

Borderlands Culture  
SOCI 4301

Professor: **Jeremy Slack**  
Office Hours: 3:00 – 4:30 TR  
(or by appointment)  
**Old Main 307**  
(915) 747-6530  
jmslack@utep.edu

Teaching Assistant: **Sonia Ramos**  
[Slramos3@miners.utep.edu](mailto:Slramos3@miners.utep.edu)  
Office Hours 3:00 – 4:30 TR  
**Old Main 309**

### **Course Description:**

At the U.S.-Mexico border, diverse cultures meet, mix, and create. The future of two nations can be seen in major social changes taking place at the border. The course offers an introduction to this increasingly important region, and a good way for people with experience at the border to strengthen their tools for understanding and practice. The course has four goals: 1) to provide objective factual knowledge about the social and cultural composition of the U.S.-Mexico border region as a background to major public issues such as immigration, global industrialization, cultural diversity, transnationalism, poverty, and the environment; 2) to examine the human side of those issues, paying close attention to the lives of individual people in the borderlands; 3) to place those individual lives in broader social and cultural frameworks that connect Mexico and United States; and 4) to allow students to clarify their values by exploring the many sides of these human issues.

- **Goals:**

- Use history and geography as a framework for understanding the border and analyzing border lives.
- Understand border identities, including nationality, ethnicity, and class, and apply them to analyzing border lives.
- Understand border orientations (nationalist/binationalist; unicultural/bicultural) and apply them to analyzing border lives.
- Recognize and analyze multiple, often conflicting, perspectives on border issues.
- Use the tools of "culture" and "social structure" to understand border working people, especially those facing poverty, low wages, low or no benefits, and discrimination in public.

## **BOOKS THAT YOU NEED TO BUY:**

Galemba, Rebecca Berke. 2017. *Contraband corridor: making a living at the Mexico--Guatemala border*: Stanford University Press.

Jones, Reece. 2016. *Violent borders: Refugees and the right to move*: Verso Books.

All other readings will be provided as PDFs on blackboard.

## **Grading:**

### ***In class quizzes and group activities 1-3 points each***

Everyday there will be an activity or reading quiz. Part of your points will count as an attendance grade. It is best to come to class prepared, but even if you are not prepared, it is better to show up than to miss class. (50 points total)

### ***Papers 10 points each***

You will have three five page papers due this semester. For each paper you will draw on the readings and relate the experiences you have had living on the border to the issues presented by the previous modules.

(30 points total)

### ***Exams 25 points each***

You will have three exams based on the readings and in-class lectures.

## **Academic Honesty Statement**

The course will follow the University of Texas at El Paso's policies on academic honesty. These policies can be found at <http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386>

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as ones' own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

Academic dishonesty is an assault upon the basic integrity and meaning of a University. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts which erode the University's educational and research roles and cheapen the learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that UTEP students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

All material submitted must be the student's own work. Ideas and expressions cited from the work of others must be credited appropriately. Avoid plagiarism by giving credit where credit is due, using quotation marks when using words directly from another source, and preferably putting things in your own words. I prefer your own phrasing, even if it is imperfect, to a beautifully phrased statement that is borrowed from some other source. Violations will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions.

#### **Academic Assistance and Disability Statement**

In Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, if a student needs an accommodation then the Center for Accommodations and Support Services located at UTEP need to be contacted. If you have a condition that may affect your ability to perform successfully in this course, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Center for Accommodations and Support Services. You may call (915) 747-5148 for general information about the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the rights that you have as a UTEP student with a disability. You also can visit the CASS website at <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> or the CASS office in Room 106 East Union Building. Individuals with disabilities have the right to equal access and opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at The University of Texas at El Paso.

#### **Course Rules**

I expect your full attention during class. This is an upper division course and it is imperative that everyone behaves themselves in an adult, respectful manner. Please see me immediately if you feel that anyone in the class (including the instructor) is behaving in a disrespectful manner.

**NO COMPUTERS OR CELL PHONES ALLOWED DURING LECTURE.**

**EMAIL POLICY** – Email communication can be a great way to communicate, however it is not suited for all conversations. Since attendance is not mandatory in this course (although it is highly recommended since your quiz grades will suffer), I prefer emails for technical issues (blackboard etc.) and for setting up an appointment to talk. I will not

respond to vague emails such as “what did we do today?” or “was there anything important in class?”

**I reserve the right to change the syllabus at any time.** This is a living document and should be treated as such. My goal is to tailor the course to the needs of the students and create the most appropriate learning experience.

## SCHEDULE

Day	Date	Border Society	Assignment	Due Today
1	T, 1/22	First Day of Classes		
2	TH, 1/24	No Class		
		<b>Intro to Border Studies</b>		
3	T, 1/29	Heyman – Transnational Borders		
4	TH, 1/31	Martinez – Border People		
5	T, 2/5	Jones (Ch 1-4)		
6	TH, 2/7	Jones (Ch 5- 8)		
		<b>History and Geography</b>		
7	T, 2/12	Arreola and Curtis		
8	TH, 2/14	Díaz – Border Contraband		<b>Short paper #1 due</b>
		<b>Economy</b>		
9	T, 2/19	Lugo – Fragmented Lives		
10	TH, 2/21	Greenberg- Ranchers		
		<b>Mid Term Exam 1</b>		
11	T, 2/26	Review		
12	TH, 2/28	<b>Mid Term Exam</b>		<b>Mid Term Exam</b>
		<b>Urbanization and Growth</b>		

13	T, 3/5	Sergio Pena		
14	TH, 3/7	Peter Ward		
		<b>Colonias: Health and Environment</b>		
15	T, 3/12	Jepson – Water Colonias		
16	TH, 3/14	Nunez, Heyman – Health Colonias		
	T, 3/19	Spring Break, no class	----- -----	----- -----
	TH, 3/21	Spring Break, no class	----- -----	----- -----
		<b>Environmental Issues</b>		
17	T, 3/26	Divided Waters – Ingram		
18	TH, 3/28	Sheridan – Political ecology of desert		<b>Short Paper #2</b>
		<b>Migration and Enforcement</b>		
19	T, 4/2	Velasco - Smuggling		
20	TH, 4/4	Sabo Enforcement		
21	T, 4/9	Galemba – Contraband Corridor 1		
22	TH, 4/11	Galemba – Contraband Corridor 2		
		<b>Exam 2</b>		<b>Midterm Exam 2</b>
23	T, 4/16	Review Exam 2		
24	TH, 4/18	Exam 2		
		<b>Border Culture</b>		
25	T, 4/23	Fishing - Vasquez		
26	TH, 4/25	Ranching - Perramond		
27	T, 4/30	Sheridan – When the Dove Calls		<b>Short Paper 3 Due</b>

		<b>International Borders</b>		
<b>28</b>	TH, 5/02	EU Borders – READING TBA		
<b>29</b>	T, 5/07	International borders 2 - TBA		
<b>30</b>	TH, 5/09	Last day of classes		
	W, 5/05	Dead Day		
	5/08– 5/12	Finals TBA		

Draft Syllabus