes for the presentation.

Final Paper

The final research paper (14-18 pages) will be on some aspect related to the U.S.-Mexico border either from the topics covered in the course or another approved by the instructor. There will be a 3-page paper proposal and annotated bibliography (with at least 7-10 books/articles) due: **February 9**. Your proposal should include: what is the focus of your study, how will you investigate this topic, why you chose this topic, and, in

what ways do you generate new knowledge/perspectives on this topic. The final paper will expand on these points. Due: **March 9.**

Extra Credit Opportunity

I would like to take a group of students to the border and visit multiple sites. We will discuss details in class.

Course Schedule

Week 1 (January 5): Introduction to Course

Film: "Border Crossing/Cruzando Fronteras" (20 min.)

Week 2 (January 12): La Frontera: Defining the Region, Understanding the History

Reading: *Troublesome Border*, Ch. 1-3
 "Opening up Borderland Studies: A Review of U.S.-Mexico Border Militarization Discourse" by José Palafox (hand-out)
 "The View from the Frontier: Theoretical Perspectives Undisciplined" by Kathleen Staudt and David Spener (hand-out)
 "The U.S.-Mexican Border in the Twentieth Century: A History of Economic and Social Transformation" by David E. Lorey (hand-out)

Week 3 (January 19): The "Illegalization" of the Migrant and Territorial Boundary-Making

Reading: *Operation Gatekeeper*, all
 "The Social Construction of the U.S./Mexico Border"
 by Nestor P. Rodriguez(reader)

Guest Speaker: José Palafox, Visiting Professor at Mills College

Week 4 (January 26): Militarization of the U.S./Mexico Border

Reading: *"The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992: Low-Intensity Conflict Doctrine Comes Home"* by Timothy J. Dunn
 "Repatriating La Migra's War: The Militarized Border Comes Home" by Christian Parenti (reader)
 "Militarizing the Border" by José Palafox (reader)
 "The Re-Bordering of American After 11 September" by Peter Andreas (reader)
 "INS Folded Into Homeland Security" by Patrick J. Mc Donnell (reader)

Film: "New World Border" (28 min.)

Guest Speaker: Christian Ramírez, Director of AFSC

Week 5 (February 2): Border Communities

Reading: *Shadowed Lives*, all
 Across the Wire, all
 "The Erotic Zone: Sexual Transgression on the U.S.-Mexican Border" by
 Ramon Gutierrez (reader)

Film: "Uneasy Neighbors" (33 min.)

Week 6 (February 9): Borderlander Identities and Creative Expression

Reading: *Troublesome Border*, Ch. 4
 Borderlands/La Frontera, all
 "Telling the Difference Between the Border and the Borderlands" by
 Manuel Luis Martinez in *Globalization on the Line* p. 53-68
 "Irredentism in MexAmerica" by Mark de Socio and Christian Allen
 (reader)

Final Paper Proposal Due!

Guest Performance: Able Minded Poets and Teatro Izcalli

Week 7 (February 16): Border Economies, Maquiladoras and Globalization

Reading: *Beautiful Flowers of the Maquiladora*, all
 Introduction: *"Border Studies, Diaspora, and Theories of Globalization"* by
 Claudia Sadowski-Smith in *Globalization on the Line* p. 1-27
 Visit: <http://www.againstthegrain.org/> and listen to Devon Peña's interview
 from 10/25/04

Week 8 (February 23): Femicide on the Border

Reading: *"Performing the Border"* by Ursula Biemann in *Globalization on the Line* p.
 99-118
 "Defining Femicide and Related Concepts" by Diana E. H. Russell (reader)
 "The Maquiladora Murders, 1993-2003" by Alicia Gaspar de Alba (reader)
 "Voices Without Echo: The Global Gendered Apartheid" by Rosa Linda
 Fregoso (reader)

Film: "Señorita Extraviada" (75 min.)

Week 9 (March 2): Social Movements at the Border

Reading: *"Las Voces de Esperanza/Voices of Hope"* by Sharon A. Navarro in *Globalization on the Line* p. 183-200
 "Transborder Collaboration" by Manuel Rafael Mancillas in *Globalization on the Line* p. 201-220
 "The Tijuana-San Diego Border Action" by Lee Siu Hin (reader)
 "Arizona's Underground Railroad" by Tim Vanderpool (reader)

Film: "Everyone Their Grain of Sand" (87 min.)

Guest Speaker: Carmen Valadez, Border Activist (CITTAC, FZLN) and Connie Garcia, Border Activist (Binational Feminist Collective)

Week 10 (March 9): Class Review/Wrap-Up

Final Papers Due!

Syllabus is Subject to Change throughout the Quarter