

Syllabus

Spanish 3308: Borderlands Literature/Literatura fronteriza

Spring 2014

Dr. Filemón Zamora

Office and Office Hours: MAB 114. Monday-Friday: 8:00 – 9:45, MWF: 11:00-12:00 or by appointment.

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Course Description:

First, this course can be taken in English or Spanish. Discussions on blackboard will be in English, for purpose of communication in case someone does not know enough Spanish. If Spanish is your major or minor, I recommend that you read the two assigned novels in Spanish.

In this course we are going to get to know the U.S./Mexico Borderlands through literary works, that is, we are going to read authors from many parts that have experienced and have written about the border. Some of them may be casual observers; others have been influenced or impacted more deeply by the border. Some of them are native to the borderlands; some others are outsiders. We are going to privilege the perspective of the native borderlands Chicanos or Mexican Americans by reading two short novels: *Pilgrims of Aztlán* and *The Devil in Texas*. We will read many representative works and authors that have written about many places of the U.S./Mexico Border (e.g. El Paso, Juárez, Ojinaga, Presidio, Eagle Pass, Laredo, Tijuana, Brownsville, Matamoros, Nogales, etc.) Readings include non-fiction, folklore, such as corridos, legends, and tales; poetry; short stories; and excerpts from novels. All readings have been selected to convey some aspect of Borderlife (people, places, values, conflicts) and Borderland issues (immigration, drug trafficking, violence, “border defense”).

Course Objectives:

- Students will gain an understanding and will learn to appreciate U.S./Mexico Borderlands culture through literature.
- Students will be able to locate major sites and identify major authors associated with the production of border literature.
- Students will be able to recognize geographical, social and cultural issues that infuse Borderlands literature.
- Students will apply their understanding of border elements, both creatively and analytically by writing an analytical paper (based on the readings) or writing two short stories that reflect their own experiences of the border.

Course Requirements: All students must read assignments from *Writing on the Edge: A Borderlands Reader*. Selections in the anthology are usually short (about three pages), but several pieces will be assigned for each week. During the last two weeks of the semester will read *Pilgrims of Aztlán* and *The Devil in Texas*. Since we are not meeting face to face for discussions, I will ask you to post responses on the Discussion Board to demonstrate that you

are keeping up with the readings. (When you click on the assignments link for the course, you will be able to see exactly, when the responses are due.)

Course Grade: The grade will be determined by the total number of points you have accumulated by the end of the semester. Here is the correlation between assignments and points:

Discussion Boards	20 points
Paper or short stories	20 points
Exam	30 points
Book Tests	30 points

Course Policies:

Required Texts:

Miller, Tom, ed. *Writing on the Edge: A Borderlands Reader*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003.

Mendez, Miguel. *Pilgrims of Aztlán*. Tempe: Bilingual Press, 1992

Brito, Aristeo. *The Devil in Texas*. Tempe: Bilingual Press, 1990

Syllabus

Date

Assignment

Week One: Jan. 20-23

*read course introduction and policies

Read the **Introduction** in **blackboard** of the book *U.S. Mexico Borderlands: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* by Oscar J. Martínez. This will provide you with the historical context of the border.

Read **Acknowledgments** section, read **Introduction**, take a look to maps of **The Literary Borderlands**, the **Cities and Their Writers** in your textbook *Writing on the Edge*.

Read: from *Mi Tierra* by Ray Gonzalez, “Negra” by Luis Alberto Urrea, from *Guerrero Viejo* by Elena Poniatowska, from *The Desert Smells Like Rain* by Gary Paul Nabhan, and from *Floating Kingdom* by George Rabasa

Discussion Board: Introduce yourself to the class—give us a sense of who you are, what your interests are: What do you like to read? What do you hope to gain in the course? Tell us a bit about your life, personality, hobbies, studies. Respond to two other writers. Respond to 2 posts!

Length:

Post your answer on Thursday 22 at 7:00 p.m.
Respond to one post on Friday 23 at 7:00p.m.

Check Announcements!

Week Two: Jan. 26-30

Read: From *Innocent Darkness* by Edward R. F. Sheehan, “When It Comes to Class: Viola Barragan” by Rolando Hinojosa, “Lucky Strike” by Gabriel Trujillo Munoz, “El Otro Lado” by Ruben Martinez, from *Rain of Gold* by Victor Villasenor, “Mericans” by Sandra Cisneros, from *Rainbow’s End* by Genaro Gonzalez

Week Three: Feb. 2-6

Read: “This Memory Begins with Flight” by Luis J. Rodriguez, from *Canicula* by Norma Elia Cantu, “Laredo, Texas” by Vladimir Mayakovsky, from *The Rain God* by Arturo Islas, “I will send For You or I will Come Home rich” by Richard Rodriguez, “The trouble with English” by Gloria Lopez-Stafford

Week Four: Feb. 9-13

Read: “Los mexicanos que hablan ingles/The Mexicans Who Speak English” collected by Americo Paredes, “To live in the Borderlands Means You...” by Gloria Anzaldua, “Rio Grande” by Jose Antonio Burciaga, “Nos Sentamos, Part 6: El Paso” by Ricardo Sanchez, “Journeys: El Paso/Juarez, 1984” by Benjamin Alire Saenz, “Naturalization Papers” by Miriam Moscona, “To Tijuana” by Miguel de Ana Jacobsen, “A Border Rose” by Robert L. Jones, “Legal Alien” by Pat Mora

Week Five: Feb. 16-20

Read: “Legal Alien” by Pat Mora, “Dog days” by Trinidad V. Sánchez, “Two Faces, One Reality” by Brianda Domeq, from *La Frontera* by Alan Weisman, “Rough Portrait” by Bárbara Jacobs, from *Lines and Shadows* by Joseph Wambaugh

Week Six: Feb 23-27

Read: from *Murieron a mitad del río*(They Died in the Middle of the River), “Sonoyta Interlude” by Tom Miller, from *Frontera Dreams* by Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Border Dictionary/Diccionario Fronterizo* by Víctor Ochoa, “Stephen Crane in Mexico (II)” by Stephen Crane

Week Seven: March 2-6

Read: from *The Old Gringo* by Carlos Fuentes, from *The Underdogs* by Mariano Azuela, “Endymion; or On the Border” by John Reed, “My First Glimpse of Pancho Villa” by Martín Luis Guzmán, from *Under the Fifth Sun* by Earl Shorris, from *A Mexican Ulysses* by José Vasconcelos, from *Another Mexico* by Graham Greene, “Jacinto Treviño” by Los Pingüinos del Norte.

Week Eight: March 9-13**Read:** “Over the Border” by Cora Hayward Crawford, *from I know Why the Caged Birds Sings* by Maya Angelou, “Cloister” by Ricardo Aguilar-Melantzón,

from *The Autobiography of A Brown Buffalo* by Oscar Zeta Acosta, from *Blue Desert* by Charles Bowden

Week Nine: March 16-20 Spring Break

Week Ten: March 23-27

Read: “On U.S./Mexico Relations” by Guillermo Gómez-Peña, “Crossing Over” by Demetria Martínez, “Poem for the Young White Man ...” by Lorna Dee Cervantes, “Speaking of My Tongue” by Janet Arelis Quezada, “La Frontera” by Alicia Gaspar de Alba, “La Frontera” by Oscar J. Martinez, “The Desert Music” by William Carlos William, from *Memory of Fire* by Eduardo Galeano

Week Eleven: March 30-April 3

Read: from *The Edge of the Storm* by Agustín Yáñez, *Bracero* by Eugene Nelson, *In Search of Bernabé* by Graciela Limón, “The Child” by Alberto Alvaro Ríos, “Mexicali, June 1954” by Allen Ginsberg

Week Twelve: April 6-10

Read: from *Lonesome Traveler* by Jack Kerouac, from *The Mexican Night* by Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Deportee: Plane Wreck at Los Gatos” by Woody Guthrie, “Across the Borderline” by Ry Cooder, John Hiatt, “What Money?” by Marty Robbins, “Lajitas and the NFL” by Sam Shephard.

Week Thirteen: April 13-17

Read: *The Devil in Texas* by Aristeo Brito

Week Fourteen: April 20-24

Read: *Pilgrims of Aztlán* by Miguel Méndez

Week Fifteen: April 27-May 1

Read assignment for final examination

Week Sixteen May 4-6

Final Examination Due by midnight,