

ENG 407
Senior Seminar in Border Theory
Winter 2015

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Office Hours: Monday Noon-2:00 pm
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Course Description:

In Gloria Anzaldúa's famous formulation, the U.S./Mexico border is characterized as *una herida abierta* (an open wound) where the Third World grates against the First and bleeds. In this course we will explore the implications of this formulation by tracing the history of border theory and culture across a variety of texts and genres. Along the way we will attempt to locate how injury can produce alternative modes of identity and representation along borders of many kinds (i.e., psychic, sexual, and physical "borders").

Course Goals:

1. Introduce the history, scope, and major critical trends in border theory from the 1950s to the present.
2. Consider some of the ways in which border thinkers imagine questions of race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship.
3. Develop student understanding of the social construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class in literary and popular culture texts related to the border.
4. Deepen student understanding of the complexity of culture and theory situated along the U.S./Mexico border.

Learning Outcomes

(Students will be able to...)

1. Provide a working understanding of history and culture along the U.S./Mexico border.
2. Comparatively analyze how Chicana/os imagine resistance to race, gender, sexual, and class marginalization in novels, essays, films, and plays and to communicate these interpretations verbally and in prose formats.
3. Develop close reading and textual analysis skills.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the social construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

Required Texts

Anzaldúa, Gloria, *Borderlands/La frontera*
Paredes, Américo, *With His Pistol in His Hand*
Urrea, Luis Alberto, *The Devil's Highway*

Books are available at The Duck Store. All other readings available on Blackboard

Requirements

1. Paper: There is one seminar paper required in this course. It will be a 8-10 page research paper due on the Monday of Exam Week via SafeAssign.
2. Presentation: One 10-minute presentation during which you will introduce the day's reading. Your presentation should include the following: biographical and background information on the author and reading, a framework or question to guide our reading, any other information that you consider relevant. Please feel free to use PowerPoint, handouts, or any other pedagogical tools that you consider important for your presentation. If you require the use of a projector or other multimedia tools, let me know one week in advance of your presentation.
3. A weekly one- to two-page response paper due at the beginning of each class. Each response paper should briefly summarize the author's argument and identify at least one generative contribution

for the piece. Please note that you should not use this paper as an opportunity to criticize authors or their positions. Instead, use it to demonstrate how you understand the argument, perhaps placing the piece in relation to other work that we do in the seminar. Papers should be NO LONGER than two single-sided pages. You are still responsible for a weekly paper on your presentation date.

4. Weekly attendance is required. Because we meet only 10 times throughout the term, your presence is essential. If you are sick or have another valid excuse, please let me know ahead of our class meeting. Please note that because of the abbreviated nature of our meeting schedule, you will lose 1/2 a grade point off of your final grade for any unexcused absence. You may not miss more than one class this term, regardless of the reason.

Grading

Paper: 40 percent

Presentation: 40 percent each

Weekly Response Papers: 10 percent

Participation: 10 percent.

Timeline

This syllabus is primarily a reading guide. As such, it may be subject to revision.

Week 1: Introduction/Theoretical Foundations
Monday 1/5

Read by This Date:
Introduction, Frederic Jameson, "Introduction" to *Lenin and Philosophy*, Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus"

Week 2: Historiography and the Border
Monday 1/12

Ramón Saldívar, "Race, Class, and Gender in the Southwest: Foundations of an American Resistance Literature and Its Literary History"

Week 3: Border History/Foundational Texts
Monday 1/19

José Saldívar, "Américo Paredes and Decolonization," Américo Paredes, *With His Pistol in His Hand*

Week 4: Borderlands
Monday 1/26

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La frontera*

Week 5: Postmodernism and Border Resistance
Monday 2/2

Chela Sandoval, from *Methodology of the Oppressed*

Week 6: Border Culture and Aesthetics
Monday 2/9

George Lipsitz "Cruising Around the Historical Bloc: Postmodernism and Popular Music in East Los Angeles," Raphael Perez-Torres "Popular Music and Postmodern Mestizaje." Note: We will also listen to musical examples in class.

Week 7: Chicana Feminism(s)
Monday 2/16

Angie Chabram-Dernersesian "I Throw Punches for My Race, but I Don't Want to Be a Man: Writing Us—Chica-nos (Girl, Us)/Chicanas—into the Movement Script," Norma Alarcón, "Chicana Feminism: In the Tracks of 'The' Native Woman"

Week 8: Hybrid Voices from Latin America and Beyond
Monday 2/23

Nestor García-Canclini, from *Hybrid Culture*, Shalini Puri, from *The Caribbean Postcolonial*

Week 9: *The Devil's Highway*
Monday 3/2

Luis Alberto Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*

Week 10: *Sleep Dealer*
Monday 3/9

Film Screening: *Sleep Dealer*