

Vialla Hartfield-Méndez
Piedmont Project Report

- Syllabus for “Drawing the Line: the Mexico-U.S. *frontera* and its Stories” (SPAN 460S and LAS 490)
- Explanation of conceptualization of the syllabus in relation to the Piedmont Project

Attached is the syllabus that I have constructed for this senior seminar. Originally I had proposed integrating elements about the environment in an existing course (SPAN 317: Writing, Context and Community). I will still do this, but I came to realize that these issues were just as pertinent or more so in the senior seminar. SPAN 317 will not be taught until spring 2008, and the senior seminar will be taught this fall, so I have concentrated on it first.

Conceptualization of the syllabus vis-à-vis the Piedmont Project:

Perhaps the most helpful component of the Piedmont Project in approaching this course was the discussion of sense of place.

In planning the course, I identified five themes, all of which are related to the sense of place, and in fact the first, introductory theme, is “The border zone: a physical space in human hands; a sense of place.” The course proceeds chronologically from pre-Columbian experience to the present day, and thematically. The students will read primary and secondary sources in each thematic section, and I will use excerpts from Charles Mann’s very readable *1491* to introduce them to the idea the geographic region we now call the “border” as a place under human construction and influence since long before the arrival of Europeans. This will lead into a reading of parts of Cabeza de Vaca’s account of his travels, as the first European to see some of this land and the people who inhabited it.

The other themes are: 2) The creation and conceptualization of the border, 3) The border and Revolution, 4) “Borderlands” – the emblematic border, and 5) Multiple border spaces: the border as a space of negotiation and globalization. As noted, the students will be moving in a chronological fashion through texts that follow the history of this region, and toward the end of the course we will discuss more and more the idea of border spaces that are not necessarily located at the physical, geographic border. As is evident in the syllabus, we will be reading many kinds of texts: historical documents, fiction, poetry, biography, etc., but will also view films.

In this context, I will use the concept proposed by David Spener and Kathleen Staudt of “debordering and re-bordering.” In *The U.S.-Mexico Border: Transcending Divisions*,

Contesting Identities, Spener and Staudt write, “By rebordering, we mean processes that involve the reassertion or rearticulation of socially constructed boundaries, both territorial and nonterritorial. The dialectical cycle the debordering-rebordering antimony implies is one in which an existing boundary is challenged and penetrated (debordered), only to be reestablished, repositioned, or reconfigured in a new guise in response to a competing set of interests (rebordered)” (236). We will examine how this process happens on the actual border, but also in border spaces such as the ones that have developed in Atlanta and in surrounding areas in Georgia.

This naturally leads to the question of how this course relates directly, and perhaps unexpectedly, to Atlanta’s and Emory’s sense of place. One of the requirements of the course is that the students will write four reflection papers, but they have the option of writing only 2 of these papers and participating in Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders), that is, working in ESL classes for adults in Dekalb Technical College on Buford Highway. This is a program I have worked with from its inception at Emory, with great success, and it will give those students who choose to participate in it an up-close look at debordered and rebordered spaces 5 miles from Emory’s campus. For those who choose to write all four reflection papers, at least one of them will require them to travel to Buford Highway, make specific observations (about the constructed environment, for example) and engage in conversation with at least two Spanish speakers during their time there. Class discussions and student presentations (of which there are many scheduled throughout the semester) will frequently be structured around their personal observations, as they relate to the texts we are reading.

Another important requirement of the course is a final research project. These will arise from the students’ personal interests, but I can envision several projects related to the physical environment, international discourse about the environment, and border-inflected sense of place as revealed in various kinds of texts. These may also relate to the numerous films I expect the students to see, or to border-inflected visual art, all of which lend themselves to discussion about the environment. Each student will develop his or her own project, but as is always the case, I will guide them closely, and my experience in the Piedmont Project gave me new perspectives that will be useful as I advise these students about possible topics.

Drawing the Line: The Mexico-U.S. *frontera* and its Stories

SPAN 460S and LAS 490
MWF 10:40-11:30

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Course description: This course explores the history of the Mexico-U.S. border from colonial notions of boundaries in New Spain through the Mexican-American War and the Mexican Revolution to the twentieth-century concept of “borderlands” and the present cultural and political tangle of migration, fence-building, globalization, and multiple borderland spaces, not all of them located at the official dividing line. Through reading (or viewing) and discussion various kinds of texts (*crónicas*, treaties and other government documents, fiction, poetry, music, visual arts and film), students will gain a critical understanding of the ideological, political and cultural constructions of *la frontera*.

Texts:

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Naufragios y comentarios*

Carlos Fuentes, *La frontera de cristal*

Humberto Crosthwaite, *Instrucciones para cruzar la frontera*

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*

Selections of various texts, accessible on Blackboard

Various films, including *Lone Star* directed by John Sayles, *Babel* directed by Ignacio González Iñárritu, and the films in a series on immigration issues, tentatively set to be sponsored by the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program.

Grade:

Attendance and class participation (including viewing of films)	10%
Class presentations	10%
4 reflection papers OR 2 reflection papers and participation in Project SHINE	20%
Mid-semester exam	25%
Final research project	25%
Final portfolio	10%

Grading Scale

A = 93-100 B+ = 87-89 C+ = 77-79 D+ = 67-69 F = 0-62

A- = 90-92 B = 83-86 C = 73-76 D = 63-69

B- = 80-82 C- = 70-72

NOTE: Students taking a course on the S/U basis must earn a C or above in order to receive an “S”.

Other Important Course Information

3. *Attendance.*

Department of Spanish & Portuguese has instituted the following across-the-board attendance policy:

Students are required to attend **all** classes. You are allowed a maximum of four unexcused absences, which you should reserve for short illnesses and emergencies. Unexcused absences beyond these limits will result in the lowering of the final course grade by one letter grade. Some excused absences are permitted. Your absence on religious holidays will be excused if you inform the instructor in advance. Your absence may be excused if you suffer a serious medical emergency, provided you obtain written confirmation from a dean. Your absence may also be excused in other extraordinary circumstances, provided you obtain a letter from a dean.

2. *Honor Code.* All students in this course are expected to be thoroughly familiar with and abide by the Emory Honor Code. Sections 4 © and 4 (d) of the Honor Code are in particular applicable to this language course: © seeking, using, giving, or obtaining unauthorized assistance or information in any academic assignment or examination, and (d) intentionally giving false information to professors or instructors for the purpose of gaining academic advantage are considered to be an academic misconduct. For more detailed information see:

<http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/students/honor.html>

3. *Students with disabilities.* It is the policy of Emory University to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. All students with special requests or need for accommodations should make this request in person as soon as possible. For more information on disability policy, see: <http://www.portals.emory.edu/>.

HORARIO

31 agosto	Introducción al curso TEMA I: La zona fronteriza: espacio físico en manos humanas; el Sentido del lugar
3 sept.	LABOR DAY – no hay clase
5 sept.	Selecciones de: Mann, <i>1491</i> , y Herzog, <i>Where North Meets South</i> Cabeza de Vaca, <i>Naufragios</i>
7 sept.	Cabeza de Vaca Presentación de estudiante
10 sept.	Cabeza de Vaca Presentación de estudiante
12 sept.	Cabeza de Vaca Profesora invitada: Karen Stolley
14 sept.	RETIRO OFICIAL DEL DEPARTAMENTO: no hay clase
17 sept.	La Colonia; los californios Documentos históricos en Blackboard PRIMER TRABAJO DE REFLEXIÓN
19 sept.	La Colonia; Texas Documentos históricos en Blackboard Presentación de estudiante
21 sept.	La Colonia: Los Caminos Reales Documentos históricos en Blackboard
24 sept.	TEMA II: La creación y la conceptualización de la frontera Discusión de película en la serie de documentales sobre la inmigración

- 26 sept. 1848; El Tratado de Guadalupe
- 28 sept. Tratado de Guadalupe
Presentación de estudiante
SEGUNDO TRABAJO DE REFLEXIÓN
- 1 oct. Documentos estadounidenses
Cartas de Ulysses S. Grant
Presentación de estudiante
- 3 oct. La frontera negociada; tratados que siguen al Tratado de Guadalupe
- 5 oct. TEMA III: La frontera y la Revolución
Documentos relacionados con Madero, Pancho Villa y otros
Taibo II, *Pancho Villa* (todos estos documentos en Blackboard)
- 8 oct. FALL BREAK – no hay clase
- 10 oct. Intervenciones de EEUU en México: Henry Lane Wilson
Presentación de estudiante
- 12 oct. Corridos de la Revolución
Tarjetas postales mandados por estadounidenses
TERCER TRABAJO DE REFLEXIÓN
- 15 oct. Corridos y cultura popular
- 17 oct. Discusión de película en serie sobre la inmigración
- 19 oct. EXAMEN PARCIAL
- 22 oct. TEMA IV: “Borderlands” – la frontera emblemática
Alarcón, “Las repatriaciones de noviembre” (en Bb)
- 24 oct. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*
Presentación de estudiante

- 25 oct. Rubén Martínez (selección en Bb)
ENTREGA DE IDEA PARA EL PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN
- 29 oct. Rosario Sanmiguel (selección en Bb)
Presentación de estudiante
- 31 oct. Jiménez, “Cajas de cartón” (en Bb)
Presentación de estudiante
- 2 nov. Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*
ENTREGA DE BIBLIOGRAFÍA ANOTADA PARA EL PROYECTO
DE INVESTIGACIÓN
- 5 nov. TEMA V: Espacios fronterizos múltiples: la frontera como espacio de
negociación y globalización
Fuentes, *La frontera de cristal*
- 7 nov. Fuentes, *La frontera de cristal*
- 9 nov. Fuentes, *La frontera de cristal*
Presentación de estudiante
- 12 nov. Discusión de película en la serie sobre la inmigración
ENTREGA DE LA PRIMERA VERSIÓN DEL PROYECTO DE
INVESTIGACIÓN
- 14 nov. Quinones, *Antonio’s Gun*
Presentación de estudiante
- 16 nov. Crosthwaite, *Instrucciones para cruzar la frontera*
- 19 nov. Crosthwaite, *Instrucciones para cruzar la frontera*
Presentación de estudiante
- 21 nov. Sada, “La frontera alevosa” (en Bb)
CUARTO TRABAJO DE REFLEXIÓN
- 23 nov. THANKSGIVING – no hay clase

- 26 nov. Agustín, *Ciudades desiertas*
- 28 nov. Agustín, *Ciudades desiertas*
Presentación de estudiante
- 30 nov. Agustín, *Ciudades desiertas*
Presentación de estudiante
- 3 dic. González Iñárritu, *Babel*
ENTREGA DE LA SEGUNDA VERSION DEL PROYECTO DE
INVESTIGACIÓN
- 5 dic. González Iñárritu, *Babel*
- 7 dic. Corridos y otra música contemporánea
Evaluaciones del curso
- 10 dic. Conclusiones
- 14 dic. ENTREGA DEL PORTAFOLIO FINAL