

ETHN 116: US-Mexico Border in Comparative Perspective
Winter 2013, 3:30-4:50, CSB 004
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Office Hours: W 1:15-3:15 and by appointment

This course focuses on the US-Mexico border in history and culture from the 1830s to the present. We will start with the production of the border in the 19th century by examining wars and other conflicts as well as treaties and political documents that summoned it into existence. Over the course of the quarter, we will consider the borderlands histories of many different groups who have lived and worked there, including indigenous people, people of Mexican origin, blacks, Asians, whites, and the border patrol.

We will think about how significant flashpoints in the nineteenth-century history of the borderlands, such as the battle of the Alamo, the US-Mexico War, and Geronimo's role in the Indian Wars have been remembered and forgotten in popular and mass culture. We will also analyze different genres of music—including the corrido, the bolero, and punk—in order to understand the connections between these cultural forms and borderlands communities, as well as between music and literature, such as Américo Paredes' novel *George Washington Gomez: A Mexicotexan Novel* (1930s; 1990) and Gilbert Hernandez's graphic novels about the fictional town of Palomar.

In addition, we will learn about how photography shaped viewers' perceptions of the Mexican Revolution as well as the past, present, and future of labor in Tijuana, Juárez, and other borderlands cities as it is being imagined in recent films such as *Señorita Extraviada* (Portillo, 2001) and *Sleep Dealer* (Rivera, 2008).

Required Books Available at UCSD Bookstore

-Conway and Pellon, *The U.S.-Mexican War: A Binational Reader*

-Geronimo: *His Own Story*

-Poniatowska, *Las Soldaderas, Women of the Mexican Revolution*

-Vargas, *Dissonant Divas in Chicana Music*

-Paredes, *George Washington Gomez: A Mexicotexan Novel*

-Hernandez, *Migra! A History of the U.S. Border Patrol*

-Hernandez, *Beyond Palomar: A Love and Rockets Book*

-Kun and Montezemolo, *Tijuana Dreaming: Life and Art at the Global Border*.

Other **required readings** will be available on-line, on electronic reserves, or as electronic resources through UCSD's library, as indicated on the syllabus.

Class Requirements:

Class Participation (10%) is important! Please come to class ready to participate and with the day's reading/viewing completed. You must bring hard copies of assigned reading materials to section in order to receive full participation points. Class discussion is really important because, among other things, I want to help you work on developing and articulating your ideas about what you read. Improving each student's ability to articulate ideas effectively in public is one of the goals of this class; for most people this takes practice, rather than being something that comes naturally. Also, we will all learn more by encountering many different ideas about the topics we are studying. You must actively participate as well as attend to get an "A" for this part of the course. Unexcused absences will affect your grade, and if you have several unexcused absences you may fail the class. Please let me know if you have a doctor's note, family emergency, or some other serious reason for missing class so I can mark your absence as excused rather than unexcused. If you miss a substantial

part of any class session, it will count as an absence. Please come to class on time. If once or twice you must leave class a little early for a very good reason, be sure to tell me before class begins.

5-Minute Class Presentation and 1-Page Write-up of Presentation (10%). Each student will be asked to speak for 5 minutes in response to a question that I have posed for that day on the syllabus. You will do this as part of a group presentation, and I encourage the group to meet before the class to discuss the coordination of the presentation and to think about possible connections and differences between the individual presentations. No more than four people will be allowed to sign up for any given day; I will circulate a sign-up sheet at the beginning of class on Thursday. The presentations invite you to focus on **one example** of your own choosing (images, songs, other cultural texts, material objects, etc.) in order to develop a specific idea of your own in relation to the ideas of others in response to the material we are learning together. They should ideally help to generate class discussion. If possible, you should try to consult at least two sources for your presentation, and be careful to choose good sources rather than randomly reading whatever shows up at the top of a Google search. Be sure to tell the class about the sources you use in the presentation and why you chose these sources. On the day of the presentation, please hand in a one-page, typed write-up telling me what sources you used and why as you explain your response to the question. You will have the opportunity to turn your presentation into one of the 3 short papers if you desire. On the take-home final, I will also ask you one question in which you will have to draw on your presentation.

3 papers, 5-7 pages long (20% each, 60% total) due 1/29, 2/26, and 3/15. I will hand out prompts for these papers at least 2 weeks in advance: the prompts for the first paper will be handed out in class next Tuesday, 1/15. These papers will focus on the cluster of texts we are studying in each unit and will ask you to develop an argument in response to the prompt by drawing on those texts and, in some cases, other sources. Papers must be double-spaced and typed in 10- or 12-point font. Late papers will not be accepted unless you have asked for and received an extension in advance.

A take-home final exam (20%). On the last day of class I will hand out the take-home final exam, which you will complete and hand in by 3:00 on Tuesday, June 19 in my mailbox in the Ethnic Studies office, which is located in SSB 201. The office is open Monday thru Friday 8 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 4:30 pm. It closes for lunch from 12-1. This final will cover all of the material assigned in the class and will require you to identify and discuss keywords, quotes, and concepts from the class and also to write brief essays in response to questions I will pose.

ADA Statement. If you have a documented disability needing accommodations, please inform me and bring a notification letter outlining your approved accommodations. I will make all reasonable efforts to assist you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you must notify me in writing within one week of receipt of the syllabus. You may also seek assistance or information from the Office for Students with Disabilities, 858/534/4382.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Whether intentional or inadvertent, plagiarism is a serious violation. All work submitted in this course must be your own. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please ask your Teaching Assistants. Students who plagiarize, or who cheat on an exam, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy. Students are expected to be familiar with UCSD's Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, available at <http://www.senate.ucsd.edu/manual/appendices/app2.htm#AP14>.

Discussion Ethics: This class is intended for students interested in challenging commonly held understandings of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation. Given the nature of the course there will likely be a wide range of opinions. Ideally the course will prompt you to think for yourself and to

raise questions about conventional views and received wisdom. However, please engage one another in discussion with respect and consideration. Abusive and harsh language, intimidation and personal attacks will not be tolerated. These norms are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community that we are all expected to follow (<http://www.vcb.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

Schedule of Assignments

I Futures/Histories of the US-Mexico Border

TU 1/8 Introduction

TH 1/10 Watch *The Sleep Dealer* (Rivera, 2008) before class. It is available on Netflix and is also on reserve at the Film and Video Library in Geisel Library. It can also be purchased for \$4.99 on Amazon. Read Malcolm Harris, "Border Control" at <http://thenewinquiry.com/features/border-control/>; Jason Silverman, "Sleep Dealer Injects Sci-Fi into Immigration Debate" at http://www.wired.com/entertainment/hollywood/news/2008/01/sleep_dealer; and Mark Engler, "Science Fiction from Below" at http://www.fpi.org/articles/science_fiction_from_below.

TU 1/15 Conway, ed. *The US-Mexican War: A Binational Reader*, xii-126

Presentation Questions: How have the settlement of and struggles over Texas been remembered in the US and/or Mexico in the 20th or 21st centuries? What meanings have these struggles taken on at other moments in time?

TH 1/17 Conway, *The US-Mexican War*, 127-198 and Shelley Streeby, "Joaquin Murrieta and Popular Culture" from *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture*, 251-287. Available as electronic resource through UCSD Library website as part of the UC Press E-Books Collection, 1982-2004. Go to the electronic version after searching for the title on Roger, the UCSD Library Catalogue search engine.

Presentation Questions: How has the US-Mexico War been remembered in popular culture? Focus on a particular example, place it in its historical and cultural context, and discuss what this example remembers and what it forgets.

TU 1/22 *Geronimo: His Own Story* through p. 112: Dedication, Preface, Introduction by Frederick Turner, A Note on the Text, Introductory, Part I (The Apaches), and Part II (The Mexicans)

Presentation Questions: How has Geronimo been remembered by different groups in the 20th and 21st centuries?

TH 1/24 Finish *Geronimo: His Own Story*, Part 3 ("The White Men"), Part 4 ("The Old and the New"), Appendix.

Presentation Questions: Bring in an image of Geronimo and tell us about it, about who made/produced it and why, how it circulated, and explain why it is meaningful.

II Borderlands Cultures: Sound and Vision

TU 1/29 **Paper #1 Due at the Beginning of Class Today;** Read selections from Vanderwood and Samponaro, *Border Fury: A Picture Postcard Record of Mexico's Revolution and U.S. War Preparedness, 1910-1917*, available as a PDF I will email to you.

TH 1/31 Elena Poniatowska, *Las Soldaderas, Women of the Mexican Revolution*

Presentation questions: Bring in another visual representation of the Mexican Revolution and analyze what it makes visible and perhaps what it conceals in relation to the "event" itself as well as the moment in which it was produced.

TU 2/5 Deborah Vargas, "Introduction: Music, Mejicanas, and the Chicano Wave" and "Remember the Alamo: Remember Rosita Fernández" in *Dissonant Divas*, vii-53 and José Límón, "Introduction" and "Borders, Bullets, and Ballads: The Social Making of a Master Poem" from *Mexican Ballads, Chicano Poems: History and Influence in Mexican American Social Poetry*. Límón's book is available as an electronic resource through UCSD Library website as part of the UC Press E-Books Collection, 1982-2004. Go to the electronic version after searching for the title on Roger, the UCSD Library Catalogue search engine.

Presentation Questions: Bring in an example of a corrido and briefly analyze it for the class, considering what contexts and conflicts it addresses as well as the significance of gender and/or sexuality

TH 2/7 Kelly Hernandez, "Introduction" and "Part One: Formation" in *Migra! A History of the US Border Patrol*, 1-100.

Presentation Questions: How has the policing of the border been represented in popular culture in Mexico and/or the US at particular moments in time? Focus on a particular example, explain its historical context, and briefly analyze the questions it raises and the ideas it communicates. How is its form important in expressing that meaning?

TU 2/12 Américo Paredes, *George Washington Gomez*, through page 105 and selections from Ramón Saldivar, *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary*, available as a PDF that I will email to you.

Presentation Questions: How have films (there are many examples, from the silent era through recent cinema) imagined relations between whites and Mexicans and between the US and Mexico in the Texas borderlands? Bring in an example to compare to the texts we are reading today and consider how literature and film function as distinct yet sometimes convergent modes of representing race and nation.

TH 2/14 *George Washington Gomez* through p. 175

Presentation Questions: What kinds of debates over the education of people of Mexican origin have taken place in the United States at different moments in time? What representations of Latinos and Latinas and education exist and what questions and issues do they raise? Focus on a particular example and think about it in relation to "Dear Old Gringo School Days" in *GWG*.

TU 2/19 Finish *George Washington Gomez*. Read Vargas, "Borders, Bullets, Besos: The Ballad of Chelo Silva" in *Dissonant Divas*, 54-107.

Presentation Questions: Bring in an example of a bolero and briefly analyze it for the class, considering what contexts and conflicts it addresses as well as the significance of gender and/or sexuality.

TH 2/21 Vargas, "Giving Us the Brown Soul: Selena's Departures and Arrivals" and "Epilogue: The Borderlands Rock Reverb of Gloria Ríos and Girl in a Coma," *Dissonant Divas*, 179-226.

Presentation Questions: Find another cultural example of the "brown soul" that Vargas discusses in *Dissonant Divas*, situate in its particular historical context, and briefly analyze it in relation to some of the larger questions and issues she raises in this chapter.

TU 2/26 **Paper #2 Due at Beginning of Class Today.** Read Michelle Habell-Pallan, "Soy Punkera, Y Que?": Sexuality, Translocality and Punk in Los Angeles and Beyond" in *Loca Motion: The Travels of Chicana and Latina Popular Culture*, available as a PDF I will email to you. Start Gilbert Hernandez, *Beyond Palomar*. In-class viewing: *Pretty Vacant* (Mendiola, 2006).

TH 2/28 Finish Gilbert Hernandez, *Beyond Palomar*

Presentation Questions: Bring in another example of one of Los Bros Hernandez's comics. You might want to consider some of Jaime Hernandez's work. Show an image (the cover?) from the comic to the class and discuss how the art and the story work together. Try to also consider the question of how a punk aesthetic shapes their work

III Borderlands Cities: Art and Social Justice in Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana

TU 3/5 Watch *Senorita Extraviada* (Portillo, 2001) before class. It is on reserve at the Arts Library at SSH. Read Rosalinda Fregoso, "Keynote Address: We Want Them Alive! The Culture and Politics of Human Rights," *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law & Justice*, Vol. 22, (2007) 367-

79: <http://www.rosalindafregoso.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Keynote-Address-We-want-them-alive-Alive.pdf>.

Presentation Questions: Analyze a particular example of the "cultural politics of visibility" that Fregoso suggests responded to the feminicides in Juarez: "stage demonstrations, installations, public art murals, poetry, testimonies, audio-visual media in the form of video, graphics, internet art, music, and film." How has the "cultural sphere" played an important role in "shaping public understanding of the rape, torture, disappearance, and murders of women as not just a women's issue but a human rights issue" and what are the implications of this?

TH 3/7 NO CLASS

TU 3/12 Josh Kun and Fiamma Montezemolo, "The Factory of Dreams"; Humberto Félix Berumen, "Snapshots from and About a City Named Tijuana"; Lucía Sanromán, "Todos somos ciudadanos? Artistic Production and Agency in Tijuana"; Jesse Lerner, "Borderline Archaeology"; Ejival, "Counterculture, Rockers, Punks, New Romantics, and Mods in Tijuana" in Kun and Montezemolo, *Tijuana Dreaming*.

Presentation Questions: Bring in an example of a cultural text or work of art that is about Tijuana or was produced by an artist living in or from Tijuana. Briefly discuss its significance in relation to some of today's readings.

TH 3/14 Take-Home Final Exam Handed Out. Read Kathryn Kopinak, "Globalization in Tijuana Maquiladoras: Using Historical Antecedents and Migration to Test Globalization Models"; Tito Alégria, "The Transborder Metropolis in Question: The Case of Tijuana and San Diego"; and Teddy Cruz, "Practices of Encroachment: Urban Waste Moves Southbound; Illegal Zoning Seeps into North"; and Michelle Téllez, "Community of Struggle: Gender, Violence, and Resistance on the US-Mexico Border" in *Tijuana Dreaming*.

Paper #3 is due Friday 3/15 by 3:00 in my mailbox in the Ethnic Studies office, which is located in SSB 201. The office is open Monday thru Friday 8 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 4:30 pm. It closes for lunch from 12-1.

Take-Home Final Due Tuesday March 19 by 3:00 in my mailbox in the Ethnic Studies office.