

**HIST 5312: Studies in Borderlands History**  
**“Imperial Borderlands of the Gulf Coast”**  
 Spring 2021 / CRN 28454

**Dr. Christina M. Villarreal**

Wednesdays 1:30 pm – 4:20 pm

Virtual Office Hours: Monday 9:30 am – 11:00 am ([LINK HERE](#)) ; and by appointment  
[cmvillarreal@utep.edu](mailto:cmvillarreal@utep.edu)



J. F. Benard, *Partie Meridionale de la Riviere de Missisipi, et ses environs dans l'Amerique Septentrionale* (1718), from the Texas General Land Office collection Map # [93926](#)

### Course Description

During the eighteenth century, French, Spanish, and English governments vied for control over the land along the Gulf Coast of Mexico—territory in which diverse indigenous societies resided, traversed, controlled, and used according to their own diplomatic relations. European settlers brought enslaved Africans to the region, introducing new systems of slavery and a large Black population to the territory that includes present-day Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. The Gulf Coast borderland became home to diverse populations with competing and conflicting agendas. Within this contentious borderland emerged overlapping visions of empire, disparate forms of racial slavery, and surprising collaborations.

In this graduate studies seminar, students will explore the literature on the eighteenth-century borderlands of the Gulf Coast of Mexico, with a focus on indigenous land claims, slavery, race, and imperial competition. Students will make sense of the most recent historiographical shifts, paying close attention to the methodologies and evidence that allowed for them. As a final project, students will write a grant proposal using methodologies and/or archival material from the course readings.

### **Class Meetings/Format**

This class runs from 1:30-4:20 PM. Students should dedicate the first thirty minutes of class time to reviewing notes from the readings, forming discussion questions/prompts, completing any course assignments, and otherwise preparing to fully participate in class discussion. With few exceptions, this class will convene via zoom every Wednesday at 2:00 PM. Attendance is mandatory.

I will open our online space at 1:45 p.m. Students can enter Zoom at this time to engage with the me and/or other students. Book presentations will begin promptly at 2:00 PM, at which time all students must be online with video on.

### **Zoom Meeting Information**

Topic: HIST 5312- Imperial Borderlands

Every Wednesday, until May 5, 2021

Join Zoom Meeting (same URL)

<https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/88092053290?pwd=am5jenJCSVRJY1dQeUJTYVdpb1ZaZz09>

Meeting ID: 880 9205 3290

Passcode: 3r8bA1FK

One tap mobile

+13462487799,,88092053290#,,,,\*80515416# US (Houston)

+12532158782,,88092053290#,,,,\*80515416# US (Tacoma)

### **Technology**

If you are experiencing difficulties with technology or internet connectivity, please send me an email before class time. If you experience technical difficulties during class, please do your best to fix them, logging out and back on as needed. If possible, please make a note of your situation via the chat.

To avoid audio feedback, please remain on MUTE if you are not speaking or actively engaged in discussion with the instructor or a fellow classmate. Please leave your video ON unless background distractions momentarily enter your “classroom space.”

Please do not record Zoom videos without student and faculty consent.

### **Student Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Online Etiquette**

Students must follow the Student Academic Code of Conduct and the Handbook of Operating Procedures. Plagiarism, cheating, or other violations will be dealt with according to university guidelines stated in these materials linked here. Students in history classes must be particularly attentive to proper citation formats and the obligation to give credit to authors for their intellectual work. This means that if you use another person’s idea, information, language, etc., you must

“CITE” their work with quotations and/or a footnote/endnote. See the additional handouts for the precise format (Chicago Manual of Style). All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more see the website: [link to Student Conduct and Discipline](#).

In addition to proper citation format, avoiding plagiarism and cheating, and other issues, students must be respectful of each other and their opinions. One of the central goals of learning at a university is that we are exposed to new—even challenging and frustrating—viewpoints. This class must remain open and inclusive of different perspectives but we cannot tolerate language and behavior that promotes hateful, violent, racist, homophobic, or discriminatory agendas. Online platforms such as Blackboard or Zoom used for classroom purposes are not public venues; consider all postings and discussions as private and confidential. Please do not copy documents and or student posts to share on a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

### **Accommodations and Support Services**

“Students with physical or other challenges who require accommodation(s) in order to participate in this course should contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services: Union Building East 106, 915-747-5148, [Cass@utep.edu](mailto:Cass@utep.edu), <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/cass/>. It is the student’s responsibility to speak with a counselor in order to receive necessary accommodations and support services. Within the first week of the beginning of the semester, you must provide documentation from CASS in order to receive any accommodation(s). Failure to contact CASS and provide documentation in a timely manner may delay such accommodation(s) being made.”

### **General Communication**

I will have reoccurring office hours via Zoom every Monday from 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. You can also schedule a meeting for a time within regular business hours (M-F, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.) Please contact the me via university email: [cmvillarreal@utep.edu](mailto:cmvillarreal@utep.edu). I will respond to all queries within 24 hours within regular work times and not over the weekend.

### **Late Work/Absence**

You must attend class discussions weekly and submit assignments when they are due. A late assignment will lose one letter grade for each late day. If you require accommodations or extensions due to illness, work, care for an elderly or sick family member, or for your child, please contact me as soon as you are aware of your need.

### **Drop Policy**

I will not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

### **Covid-19**

The Covid-19 pandemic has transformed life on campus. The University is holding nearly all of its courses online this semester. Most offices and buildings on campus are closed and unoccupied or they are operating under very restrictive guidelines that limit access. History Faculty are unlikely to be in their offices until the University announces policies that keep faculty, students, and staff safe. All of these changes mean that students must contact faculty and staff via email, Blackboard or

remote video appointments. Departments and units across campus are providing support and services to students in a remote setting. If you have any general questions about how the University is handling this public health crisis, please see the UTEP Main Page for Covid-19 updates, at this link attached here: <https://www.utep.edu/> and <https://www.utep.edu/ehs/COVID-19/index.html>

If you are experiencing covid-19 symptoms, please find aid here:  
<https://www.utep.edu/resumingcampus-operations/testing/>.

The health crisis has forced many individuals into unique living situations and new routines. If you need aid, please review the resources below.

- Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/resources/covid19/index.html>
- Crisis and Emergency: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/resources/covid19/crisis-emergency.html>

Miners Talk  
After Hours Crisis Line  
(915) 747-5302

### Required Readings

- Barr, Juliana. *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Din, Gilbert C. *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803*. 1st ed. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1999.
- Dubcovsky, Alejandra. *Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Galan, Francis X. *Los Adaes, the First Capital of Spanish Texas*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2020.
- Hanger, Kimberly S. *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Johnson, Rashauna, *Slavery's Metropolis: Unfree Labor in New Orleans during the Age of Revolutions* (Cambridge, 2016)
- Landers, Jane. *Black Society in Spanish Florida*. Blacks in the New World. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.
- McMichael, F. Andrew. *Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810*. Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 2008.
- Narrett, David E. *Adventurism and Empire: The Struggle for Mastery in the Louisiana-Florida Borderlands, 1762-1803*. Chapel Hill (North Carolina): The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Usner, Daniel H. *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783*. Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

White, Sophie. *Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana*. Early American Studies. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013.

## Assignments

### *Assignment Instructions*

**\*\*You will submit all written assignments as PDFs on Blackboard.** Your essay, book reviews, and grant should be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, with 1 inch margins top/bottom/left/right margins.

### **Critical Review Essay (1) 20%**

The purpose of this review essay is to provide a critical assessment of the readings assigned for the first five weeks of the semester (4 monographs and 2 articles). What are the major strengths and weaknesses of each work? How do they contribute to our understanding of the empires converging along the eighteenth-century Gulf Coast? Comment on the methodological approaches and archival sources the scholars engaged/consulted for each work. Also consider what you think are the most important issues raised by the readings collectively about the histories of empires and the Gulf Coast borderlands. Your essay should be **8-10 pages**.

Please submit your essay as a PDF via Blackboard by **2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 3, 2021**.

### **Book Reviews (4) 40% (10% each)**

Students will select 4 books from weeks 7-13 for which they will write a 2-page review per book. Book reviews should be approximately 750 words-long (excluding endnotes). They are due by the start of each Zoom discussion dedicated to the corresponding book (e.g., a book review for *Bounded Lives* is due at 2 p.m. on March 3; book reviews for *Los Adaes*, due at 2 p.m. on March 10, etc.)

Please respond to each of the following in your reviews:

1. identify the thesis/major contributions of the monograph
2. identify archival sources; how effectively are they used?
3. identify methodology and/or theory employed
4. comment on the effectiveness of the writing style
5. what is most compelling about the work; what are the weakest aspects of it?

For review reference, see Bruce Mazlish, "The Art of Reviewing" in Perspectives (February 2001) [www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2001/0102/0102vie1.cfm](http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2001/0102/0102vie1.cfm)

### **Book Presentations (1-2) 10%**

Each week, a student **will lead discussion on a monograph**. When presenting, you will be responsible for identifying the historiographical currents, archival collections, and any methodological innovations addressed in the monograph. **Students will initiate class discussion with their brief presentations (~10 minutes). While not required, presenters are welcome to use images/PowerPoints.** Presenting students are welcome to meet with the instructor before class and must submit 5 discussion questions by Tuesday before the class meeting. Discussion

questions should engage the arguments/methodologies/evidence relevant to the assigned monograph and the broader themes of the course (borderlands/imperial rivalry/race/etc.). Students who volunteer to present a second book will earn credit towards one weekly review essay.

**Grant Proposal – (1) 20%**

Students will write a 10- page grant proposal using methodologies/archives discussed in class. You will model your proposal on the SSRC Fellowship which requests that applicants respond to three questions:

- What are we going to learn as the result of the proposed project that we do not know now?
- Why is it worth knowing?
- How will we know that the conclusions are valid?

The proposal, due at the end of the semester, should lay out a research project, define the basic problem to be addressed, outline the existing historiography of the question, and identify a set of sources to be used in addressing the problem. **Students in the PhD program** should use their doctoral research questions for the grant. **MA students** should form a research question regarding the imperial borderlands of the Gulf Coast based on the material covered in class.

**Important Dates**

- **Feb 24:** Discuss topics for grant proposals
- **March 3:** Critical Essay due
- **March 24:** Topics for grant proposals approved (student should have met with instructor)
- **April 14/April 21:** Short report on grant proposal: What methods/archives/theory from class are you using?
- **May 5:** Proposal Presentations/Workshops – 20 mins per proposal – Meeting at 1:30\*
- **May 12:** Final Proposal due @ 2 PM

**Grading**

A	B	C	D	F
100-90	89-80	79-70	66-65	65>*

**Schedule**

WK	Date	Work
1	Wednesday, January 20, 2021	Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student Intros</li> <li>- Course Rationale</li> <li>- Syllabus: Course Assignments</li> <li>- Preparation for Grant Proposal</li> <li>- Book Summaries/Access</li> </ul>

		- Assign Book Presentations
<b>Extended Networks</b>		
2	Wednesday, January 27, 2021 <b>Presenter: Pablo</b>	Read: White, Sophie. <i>Wild Frenchmen and Frenchified Indians: Material Culture and Race in Colonial Louisiana</i>
3	Wednesday, February 3, 2021 <b>Presenter: Marc</b>	Read: Usner, Daniel H. <i>Indians, Settlers, &amp; Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783</i>
4	Wednesday, February 10, 2021 <b>Presenter: José</b> <b>Guest: Alejandra Dubcovsky</b>	Read: Dubcovsky, Alejandra. <i>Informed Power: Communication in the Early American South</i>
5	Wednesday, February 17, 2021 <b>Presenter: Roció</b>	Read: Barr, Juliana. <i>Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands</i>  Students should start thinking about Critical Essay
6	Wednesday, February 24, 2021 <b>Presenter: Marc</b>	Read:  1. Ellis, Elizabeth. "Petite Nation with Powerful Networks: The Tunicas in the Eighteenth Century." <i>Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association</i> 58, no. 2 (2017): 133-78. <a href="http://0-www.jstor.org.lib.utep.edu/stable/26290898">http://0-www.jstor.org.lib.utep.edu/stable/26290898</a> .  2. Gallman, Nancy O. "Reconstituting Power in an American Borderland: Political Change in Colonial East Florida." <i>The Florida Historical Quarterly</i> 94, no. 2 (2015): 169-91. <a href="http://0-www.jstor.org.lib.utep.edu/stable/24769177">http://0-www.jstor.org.lib.utep.edu/stable/24769177</a> .  In-Class: Document Analysis on Perusall Discuss: Topics for grant proposals
<b>Local Networks</b>		
7	Wednesday, March 3, 2021 <b>Comparative Essay Due</b> <b>Presenter: Jason</b>	Read: Hanger, Kimberly S. <i>Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803</i>
8	Wednesday, March 10, 2021 <b>Presenter: Adam</b>	Read: Galán, Francis X. <i>Los Adaes, the First Capital of Spanish Texas</i>

		Review: Grant Sample and elements of a strong research grant. Review methodologies covered course readings
	Wednesday, March 17, 2021	<b>Spring Break</b>
9	Wednesday, March 24, 2021 <b>Presenter: Alejandro</b>	Read: Landers, Jane. <i>Black Society in Spanish Florida</i>
<b>Imperial Disruptions</b>		
10	Wednesday, March 31, 2021 <b>Presenter: Pablo</b>	Read: Din, Gilbert C. <i>Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation of Slavery in Louisiana, 1763-1803</i>
11	Wednesday, April 7, 2021 <b>Presenter: Andrew</b>	Read: Narrett, David E. <i>Adventurism and Empire: The Struggle for Mastery in the Louisiana-Florida Borderlands, 1762-1803</i>
12	Wednesday, April 14, 2021 <b>Presenter: José</b>	Read: McMichael, F. Andrew. <i>Atlantic Loyalties: Americans in Spanish West Florida, 1785-1810</i>
13	Wednesday, April 21, 2021 <b>Presenter: Kera</b>	Read: Johnson, Rashauna. <i>Slavery's Metropolis: Unfree Labor in New Orleans during the Age of Revolutions</i>
<b>Work Weeks</b>		
14	Wednesday, April 28, 2021	No class, work on grant proposal using archives, theoretical framing, and/or methodologies discussed in class
15	Wednesday, May 5, 2021	Grant Proposal Presentations/Workshop  Final Proposal Due @ 2 PM on Weds, May 12