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HIST 305-01, U.S. and Mexico in Historic Perspective, Spring 2012

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Infinite Border: U.S and Mexico in Historic Perspective

Instructor: Michael J. LaRosa, PhD

Spring, 2012

Rhodes College

Office Hours: T, W, R: 8-11 am. [T, R at Burrow 136; W at Buckman 215]

Introduction: This course is designed as upper-level history course, dealing with the history of two countries, the United States and Mexico though most of our focus is on the latter. Our objective is to understand how the history of the Border –the border separating the United States and Mexico—has shaped political, economic, historic and cultural realities, for centuries, at a place that’s neither fixed nor clear. Students will study primary documents, read essays/literary accounts, and view films to arrive at a more complete understanding of the history, tragedy and possibility of the border.

Objectives: This course is interdisciplinary, and students will read novels, short stories and historical texts. We will view films, read critically and write. Students will leave this course with a broad appreciation of the diversity of historical thought, questions and interpretations. History changes so one of our goals is to consider that change, and understand clearly why history is a humanistic rather than scientific pursuit.

Requirements: I will expect students to turn in five assignments during the semester: Two short critical review (c. 5 pp.) essays, one research paper (8-10 pp.) and a standard essay midterm and final exam. The research paper will be based on semester-long research on a specific topic, selected by students; each student will make a 10-15 minute presentation of their research toward the end o the semester. The shorter essays will be reviews of readings and/or films.

Course dynamic: I will lecture for 45 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday; thirty minutes of class will be taken up by student-led discussion of current events, readings, and other materials from the course. On alternating Thursdays, students will hand in a short (1-2 pp) writing assignment analyzing the reading and take a short quiz that focuses on the readings. The quiz will be graded and discussed in class. All assignments are due at due date—I do not accept late papers. All work must be submitted on paper, in either English or Spanish. Students must attend all classes; those who miss classes will see their final grade lowered (for example, students who miss four classes will not be assigned a grade that translates to “excellent work.”) Exceptions can always be made for unforeseen crises.

Grading: You final grade will be determined as follows:

Critical reviews:	15 percent each
Research paper:	20 percent
Midterm and final:	15 percent each
Participation and Attendance/oral presen.	10 percent

Short writing assignments and weekly quizzes: 10 percent

Readings: There are five books for purchase and some additional reading will be placed on reserve at the Library.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: La Frontera*. (third edition)

Casares, Oscar. *Brownsville*.

Fuentes, Carlos. *The Crystal Frontier*.

Martínez, Oscar, ed. *U.S. Mexican Borderlands: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*

McCarthy, Cormac. *No Country for Old Men*.

Films: We will watch three films during the course of the semester: The films are: “Lonestar,” directed by John Sayles and “No Country for Old Men,” directed by the Coen Brothers and “The Three Burials of Melquiades Estrada” directed by Tommy Lee Jones.

Etc. A few readings are in bold—these readings will be placed on reserve at the library.

Weekly Course Outline:

Week One: 12 Jan. Thursday: Introduction to course. Organization of materials and the course

Week Two: Introduction, plus The Border in History.

Tuesday 17 Jan: Section I from Martínez

Thursday: 19 Jan. ANZ: Introductions plus preface—ie “front matter.”

Week Three: Colonialism and the Border

Tuesday: 24 Jan: Read Chapter I, Anzaldúa

Thursday: 26 Jan. First short paper due

Week Four: Mexican American clash, mid-19th century and the beginning of Texas

Tuesday: 31 Jan. Section two from Martínez, plus **Zinn handout**

Thursday 2 Feb. Chapter 2, ANZ, Quiz

Week Five: European Positivism arrives to the border: Post-civil war US, and Mexico's "Porfiriato"

Tuesday: 7 Feb. W. Dirk Raat chapter 5 (hand out), plus Section III, Martínez

Thursday 9 Feb. Second Short paper due

Week Six: Revolutionary Mexico

Tuesday 14 Feb. Martínez, section IV

Thursday 16 Feb. ANZ: Chapter 3, Quiz

Week Seven: Boom and Bust at the border.

Tuesday 21 Feb., Martínez, Section V (**in class midterm on Tuesday**)

Thursday 23 Feb. Third short paper due. ANZ, chapter 4. Start Fuentes.

Week Eight: Cultural Questions at the Border

Tuesday 28 Feb. **Limón chapter**

Thursday 1 March: ANZ, chapter five. Finish Fuentes; quiz

Film: Lonestar.

Week Nine: A History of Immigration at the Border

Tuesday: 6 March: **LaRosa and Ingwersen**: essay from *Neighborly Adversaries*.

Thursday 8 March: Fourth short review due. ANZ, chapter six

(First critical review due on Thursday)

Week Ten: No class – spring break; ANZ chapter seven (Sorry)

Week Eleven: Economics and the Border

Tuesday 20 March: Martínez, section VI. **Monroy chapter on NAFTA**; fifth short review due

Thursday: 22 March Start Casares. ANZ, I.

Film: "Three Burials"

Week Twelve: A literary Border

Tuesday 27 March. Finish Casares. Focused discussion on this work.

Thursday 29 March. Quiz. Comparative discussion, Fuentes and Casares. ANZ, chapter II

Week Thirteen: Drugs and Violence

Tuesday 3 April: Start *No Country for Old Men*.

Thursday 5 April: **(Second critical review due on Wednesday at five pm)—Easter Recess no class**

Week Fourteen: A Feminist Border

Tuesday 10 April: Read selections from **Ana Castillo**, *Goddess of the Americas: Diosa de las Americas*.

Thursday 12 April: Quiz, ANZ chapters III, IV

Week Fifteen: The Border according to **William T. Vollmann**: A look at *Imperial*.

Tuesday 17 April: Readings from *Imperial*

Thursday 19 April: Finish *No Country*. (No class --- Easter Break)

Research paper due, 19 April

Film: No Country

Week Sixteen: Conclusion at the Border: Future Considerations and change.

Tuesday 24 April: **Monroy chapter six**. Section VII – Martínez. ANZ, V, VI plus interview

Thursday 26 April: Last day of class, Discussion.

Final will be held during regularly scheduled final period for this course

To include: NAFTA and the new world border chapter one in “The Borders within” by Douglas Monroy

E183.8.M6 M827, 2008

The other American south: Southern culture and greater Mexico chapter one in Jose Limon, in *American Encounters*. E 183.8.M6L53 1998

Gloria Anzaldua—find, “Borderlands/La Frontera: the New Mestiza”—find

Ana Castillo, ed. *Godess of the Americas, Diosa de las Americas*.—find

Vollmann, William T. *Imperial*. Find

Add in films and dates

Add in paper assignments 2 plus mid and final, plus research paper—due during last week in april