

**FMS161/SP160/GLBCLT103B/CHCLAT129: “Borderlands Cinema”  
Spring, 2016**

**Lecture: T, TH 11:00-12:20 p.m.**  
**Screenings: T 12:30-1:50 p.m.**  
**Location: HH 156**

**Prof. Catherine L. Benamou**  
**Office Hours: T 2:15-4:15 p.m.**  
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This course involves a comparative exploration of documentary and fictional screen representations of border crossing and borderlands culture along shared borders in North America, as well as other regions (the Middle East, SubSaharan Africa) of the world, from the 1950s to the present. Special attention will be given to the positioning of border films with respect to national film industries and discourses of citizenship and sovereignty, along with creative uses of cinema and media to portray the transformations of sociocultural identity occurring as a result of human encounters, both chance and enforced, in border zones. The contributions of individual filmmakers to the formation of “borderlands consciousness” will be foregrounded, as well as the challenges of producing and distributing transborder films. Borderlands theory, including the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, Hamid Naficy, and José David Saldívar, will accompany historical and critical texts. Featured filmmakers include Ida Lupino, Orson Welles, John Sayles, Alanis Obomsawin (Mohawk), Anayansi Prado, Lourdes Portillo, Alejandro González Iñárritu, Alex Rivera, Robert Rodríguez, Maria Elena Velasco, Flora Gomes, and Amos Gitai. Students will gain familiarity with the difficulties currently facing those who cross and reside near these borders, as well as the challenges facing government policymakers; they will be able to sharpen the critical tools needed to identify and compare the narrative strategies and audiovisual styles adopted to represent varied and shifting natural and social geographies. An emphasis will be placed on collaborative learning. Several films will feature Spanish-language dialogue with subtitles or professor’s translated summary.

**Required texts:**

***Available at UCI Bookstore:***

David R. Maciel and María Herrera Sobek, *Culture Across Borders: Mexican Immigration and Popular Culture* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 1998)

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza = La Frontera* (Aunt Lute Books, 2007)

Camilla Fojas, *Border Bandits* (University of Texas Press, 2008)

**Other readings available on reserve at Langson Library:**

Paul Ganster, with David Lorey, *The U.S.-Mexican Border Today*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Rowman and Littlefield, 2015)

Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton University Press, 2001)

**The Borderlands Encyclopedia: A digital educational resource on contemporary U.S.-Mexico Border Issues, Univeristy of Texas at El Paso**

<https://antpac.lib.uci.edu:443/record=b2964360~S7>

***Available as electronic book on Antpac (portions assigned below):***

David Spener and Kathleen Staudt, eds., *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Transcending Divisions, Contesting Identities* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998)

José David Saldívar, *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies* (University of California Press, 1997) F787

**Additional readings will be scanned and posted on EEE-Canvas.**

**ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING: course participation (see below): 20%; web exercise: 10%; quiz: 10%; film review: 20%; final group project: 40%.**

## **I. BORDER CROSSINGS**

### **Week 1: Film Noir & Maverick Portrayals of the 1950s**

**3/29:** Off-Hollywood Representations of the U.S.-Mexico Border

**CLIP:** THE HITCH-HIKER, dir. Ida Lupino (RKO Radio Pictures, U.S., 1953)

**Studio Film:** TOUCH OF EVIL, dir. Orson Welles (Universal International Pictures, U.S., 1958)

### **3/31: DISCUSSION WITH GUEST FILMMAKER MARICARMEN DE LARA**

**CLIP:** ESPALDAS MOJADAS (WETBACKS), dir. Alejandro Galindo (Atlas Films, Mexico, 1955)

**Reading:** Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez, “Notes from an Unrepentant Border-Crosser”  
*eee-Canvas*

David R. Maciel and María Rosa García-Acevedo, “The Celluloid Immigrant” in Maciel & Herrera-Sobek

Anthony Nericcio, “Of Mestizos and Half-Breeds: Orson Welles’s *Touch of Evil*” *Canvas*

### **Week 2: Focalizing Migrancy: Realist Strategies & Border Geographies**

**\*\* WEB EXERCISE DUE IN DROP-BOX BY 5 p.m. Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>\*\***

**4/5:** The Border in Popular Memory, From *Corrido* to Screen

**Studio Film:** *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, dir. Robert Young (1985)

**4/7:** *Sin Nombre*, dir. Cary Fukunaga (Mexico, 2009)

**Reading: “Introduction,” Chapters 1 & 2 in Ganster & Lorey**

José David Saldívar, “Cultural Theory in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands” *Antpac*

Fojas, “Introduction: Welcome to the Alamo”

María Herrera-Sobek, “The *Corrido* as Hypertext” in M & HS

### **Week 3: Humor & National Allegory in 80s Cross-Border Representations**

**4/12:** The Border in the Chicano-Latino Imaginary

**Studio Film:** BORN IN EAST L.A., dir. Cheech Marín (Clear Type/Universal, 1987)

**4/14: \*\*QUIZ IN CLASS\*\*** *CLIPS* from: NI DE AQUÍ, NI DE ALLÁ, dir. María Elena Velasco (1987), LOS TRIUNFADORES, dir. Javier Durán (1978), LA TUMBA DEL MOJADO, dir. José Luis Urquieta (1985), LA ILEGAL, dir. Arturo Ripstein (1979)

**Reading:** ” Juan Gómez-Quiñones and David R. Maciel, “What Goes Around, Comes Around” in M & HS

Rosa Linda Fregoso, “Humor as Subversive Deconstruction” *EEE-Canvas*

Maricruz Castro Ricalde, “Popular Mexican Cinema and Undocumented Immigrants” *EEE-Canvas*

**Recommended:** José R. Reyna and María Herrera-Sobek, “Jokelore, Cultural Difference, and Linguistic Dexterity,” in M & HS

Pablo Vila, “The Competing Meanings of the Label ‘Chicano’ in El Paso” Ch. 9 in *Spener & Staudt (electronic book)*

### **Week 4: Transculturation Through Border-Crossing**

**4/19:** Home-Seeking and Exile in the Middle East

**Studio Film:** FREE ZONE, dir. Amos Gitai (Israel/Jordan, 2005)

**4/21:** The “Other” Border and Indigenous Sovereignty

*CLIP:* FROZEN RIVER, dir. Courtney Hunt (Cohen Media Group/Harwood Hunt Productions/Off-Hollywood Pictures, 2008)

**Reading:** Peter Andreas, “A Tale of Two Borders” *eee-Canvas*

Hamid Naficy, “Chronotopes of Imagined Homeland” *eee-Canvas*

Ella Shohat, “Rupture and Return: Zionist Discourse and the Study of Arab-Jews” *eee-Canvas*

## **II. BORDER LANDS**

### **Week 5: Uncertain Justice \*\*Film Reviews Due Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. in Course Dropbox\*\***

**4/26:** Border “Banditry,” continued

*CLIP:* THE WILD BUNCH, dir. Sam Peckinpah (1969)

**Studio Film:** LONE STAR, dir. John Sayles (Columbia Pictures/Castle Rock Entertainment/Río Dulce, U.S., 1996)

**4/28:** Ethnicity, Class, and the Law, continued

*CLIPS:* BORDER COP, dir. Christopher Leitch (1979)

**Reading:** Fojas, Chapter 2

Alberto Ledesma, “Undocumented Crossings” in M & HS

Rosa Linda Fregoso, “Recycling Colonialist Fantasies on the Texas Borderlands” *eee-Canvas*

Sang Hea Kil and Cecilia Menjivar, “The ‘War on the Border’” *eee-Canvas*

**Recommended:** Julianne Burton-Carvajal, “Oedipus Tex/Oedipus Mex” *eee-Canvas*

## **Week 6: Border as Boundary, Narratives of Loss and Longing**

**5/3:** Future-Oriented Visions of the U.S.-Mexico Border

**Studio Film:** SLEEP DEALER, dir. Alex Rivera (Likely Story/This Is That Productions, 2008)

**5/5:** The Future of the Border Is Now, Part II

*CLIP:* SEÑORITA EXTRAVIADA, dir. Lourdes Portillo (Xochitl Films/ITVS, 2001)

**Reading:** Thomas J. Biersteker, “The Rebordering of North America?” *eee-Canvas*

Fojas, Chapter 4

Olivia Ruiz, “Visiting the Mother Country” in Spener & Staudt

Alicia Schmidt-Camacho, “Migrant Melancholia: Emergent Narratives of the Border Crossing” *eee-Canvas*

Leslie Salzinger, “Manufacturing Sexual Subjects” and Melissa W. Wright, “The Dialectics of Still Life: Murder, Women, and Maquiladoras” *eee-Canvas*

## **Week 7: Border Productions and Narco-Narratives**

**\*\*FORMATION OF RESEARCH GROUPS –ONLINE SIGNUPS\*\***

**5/10:** The Cinema of Robert Rodríguez

**Studio Film:** EL MARIACHI, dir. Robert Rodríguez (Los Hooligans Productions/Columbia Pictures, 1992)

**5/12:** *CLIPS* from: CONTACTO CHICANO, dir. Federico Curiel (1979) and REGALO CARO 2, dir. José Luis Vera (2002)

**Reading:** Charles Ramírez-Berg, “Ethnic Ingenuity and Mainstream Cinema” *eee-Canvas*

Fojas, “The ‘NARC’ in All of Us: Border Media & the War on Drugs”

Catherine Benamou, “*Con amor, tequila, y gasolina: Lola the Truckdriver and Screen Resistance in Cine Fronterizo* (Border Cinema)” *eee-Canvas*

Tony Payán, “The Drug War and the U.S.-Mexico-Border” *eee-Canvas*

### **III. TRANSBORDER COMMUNITIES**

#### **Week 8: Reconstructing histories/transmitting cultural memory**

**5/17:** Border as Metaphor in Third World Narrative

**Studio Film:** PÓ DI SANGUI, dir. Flora Gomes (Guinea-Bissau, 1997)

**5/19:** CHULAS FRONTERAS, dir. Les Blank (Flower Films, 1976)  
GROUNDS, dir. Dolissa Medina (2001)

**Reading:** Fernando Arenas, *Lusophone Africa: Beyond Independence* (excerpt) *eee-Canvas*  
Charles Ramírez-Berg, “El Genio del Género” *eee-Canvas*  
Gloria Anzaldúa, “The Homeland, Aztlán” and “The Coatlicue State”

#### **Week 9: Native Networks/Transborder Spaces**

**5/24:** First Nations Contributions to Transborder Discourse: Alanis Obomsawin

**Studio Film:** SPUDWRENCH: KAHNAWAKE MAN, dir. Alanis Obomsawin  
(Abenaki, National Film Board of Canada, 1997)

**5/26:** Experimental Debordering

*CLIP:* ESTABLISHING SHOTS, dir. Christopher McNamara (Thinkbox, 2006)

**Reading:** Audrea Lim, “Borderlands and Paradises” *eee-Canvas*  
Randolph Lews, “Documentary on the Middle Ground” *eee-Canvas*

#### **Week 10: Familial Faultlines**

**5/31:** Border and Memory, Tracing Affective Ties

*CLIP:* CHILDREN IN NO MAN’S LAND, dir. Anayansi Prado (Impacto Films, 2013)

**Studio Film:** CALAVERA HIGHWAY, dir. Renee Tajima Peña and Evangeline Griego (2008)

#### **6/2: GROUP PRESENTATIONS**

**Reading:** Hamid Naficy, “Journeying, Border Crossing, and Identity Crossing”  
Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila, “‘I’m Here, but I’m There’: The Meanings of Latina Transnational Motherhood” *eee-Canvas*  
David Spener and Kathleen Staudt, “Conclusion: Rebordering” in Spener & Staudt (Antpac)

**Recommended:** Norma Ojeda de la Peña, “Transborder Families and Gendered Trajectories of Migration and Work” *eee-Canvas*

**\*\*ALL FINAL REPORTS DUE IN DROP-BOX June 7<sup>th</sup> by 12:30 p.m.  
NO EXCEPTIONS WITHOUT PROVEN EMERGENCY\*\***

**THE “NOT-SO-FINE” PRINT:**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** everyone is entitled to **one** unexcused absence; after that point, one half grade will be taken off of participation grade for each additional absence.

**TARDINESS:** if you arrive more 10 minutes late or leave class more than 10 minutes early without a reasonable excuse, you will be marked “absent.”

**CLASSROOM COURTESY:** **Sleeping** is not allowed in class; if you fall asleep, you will be marked “absent.” **Cellphones must be turned off** during all class sessions. Any **electronic device**, including **cellphones or ipods**, used in class will result in an “absence;” use during an in-class assignment or exam and you will fail the assignment. Using a **laptop or tablet for purposes other than accessing the course website, assigned reading, or taking notes** will result in being marked “absent.” Please be considerate of your fellow students please **remove any personal refuse** upon leaving the classroom.

**PLAGIARISM** will not be tolerated under any circumstances; if it is determined that you have committed plagiarism in *any assignment, at minimum* it will lead to a **serious reduction** in your grade for this course. Please see <http://senate.uci.edu/uci-academic-senate-manual/part-iii-appendices-of-the-irvine-division/appendix-viii-uci-academic-senate-policy-on-academic-integrity/> for UCI policy. For a **definition of plagiarism** and a helpful tutorial, please see <http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/index.cfm>; for the **UCI principles of community**, please consult <http://www.dos.uci.edu/conduct/principlesofcommunity.php>

**SCREENINGS:** you are expected to view assigned films during scheduled viewing times; **if you must be absent** during studio then please **notify me via email** and please **view the film on reserve at MRC** at your earliest convenience. All films screened during studio will be available for viewing **on reserve** at the **MRC in Ayala Library** within 24 hours after the scheduled screening time. These films will not be in the Library after Thursday before class, when they are retrieved for class screening.

**PARTICIPATION GRADE:** includes attendance, classroom discussion, group presentations of final projects, and reading presentations for extra credit.

**\*\*PLEASE SEE COURSE HANDOUTS FOR SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS\*\***