

WL 3382: Texas-Mexico Borderlands: A social, political, cultural and economic story (Jan Term 2019)

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course focuses on the relationship between Mexico and the US, and on the US-Mexico border(lands) as a historical, political, and cultural space, with a special focus on the relationship between Mexico and Texas. Topics will include the history of the border(lands) and its peoples; patterns of migration; music and literature of the borderlands; the relationship between Dallas and Mexico; and past and current debates about migration across the US-Mexico border. We will engage these topics through written and audio-visual texts, including historical and academic texts, literature, newspaper articles, websites, songs, and documentaries.

REQUIRED READINGS:

- Neil Foley, *Mexicans in the Making of America* (The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2014)
- Américo Paredes, *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero* (U of Texas P, 1995/1976)
- Tomás Rivera, *...And The Earth Did Not Devour Him* (Arte Público Press, 2015/1971)
- Gloria Anzaldeua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (aunt lute books, 1987)
- Yuri Herrera, *Signs Preceding the End of the World* (& other stories, 2015/2009)
- Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in 40 Questions* (Coffee House Press, 2017)
- Links to additional texts will be available on Canvas

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- **Human Diversity (UC 2012/16)**
 - 1a. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the historical, cultural, social, or political conditions of identity formation and function in human society, including the ways in which these conditions influence individual or group status, treatment, or accomplishments.
- **Ways of Knowing (UC 2012/2016)**
 1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of more than one disciplinary practice.
 2. Students will explain how bringing more than one practice to an examination of the course topic contributes to knowing about that topic.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Preparation: You must complete a portion of coursework before the JanTerm begins (see details in the Daily Schedule, below). During the Jan Term, you will be expected to study all assigned materials thoroughly before each class session. On average, expect to spend 6-8 hours preparing for each class session.

Participation: This class is discussion-based, so expressing your ideas and opinions orally is important. I expect everyone to contribute to classroom conversations, which benefit from a diversity of perspectives. Often the most insightful comments are not the most eloquent or verbose: a simple question or observation can open the discussion in unexpected ways. Similarly, sometimes students who talk the most, say the least: repeating questions/comments others have just made or making statements that reveal a superficial or incomplete reading of the homework will not improve your participation grade. An average of 1-3 thoughtful remarks or questions every class session will ensure a good (A-B range) participation grade. A complete or near-complete lack of oral participation in class will result in a participation grade of D or F. *If you have difficulty expressing yourself in a classroom setting, please come see me so that we can develop strategies for helping you in this area.*

Please note: *Engaging in rude or distracting behavior (interrupting classmates, chatting with friends, playing with electronics, doing homework for other classes, sleeping, etc.) will result in a lower, or even failing, participation grade, regardless of the quality or frequency of your overall participation. Excessive late arrivals, early departures, or comings-and-goings during the class period may also affect your final participation grade. All electronic equipment, **including phones, tablets, and laptops**, should be **TURNED OFF** and **PUT AWAY** at the beginning of class and remain so for the duration, unless I have given you explicit permission to do otherwise.*

Daily Quizzes: I will give brief quizzes daily, at the beginning of the morning session or post-lunch session, or both. Quizzes will test that you have done the reading. They will be distributed in the first 5 minutes of the class

period (morning or post lunch). If you arrive late and miss the quiz, you will receive a “0”. I will drop the lowest Quiz grade.

Daily Assignments: You will use in-class time to prepare a daily assignment to help process and reflect upon our discussions, readings, lectures, and in-class video viewings. These assignments will include a mix of Canvas discussion board entries and oral presentations (either individual or group). Make sure to bring a laptop or other electronic device to class every day so that you can complete these assignments. Note that with both the Discussion Board entries and the presentations, part of your evaluation will include active interaction with classmates. I will drop the lowest Daily Assignment grade.

Exams: You will take two essay-based exams.

TESTING AND EVALUATION

<u>Grade Breakdown:</u>	Daily Quizzes:	10%
	Participation:	15%
	Daily Assignments:	25%
	Two essay exams:	50%

Pass/Fail: With the approval of your adviser and me you may take this course P/F. P/F forms, available from your adviser, must be filed with the Dean by the second day of this short term (Tuesday, January 8). Majors or those desiring UC credit may *not* take this class PF.

Make-up work: Except for under grave circumstances, no make-up work will be allowed and no extensions will be given. Please note that all graded assignments will be completed during class time.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, AND WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES:

Attendance and Unexcused Absences: Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. Due to JanTerm’s compressed nature, **NO unexcused absences will be permitted.** Your grade will drop 3% points for each 2-hour class session missed (i.e. of our three daily sessions). If you miss more than three 2-hour sessions you will fail the class. Excessive late arrivals, early departures, or frequent exiting during class time may also impact final grade.

Excused absences (all other absences are unexcused unless special arrangements are made with me):

A. Health: See www.smu.edu/StudentAffairs/HealthCenter/FrontDesk/ClassExcusePolicy. Dated notes from personal physicians will also be accepted. Non-emergency medical appointments are not excused absences.

B. Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence (see University Policy No. 1.9.)

Withdrawal from courses: **[INFO TO BE ADDED]**

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

Academic Dishonesty and the Honor Code: Students are expected to adhere to the SMU Honor Code. You may read the SMU Honor Code at smu.edu/StudentAffairs/StudentLife/StudentHandbook/HonorCode. Cheating of all kinds, including intentional or unintentional plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any work that is plagiarized in part or in whole, or completed in part or in whole by another person, or translated from English (or any other language) into Spanish by a tutor or online or other translation service will result in a reduced grade (up to and including a grade of zero), a final grade of “F” in the course, and/or disciplinary action.

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first register with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS). Students can call 214-768-1470 or visit smu.edu/Provost/ALEC/DASS to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor as early in the semester as possible, present a DASS Accommodation Letter, and make appropriate arrangements. Accommodations are not retroactive and require advance notice to implement.

DAILY SCHEDULE, WL 3382 (JAN TERM 2019): TEXAS-MÉXICO BORDERLANDS

Work to be completed prior to the beginning of JanTerm:

- **read** chapters 1-8 of Neil Foley's *Mexicans in the Making of America* and **complete** the accompanying reading guide (you may handwrite or type your answers, as preferred)
 - in a few cases you will not need to read the entire chapter; required selections are noted in reading guide
 - the completed guide will be turned in for a grade on the first day of class
 - students may be called on to summarize aspects of the Foley reading on the first day of class and thereafter
- **read/watch/explore** the following FOUR reports or series or reports having to do with contemporary relations between the US (especially Texas) and Mexico; for **each** report or series, **write a 1-2 page (typed, single-spaced) summary** of the most important points
 - the completed summaries will be turned in for a grade on the first day of class
 - students may be called on to summarize aspects of these readings on the first day of class and thereafter
 1. "borderland: dispatches from the u.s.-mexico boundary," a special NPR 2014 series focusing on the borderland (npr.org/series/291397809/borderland-dispatches-from-the-u-s-mexico-boundary); you **MUST** read/watch the first story, "We Drove the Entire Mexican Border..." (<http://apps.npr.org/borderland/>); after that, you should choose 3-4 of the additional radio reports to listen to; make sure you list all of the reports you listened to in your summary
 - a. Main questions: What did you learn about the border in this series? Which aspects of this series confirmed your existing notions of the border, and which challenged them? Explain.
 2. "The Taking," a 2017 series of reports from the *Texas Tribune* about the process of building of border fence in South Texas, which took place during the George W. Bush administration (<https://www.texastribune.org/series/the-taking/>)
 - a. Main questions: What are the inherent difficulties in building a fence (or wall) between Texas and Mexico? What are the (potential) positive impacts of a fence/wall, and what are the (potential) negative impacts?
 3. "Families Divided," a 2018 series of reports compiled by the *Texas Tribune* on the family separations that became a part of President Trump's "zero tolerance" immigration policy last summer (<https://www.texastribune.org/series/separated-immigrant-families-zero-tolerance/>); focus on 8-12 stories
 - a. Main questions: What happened last summer to prompt family separations at the US-Mexico border? What were the intended purposes of these separations? Did this policy seem to have unintended and/or unforeseeable consequences?
 4. "Texico: the Texas-Mexico Economy and Its Uncertain Future," pp. 2-16 of the 2017-18 Annual Report of SMU's O'Neil Center for Global Markets and Freedom (https://www.smu.edu/-/media/Site/Tower/TexMex/SMU-Cox-ONeil-2018-Annual-Report_100118_Final_web.pdf?la=en)
 - a. Main questions: What is the history of the Texas-Mexico Economy? What is its current status? How important is this economic relationship to Texas, and to Mexico? Why is its future uncertain?

Day One: January 7

Homework to be completed before class:

- see above, “**Work to be completed prior to the beginning of JanTerm**”

Topic One: Introduction to the class, “The border isn’t a line, it’s a...”

- course syllabus and requirements
- what is a border? what is a borderland?
- overview of geography of the Texas-Mexico borderlands (map quiz)
- **discuss** “We Drove the Entire Mexico Border”, i.e. “The border isn’t a line, it’s a...”

Topic Two: The Historical Border(land), *Mexicans in the Making of America*

- **discuss** all of Foley (recreate timeline, summarize trends, identify key arguments and events)

Break for lunch

Topic Three: The Historical Border(land), Tracing the Line (1762–1853)

- **discuss more about** Foley, chapter 1
- **explore and discuss** additional materials on the topic

Day Two: January 8

Homework to be completed before class:

- **prepare** for map quiz
- **read** excerpts from *Personal Memoirs of John N. Seguín*
- **read** “The Plan de San Diego Uprising and the Making of the Modern Texas-Mexican Borderlands” (historical article by Benjamin Johnson, 2004)
- **read** selections from *Recollections of My Trip* (memoir by Olga Beatriz Torres, 1918)

Topic One: The Historical Border(land), Re-remembering the Alamo

- **discuss** excerpts from *Personal Memoirs of John N. Seguín*
- **explore and discuss** additional materials on the topic

Topic Two: The Historical Border(land), the Mexican Revolution (1910–24)

- **watch and discuss** clips from *The Storm that Swept Mexico* (documentary on Mexican Revolution)

Break for lunch

Topic Three: The Political and Cultural Border(land), the Mexican Revolution in Texas

- **discuss** Johnson article
- **discuss** selections from *Recollections of My Trip* (memoir by Olga Beatriz Torres, 1918)
- **explore and discuss** additional materials on the topic

Day Three: January 9

Homework to be completed before class:

- **read and complete Canvas-based activities on** excerpts from *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (academic study by Américo Paredes, 1976)
- **review** Foley reading guides, **chapters 2-6**

Topic One: The Cultural Border(land), The Texas-Mexican *corrido*

- **discuss** excerpts from *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (academic study by Américo Paredes, 1976)
- **listen to and discuss** selected *corridos*

Topic Two: The Historical Border(land), US Immigration Policy, WWII, and the Bracero Program

- **discuss/review** Foley, chapters 2-5
- **explore and discuss** additional materials on the topic

Break for lunch

Topic Three: The Cultural and Historical Border(land), The Chicano Movement

- **discuss/review** Foley, chapter 6
- **watch and discuss** selections from *Chicano!*, pt. 4, on Crystal City, TX (PBS documentary, 1996); *Chulas Fronteras* (Les Blanks documentary, 1976)

Day Four: January 10

Homework to be completed before class:

- **read** all of *...And the Earth Did Not Devour Him* (by Tomás Rivera, novel, 1971)
- **prepare** for Exam #1

Topic One: The Cultural Border(land), Tomás Rivera on the Migrant Worker's Life

- **discuss** Rivera's novel

Break for lunch

Topic Two: Essay Exam #1

Day Five: January 11

Homework to be completed before class:

- **review** Foley reading guide, chapter 7
- **read** "Homeland/Atzlán" and "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (ch. 1, 5 in *Borderland/La Frontera*)

Topic One: The Political Border(land), Ronald Reagan's "Amnesty" (IRCA of 1986)

- **discuss/review** Foley, chapter 7
- **explore and discuss** additional materials on the topic

Break for lunch

Topic Two: The Cultural Border(land), Living on the Line

- **discuss** "Homeland/Atzlán" and "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (literary essays by Gloria Anzaldúa, 1987)
- **watch and discuss** other materials on the topic

Day Six: January 14

Homework to be completed before class:

- **review** Foley reading guide, first half of chapter 8 (p. 200-212)
- **read** "Afta Thoughts on NAFTA" (short think piece by J. Bradford DeLong)
- **read** *Signs Preceding the End of the World* (by Yuri Herrera, novel, 2009)

Topic One: The Economic (and Cultural) Border(land), NAFTA and Maquiladoras (Part One)

- **discuss/review** Foley, first part of chapter 8
- **discuss** "Afta Thoughts on NAFTA"
- **watch and discuss** clips from *Maquilapolis* (documentary, 2006)

Break for lunch

Topic Two: The Cultural Border(land), The Mythical Tale of Makina's Crossing

- **discuss** *Signs Preceding the End of the World* (by Yuri Herrera, novel, 2009)

Day Seven: January 15

Homework to be completed before class:

- **review** Foley reading guide, second half of chapter 8 (p. 212-224)
- **read** newspaper articles on relationship between Presidents George W. Bush and Vicente Fox

- **watch** *Frontline*, “Lost in Detention” (Oct 2011 documentary on Obama’s immigration policy)
- **review** summaries of “The Taking,” “Families Divided,” and “Texico...Uncertain Future”
- **additional assignments** for Topic 2 TBD, due to volatility of the issues

Topic One: The Political (and Cultural) Border(land), 9/11 and Border Militarization

- **discuss/review** Foley, second half of chapter 8
- **read and discuss** articles on Bush and Fox’s relationship
- **watch and discuss** clips from *Crossing Arizona* (documentary, 2006)

Topic Two: The Political Border(land), Dreamers and Detention under Obama + Trump

- **discuss** “Lost in Detention”
- **discuss/review** “The Taking,” “Families Divided,” and “Texico...Uncertain Future”
- **explore and discuss** TBD materials on the topic

Break for lunch

Topic Three: review for final exam and workshop to prepare final presentations

Day Eight: January 16

Homework to be completed before class:

- **read** *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in 40 Questions* (literary essay by Valeria Luiselli, 2017)
- **prepare for** final presentation and Essay Exam #2

Topic One: The Political (and Cultural) Borderland, The Central American “Crisis”

- **discuss** *Tell Me How It Ends*
- **explore and discuss** additional materials on the topic

Topic Two: Final Presentations

Break for lunch

Topic Three: Essay Exam #2