Teresa Hernandez Awarded a CSWS Research Grant

Teresa Hernández, a Doctoral Candidate and first-generation college student in the English Department, has been awarded a 2021-2022 CSWS Research Grant for her transdisciplinary work within critical border feminist and Chicanx nationalist discourses. Her dissertation, “Contested Motherlands,” is invested in the futurity of Chicanx and Latinx literary studies through a new spatial imaginary wherein she examines “the overlapping and contentious geopolitical spatializations in Mexican and Mexican American literature and cultural studies.”

Hernández’s work interrogates intersections of sovereignties and nationalisms, challenging current definitions of decolonization and border feminisms. In a self-analysis of the stakes of her work, Hernández humbly suggests that while her work cannot “correct the violence committed in the name of nationalism in the fields of Chicanx and Latinx literary studies,” she does see the final realization of her work as “one that begins with admission and ends with possibility.”

As a self-identified Tejana and border subject, Hernández locates both an intimacy and an urgency at the heart of her work. She observes that, “Even as I find myself physically distanced from the Texas/Mexico border, I remain tethered to my community in the same im/material ways that I theorize within the dissertation. In this way, the project demands intellectual and personal responsibility.” Here, Hernández insists that her work does not mean to suggest she is speaking for all border communities, or even her own. Rather, her intention is “to create new dialogue across what we call the U.S./Mexico border.”
Hernández will utilize CSWS’s generous research grant for travel to Texas, the Rio Grande Valley, and Mexico City. She intends to use her time in these locations to properly document, through photography, access to physical literary archives, and exhibits at the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Museum of South Texas History, and numerous natural and historical landmarks across both Texas and Mexico. She would like to give an especially warm gracias to her advisors Profs. Kirby Brown and José Cortez. She also offers many thanks to the rest of her committee: Tara Fickle, Ernesto Martínez, and David Vázquez as well as Prof. Michelle McKinley and the rest of the CSWS faculty and staff. Last but not least, her familia, amigxs, and the rest of the English Dept. faculty and staff for their ongoing support.