

Chic/Lat 160  
Spring '07

**Chicano/Latino Studies 160**

**Perspectives on the U.S.-Mexico Border**

**Tuesday-Thursday, 12:30-1:50**

**Ricardo Chavira**

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**Office Hours: T-TH, 11 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.**

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**Course Overview**

Students will explore and assess the U.S.-Mexico border, a unique and critically important region. This study will encompass border history and the many controversies that animate and define the 2,000-mile divide between the two nations. The economy and labor, security, immigration, culture and the environment will be examined in depth. A portion of the class will be devoted to placing the U.S.-Mexico border in a global context, comparing it to the frontiers that separate other nations. Conflict traditionally has infused the border, a characteristic common to many other international boundaries.

The course goal is to develop an understanding of the border that goes beyond the stereotypical depiction of the region as exclusively a point of conflict. To be sure, violence is a daily part of the borderlands. But it is a multi-faceted region.

San Ysidro, just to our south, is the world's most heavily trafficked land crossing. Some forty million people and fourteen million vehicles annually enter the United States at this sliver of San Diego. More broadly, the nearly 2,000 mile border region is home to some eleven million people.

With an estimated 2,700 maquiladoras, the border is the focal point of commerce between the neighbors. The United States is Mexico's largest trading partner, and Mexico is the United States' second-largest trading partner. Trade between the two countries reached \$290 billion in 2005, averaging about \$795 million a day. US exports to Mexico in 2005 were \$120 billion, and US imports from Mexico were over \$170 billion. Exports to Mexico have more than doubled since the passage of NAFTA in 1994, when US exports to Mexico were over \$50 billion.

**Assignments**

You will have two major assignments. One is a 40-minute oral group presentation on an aspect of the border. The other is an eight page paper on a contemporary issue that will constitute your final exam. I will immediately provide prompts for these assignments. We will also have a midterm essay exam.

## Expectations and Structure

By the quarter's end you should have a deep, detailed and sophisticated understanding of the border. To help achieve this goal, I will present information, insights and guidance. Students, for their part, should be prepared to devote substantial time to study and full participation in class discussions.

Consequently, the class will function much like a seminar. Lectures should stimulate discussion and debate. Group oral presentations, a vital component, similarly ought to spark questions and lively exchanges.

The paper should reflect ample research and incisive analysis. I encourage you to use me as a resource; I'm happy to advise you in researching and preparing the final project. You will receive a written prompt to aid you in completing your paper.

I will be as accessible as possible. So, please be in touch as often as you'd like. You will see listed above a variety of ways to reach me.

I expect you to be in class unless you are ill or have an emergency. Please let me know as soon as possible if you will not attend class. Irregular attendance will unavoidably lower your final grade. **Assigned class readings should be completed by the date listed.**

## GRADING

Your final grade will be based on three activities. They are the group project, the midterm exam and your term paper, which also counts as your final.

GROUP PROJECT: 35%

MIDTERM: 25%

TERM PAPER: 40%

## Required Texts

**Troublesome Border**  
**By Oscar J. Martinez**

**Women and Change at the U.S.-Mexico Border**

**Edited by Doreen J. Mattingly and Ellen R. Hansen**

**Copies of selected studies and articles will also be distributed.**

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**Week One**

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>: Introduction to class and discussion of syllabus**

**Read: Martinez, introduction**

**April 5<sup>th</sup>: The Border's Boundaries and Identity: Survey of key issues**

**Read: Martinez, chapters one and two**

**Week Two**

**April 10<sup>th</sup>: Border History, Early American Intrigue to War**

**April 12<sup>th</sup>: Border History, Revolution and Conflict**

**Quiz**

**Read: Martinez, chapter four**

**Week Three**

**April 17<sup>th</sup>: *Los Fronterizos*: Identity and Conflict**

**Read: Martinez, chapter four; Mattingly and Hansen, part two**

**April 19<sup>th</sup>: The Economy and Workers**

**Read: Mattingly and Hansen, Part One**

**First oral presentation**

**Week Four**

**April 24<sup>th</sup>: Maquiladoras and the Role of Women**

**April 26<sup>th</sup>: Midterm Essay Exam**

**Week Five**

**May 1<sup>st</sup>: Militarization of the Border**

**Second oral presentation**

**Read: Martinez, chapter seven**

**May 3<sup>rd</sup>: Immigration**  
**Third oral presentation**

**Week Six**

**May 8<sup>th</sup>: Violence and Drugs**  
**Fourth oral presentation**  
**Read: Martinez, chapter six**

**May 10<sup>th</sup>: The Environment**  
**Final paper proposals due**  
**Fifth oral presentation**

**Week Seven**

**May 15<sup>th</sup>: Sixth and Seventh Oral Presentations**

**May 17<sup>th</sup>: Political Activism in the Borderlands**

**Week Eight**

**May 22<sup>nd</sup>: Eighth Oral Presentation**

**May 24<sup>th</sup>: When Countries Collide: A Survey of Other Borders**

**Week Nine**

**May 28<sup>th</sup>: Frontera Sur: Similarities and Contrasts**

**May 30<sup>th</sup>: Health and the Border**

**Week Ten**

**June 5<sup>th</sup>: The Border's Future**

**June 7<sup>th</sup>: Class Summary**

**Final Papers Due: June 15<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m.**