LACS 212 Spring 2023

Border Lives

MW 11:30AM-12:45PM

HL-121

Instructor:

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Office hours: MW 1:30-2:30 & by appt.

Zoom link for Office Hours: <https://trincoll.zoom.us/j/6199403974>

**Course Description**

We live in a bordered world. While some national borders may seem invisible, allowing for easy crossing, others are heavily guarded--stern markers of state sovereignty and protectionism. In this course we will examine the broad political and cultural implications of borders, from the 20th century into the present. Our main focus will be on the lived experience of--and on--the border, with special attention given to transnational travel, migration (increasingly climate related), exile, and the unique cultures that emerge in borderlands. Aside from reading essential texts within the field of Border Studies, we will explore several novels, short stories and films from different parts of the world--from the Berlin Wall to the US-Mexico Border.

**Course Materials**

**Purchase, rent or borrow (either hardcopy or e-book):**

* Manlio Graziano. *What is a Border?* San Francisco: Stanford UP, 2018. ISBN: 9781503605398.
* Raja Shehadeh. *Where the Line is Drawn. A Tale of Crossings, Friendships, and 50 Years of Occupation in Israel-Palestine.* New York: The New Press, 2017. ISBN: 9781620972915.
* Francisco Cantú. *The Line Becomes A River.* *Dispatches from the Border.* New York: Riverhead Books, 2018. ISBN: 9780735217713.
* Bryan Caplan and Zach Weinersmith. *Open Borders. The Science and Ethics of Immigration*. New York: First Second, 2019. ISBN: 9781250316967.

Most of the readings and viewings will be made available on our Moodle site at

https://moodle.trincoll.edu/course/view.php?id=7591

**Course Format and Strategy**

Our seminar will be very much student-centered. It goes without saying that you can learn a great deal from your peers who have different backgrounds, bring different approaches, observations, and interpretations to the classroom, and actively contribute to the course. There will be lots of student interaction, group discussions, and peer presentations.

Participation in this course involves the following activities:

A. Reading/Viewing Assignments.  For each class session there will be several readings and/or viewings. Sometimes, I post questions on Moodle for you to consider as you read/view the material assigned.  Please take detailed notes. Research shows that doing so in LONGHAND helps you process and retain information better.

B. Pre-class Group Work.  To encourage collaboration, I will assign small working groups (4 students max) on a regular basis. I ask that you meet as a group once a week (see Moodle schedule) to share your thoughts and formulate questions. Each group submits a Moodle post – again before class – that reflects your discussion. Posts should be the result of your **collaborative work** (one of you submits on behalf of the group). I usually provide a prompt, but sometimes you may write about a subject of your choosing. Either way, posts should 1) respond to the reading/viewing; 2) brim with curiosity and intelligence; and 3) be well written. Posts are typically between 250-300 words.

C.  Group Discussants. Each Monday class, one groups will be in charge of framing the conversation. What does “framing the conversation” mean? Think of it as providing a bit of context: offer some background that you think is useful; identify a theme or motif that you consider of central importance; offer an interpretation that you then open up for questions and further discussion. I encourage the use of a Power point presentation. The group in charge has about 10 minutes. Of course, other groups will chime in, too.

D. & Individual Posts/Mini Essays. You will write individual posts once a week, due before Wednesday’s class. Posts should be at least 250 words and focus on a theme related to the reading/viewing. Several times this term, I will ask you to write individual short essays instead of a post. Short essays should be 3-4 pages or 900-1.000 words). Deadlines on Moodle.

E. Full and Active Participation. You are encouraged—expected—to contribute to class discussion, because without you, there won’t be any! So: ask questions, respond, argue, quote, joke, ponder, debate, critique. I’ll do the same.

F. In-Class Group Work. You'll regularly work in small groups to further discuss some of the questions raised in class. You will all take notes during the discussion. After approx. 10 minutes, we’ll regroup and share our questions/findings.

G. Essay OR Creative Project. You'll write one 8-10 page research paper (for which you consult at least three external sources) due toward the end of the semester. I'll set aside some time to talk about how to make and convey an argument, what a “thesis” is, how to polish your writing, what constitutes intellectual property and how to avoid plagiarism, how to go about doing research for your paper and support your own ideas with secondary literature, etc.  Papers are submitted electronically through Moodle.

As an alternative to the essay, you may do a creative project that addresses the core subjects of the course (e.g. a documentary video, a series of interviews with local activists, a portfolio of art works, a work of fiction, a set of poems, etc.). If you choose this option, it is important to discuss your plan early. You are encouraged to work with another student.

H. Midterm.  There will be one midterm test in which I will ask you to address a number of questions about the readings and discussions from the first half of the semester. See Moodle for dates. There won’t be a final exam.

**Workload**

For this 1-credit course (= 157.5 hour equivalent), you should expect to spend **an average of 9 hours** per week studying and completing assignments.

**Accommodations**

If you have approval for academic accommodations, please notify me—by email or during office hours—so that we can discuss implementation.

**Grading Policy**

Attendance/Active Participation 25%

Leading Discussion 10%

Moodle Posts/Short Essays 25%

Midterm 20%

Final Project 20%

**Grading Scale**

98-100 A+

93-97 A

90-92 A-

88-89 B+

83-87 B

80-82 B-

78-79 C+

73-78 C

70-72 C-

68-69 D+

63-67 D

60-62 D-

Below 60 F

**Academic House Rule**s

Please be a responsible academic citizen, and by this we mean (at the risk of stating the obvious or sounding pedantic):

a) Since this course is very student-oriented, attendance is crucial and imperative. If you think you can’t make it to class, first do some serious soul searching to see if your excuse is legitimate. If so, let us know in advance so that we can work out an alternative for you. If you're absent more than two class periods without a compelling reason, 3% will be taken off your final grade for every additional class missed.

b) If work starts at 8 a.m., you make sure that you are there. Our class starts at 11:30AM. Be there on time. Coming in late is very disruptive and disrespectful both of your peers and your instructor. If you are more than 10 minutes late without a legitimate reason, you'll be considered absent.

c) Plagiarism is the biggest sin in academe (and this is no overstatement). You are encouraged to use other people’s ideas to support your own, but make sure that your reader can differentiate between your thoughts and someone else’s. Consult the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers by Joseph Gibaldi with questions about the proper format of your paper. Please familiarize yourselves with Trinity’s Academic Dishonesty procedures, which you will find in the Student Handbook.

**Detailed Schedule: See Moodle**

https://moodle.trincoll.edu/course/view.php?id=7591