The New Border*

This syllabus is dedicated to the refugee children who have died in U.S. custody since September 2018:

Darlyn Cristabel Cordova-Valle (10 years old)
Jakelin Caal Maquín (7 years old)
Felipe Gómez Alonzo (8 years old)
Juan de León Gutiérrez (16 years old)
Wilmer Josué Ramírez Vásquez (2 years old)
Carlos Gregorio Hernandez Vasquez (16 years old)

This syllabus is also dedicated to Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his daughter, Valeria Martínez Ramírez (1 year old) and to all those rendered nameless, stateless, and documentless in the empire of borders. Y a todos que siguen la lucha—

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:00 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.
Tucker Hall 220
Professor Scott Challener (sdchallener@wm.edu)
Office: Tucker Hall 033; College Apartments 217
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
and by appointment
Migra Watch Hotline: 1-844-363-1423
Course Twitter account: @border_new

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of the literature of the U.S.-Mexico border from the 1980s to the present. We begin with Gloria Anzaldúa’s foundational texts, Borderlands / La Frontera, and her landmark feminist anthology, co-edited with Cherrie Moraga, This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color. We then consider the legacies and afterlives of this body of work in more recent literature, from Roberto Bolaño’s obsession with femicide and the borderlands to Carmen Boullosa’s Texas: The Great Theft, Yuri Herrera’s Signs Preceding the End of the World, and Valeria Luiselli’s The Last Children Archive. We’ll also spend significant time with contemporary poets, including Daniel Borzutzky, Juan Felipe Herrera, Valérie Martinez, Wendy Trevino, and Javier Zamora. How does this literature understand the changing dynamics of what scholar John Alba Cutler calls “the new border,” a zone defined by an increasingly punitive regime of militarization, criminalization, mass detention and mass deportation? How does this literature disclose the structures of relation that underlie the mediation and spectacularization of the border? How does it respond to the ideologies of white supremacy and anti-Mexican and anti-Latino racism? More basically, what theories and methods of reading does the literature of the new border demand? Where does it direct our attention? While our main focus will be on how the literature of the new border asks us to think about the U.S.-Mexico border, we will conclude by examining how this literature has changed as the border zone has expanded into Central and South America—

* Special thanks to Michael Dowdy for his help in the construction of this syllabus.
and beyond. With this final turn, we will extend our examination to recent work that explores the nature of the relationship between the United States and the Americas.

**REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS**

Valerie Martínez, *Each and Her* (Arizona UP, 2010).

Additional assigned texts will be provided on the course website.

**COURSE WEBSITE**

Our class has a Blackboard site that contains the syllabus, assignments, and other course-related materials. You can log in to our Blackboard site at blackboard.wm.edu.

**REQUIREMENTS**

10% PARTICIPATION IN CLASS

Regular attendance and active, thoughtful participation in class are required. Classes will be a mix of lecture, small-group and large-group discussion. Discussion requires every student to take the intellectual risk of offering observations, ideas, and arguments in class in response to one another and to the instructor. You aren’t supposed to know all the answers in advance, but you are required to come to class prepared to join in a communal effort to figure things out. If you are apprehensive about speaking in class, please see me during office hours at the start of the semester.

I discourage the use of laptops, smartphones, tablets, or smartwatches in class. Their power to distract from discussion often outweighs their potential uses.

If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes (e.g. religious observances, varsity athletics), please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. If you fall ill or miss class for a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible; you can make up for an excused absence. If you miss three classes without excuse, the maximum participation mark you can earn is a B; if you miss four, C. Missing more than four meetings without an excuse will normally result in a failing grade for the course.

Lateness, lack of preparation, and disruptive behavior will affect the participation grade. Students who arrive late to class more than three times will receive one absence. Students who arrive later than 15 minutes past the start time will be counted as absent for that class period.
15% ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

An annotated bibliography of 8 independently researched sources that help you conceptualize the problem, stakes, and commitments of your research paper.

15% PROSPECTUS

A proposal (2-3 pp.) for the research paper.

30% RESEARCH PAPER

A researched interpretive argument (8-12 pp. min.) about a conceptual problem raised by the literature of the new border.

30% DIGITAL REMEDIATION OF RESEARCH PAPER

A “public-facing” digital remediation of the research paper for a general audience.

GRADING

William & Mary uses a four-point grading system. The general standards for grades are as follows:

A range: Outstanding work, demonstrating thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

B range: Good work, demonstrating serious engagement with all aspects of the course but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C range: Satisfactory work, meeting requirements but indicating significant problems mastering the course materials and skills.

D range: Poor or minimally passing work, meeting the basic course requirements, but frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F: Failure due to unmet course requirements or consistently unsatisfactory work.

The final grade is subject to my discretion. Unsatisfactory work in all areas of the course will result in an F even if the numerical score corresponds to a passing grade. It is not possible to pass the course without turning in both papers and completing both the midterm and the final.

Unless you make other arrangements with me in advance, graded assignments will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade for each class day they are late. If you are habitually late with your assignments, you will be unable to participate fully in the class.

RECORDING OF CLASS LECTURES & DISCUSSIONS

Students may not record class lectures and discussions without permission. Permission will be granted on a case-by-case basis.
WRITING RESOURCES CENTER

The Writing Resources Center (Swem Library, 1st floor) offers one-on-one consultations for students to discuss their work in any discipline with well-trained writing consultants. Consultants will work with you at any stage in your writing process. They will work with you to help you do your own best work, so you should expect to be actively involved in your session. The WRC is a resource for all William & Mary students. Whether you consider yourself to be a strong writer or a weak one, you can benefit from meeting with a writing consultant.

The hours for the current semester are posted on the website. I encourage you to reserve an appointment in advance. You may schedule a session online or in person. In addition to consultations at the WRC, Swem Library offers a number of other resources for students, including workshops, guidance on research, and physical spaces ideal for an array of projects, from individual projects to group work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is at the heart of the university, and we all are responsible to each other and to our community for upholding the ideals of honor and integrity. William & Mary has had an Honor Code since at least 1779. Your full participation and observance of the Honor Code is expected. To present something as your own original writing or thinking when it is not is plagiarism. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are serious violations of trust. Academic and intellectual dishonesty, including plagiarism, will have severe consequences, in accordance with the student-led honor system. For details about your responsibilities as a student, please see the Student Handbook.

STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING

You are welcome in this course regardless of status, documentation, gender, race, class, ethnicity, or ability. This classroom is a safe space. But it is not a hermetically sealed environment. Rather, it is a microcosm of our larger community. To make the classroom an equitable space you have to follow a few basic guidelines. You are expected to be respectful in your speech and actions. Intentions matter; effects do too. Practice self-reflexivity. Consider the positions you inhabit and the positions you take. Recognize the impact you have on others. Active participation does not necessarily mean that you talk; it means that you listen. It means that you recognize both the spaces you occupy and move through and the structures that organize them. Be aware of how much airtime you take up. Prioritize historically marginalized voices whenever possible. Practice critical compassion. Whether you agree or disagree, acknowledge and respond in turn. Speak from your own experiences. Use “I” statements whenever possible. Try to learn the names of your peers. And finally, accept and sit with your feelings, whether “bad” or “good” or otherwise. Embrace and explore the full range of intellectual and affective possibilities at hand—including discomfort, confusion, anxiety, insecurity, pleasure, delight, gladness, happiness, joy, and all the mixtures thereof, for which we may not have a language.

“The curriculum is us,” Eric Hayot affirms. When we study texts, we read them; when we read them, we interact with them. We press on them; they press back. We bring to them norms we’ve learned through habit, practice, and repeated exposure. Given this, we will wrestle with parallel truths: that norms are constitutive of literary form; that they differ among different publics; and that they change over time—that they’re fluid, neither permanent nor inevitable.
CHOOSEN NAME & GENDER PRONOUNS

This course aims to be an inclusive learning community that supports students of all gender expressions and identities. Please let me know if you would like to be addressed by a different name or set of pronouns than those listed in the official class roster. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I assume that all of us learn in different ways. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this course, please talk to me as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for accommodations that will satisfy both your learning needs and the requirements of the course. Whether or not you have a documented disability, William & Mary provides many support services that are available to all students.

Student Accessibility Services is the office responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability that interferes with your learning (whether visible or invisible, physical or mental), you are encouraged to register with this office. Student Accessibility Services will work with you to determine appropriate accommodations for your courses, such as additional time on tests, staggered homework assignments, or note-taking assistance. This office will give you a letter outlining the accommodations you need that you can share with your teachers; specific information about your disability will remain private. If you have any questions about accommodation, or what constitutes a disability, I invite you to speak with me or to Student Accessibility Services.

UNDOCU TRIBE RESOURCES (with thanks to Allen Lopez and the members of UndocuTribe)

ORGANIZATIONS TO GET INVOLVED WITH:

Virginia Coalition of Latino Organizations (VACOLAO)
- Serves as a working alliance among organizations in Virginia that advocates for Latino communities.

National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
- Grassroots organization founded in 1994 by local community centers to project a progressive voice and promote the full participation of Korean and Asian Americans within the larger society.

The Virginia Latina Advocacy Network (VALAN)
- Operates as an extension of NLIRH, serving as the voice and advocacy presence in Virginia. The VA LAN works with activists throughout Virginia to organize our communities around issues-based campaigns that impact our families and our lives.

ICE out of RVA
- Grassroots organization with the focus of making RVA a safer community for immigrant families in fear of ICE; uplifts the work of activists, particularly those who are undocumented/QTPOC.
Sin Barreras (Charlottesville)
- Non-profit that focuses on outreach to the immigrant (primarily Hispanic) community, connecting individuals to services such as workshops in Health, Immigration, Legal affairs, Banking, Education, and others. They also provide individual services, such as low-cost legal counseling and work one on one in daily obstacles immigrants face.

United We Dream
- The largest immigrant youth-led community in the country.

RESOURCES FOR UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS:

Dream Project and Mentoring Program
- Non-profit organization in Arlington that encourages and supports promising immigrant youth in their pursuit of higher education through mentoring, scholarships, advocacy, and community outreach.

Just Neighbors
- Provides immigration legal services to low-income immigrants and refugees of all faiths and nationalities, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Legal Aid Justice Center
- The Legal Aid Justice Center is committed to providing a full range of services to clients, including services our federal and state governments choose not to fund. Free Informational sessions at Mason for current students are currently under development.

Ayuda
- Serving immigrants in the Washington, DC, metropolitan region. Has 36 full-time, bilingual attorneys and social workers/case managers providing legal, social, and language access services

Capital Immigrant’s Rights Coalition (CAIR)
- Only legal service provider providing legal representation to detained Immigrants in facilities in DC, MD, and VA.

Tabirih Justice Center
- National non-profit committed to individuals fleeing violence and to serving as many immigrant women and girls as possible.

Edu-futuro
- Empowers immigrant and underserved youth and families through mentorship, education, leadership development and parent engagement.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS
- Financial Aid and Undocumented Students (U.S. Department of Education)
- Immigrants Rising
- UndocuScholars

Social media to follow:
@Undocumedia
A NOTE ON COURSE CONTENT

The texts in this course often depict and respond to violence (including sexual- and gender-based violence; rape; anti-immigrant, anti-Latino and anti-Mexican violence; torture; murder; and dismemberment), trauma, repression, and persecution. It is particularly important, when dealing with this material, that class discussions remain respectful. If you have any concerns, please talk to me.

SOME RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF THE LITERATURE OF THE NEW BORDER

- Undocupoets (Sibling Rivalry Press Foundation)
- “Undocumented Writers” special issue, ed. Christopher Soto, Southern Humanities Review
- Border and Migration Studies Online Database (William & Mary Libraries)
- Antena, “A language and justice collaborative founded in 2010 by Jen Hofer and John Pluecker”

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

I. HISTORY AND THEORY OF THE BORDER FROM THE 80s TO THE PRESENT

Week 1

Wednesday, January 22: Introductions, Syllabus


First day materials
Watch: John Begley, “Best of Luck with the Wall” (The Intercept, October 26, 2017).
Listen: Kimiko Hahn, “After Being Asked If I Write the ‘Occasional Poem’” (The New Yorker, Sep 16, 2019)
Watch: Juan Felipe Herrera, “187 Reasons Mexicanos Can’t Cross the Border.”

Recommended: John Alba Cutler, “The New Border” (College Literature, 2017).
Week 2

Monday, January 27


Recommended: “Children Passing in the Streets: The Roots of Our Radicalism,” the brief introductions to each subsequent section, and the appendix.

Wednesday, January 29


Week 3

Monday, February 3  Research Paper Assigned

Pat Mora, Borders, 1-51.
Javier Zamora, Unaccompanied, 3-34.

Wednesday, February 5  Swem Library Instructional Session #1

Pat Mora, Borders, complete.
Javier Zamora, Unaccompanied, complete.

Week 4


Wednesday, February 12.


Week 5

Monday, February 17.  Draft of Prospectus (1-2 pages) due.

Wednesday, February 19.


Week 6

Monday, February 24. Draft of Annotated Bibliography (8 sources min.) due.


Wednesday, February 26. Swem Library Instructional Session #2

II. **FEMICIDE & THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF GORE CAPITALISM**

Week 7

Monday, March 2. Final Prospectus (1-3 pages) and Annotated Bibliography (8 sources min.) due.

Valerie Martínez, *Each and Her*, 1-35.
Sayak Valencia, *Gore Capitalism*, “Introduction” (19-32) and “The Breakdown of the State as a Political Formation” (33-68); pages 69-87; “Conclusions” (281-295); *El Mero inicio* [“The Very Beginning”] (297-300). (course website)


Wednesday, March 4.

In class exercise: Introductory paragraph(s), motivating problems, focusing concepts, tentative title of Research Paper due.

Valerie Martínez, *Each and Her*, complete.


In class materials: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) website

Week 8 Spring Recess
Week 9

Monday, March 16.

Sara Uribe, “La traducción como forma de ayudar a levantar el cadaver” [Translation as a Way to Join to Take Up the Body, trans. John Pluecker], 188-205.

Wednesday, March 18.

A Manifesto for Discomfortable Writing, Antena collective (founded by Jen Hofer and John Pluecker in 2010).

Recommended:

Week 10


Roberto Bolaño, “The Part about the Crimes,” 353-455. (course website)
Sergio González Rodríguez, Femicide Machine, 7-97. (course website)


In class exercise: reverse outline.
Roberto Bolaño, “The Part about the Crimes,” 536-537; 632-633. (course website)

III. Cruel Fictions, Cruel Futures: Literature from the “Empire of Borders”

Week 11


In class exercise: peer abstracts.
Yuri Herrera, Signs Preceding the End of the World, 11-62.
Wednesday, March 25.

Aaron Bady, “*Border Characters*,” an interview with Yuri Herrera.

Week 12


Wednesday, April 1.


Friday, April 3. Undergraduate Research Symposium, Integrated Science Center, 2-4:30 p.m. Final Research Paper due by midnight to Blackboard.

Week 13

Monday, April 6.

Wendy Trevino, *Cruel Fiction*, complete.

Wednesday, April 8. Visit to the Reeder Media Center.

Todd Miller, *Empire of Borders* 1-53. (course website)

Week 14

Monday, April 12 Draft outline/storyboard for Digital Remediation due.


Wednesday, April 14.


Week 15

Monday, April 19.

Wednesday, April 21.


Week 16

Monday, April 27. Course evaluations.

Valeria Luiselli, *The Lost Children Archive*, complete.

Wednesday, April 29. Last class.

Carmen Giménez Smith, *Sampler* from *Cruel Futures* (City Lights, 2018).

**In class materials**


**Recommended:**
