The New Border


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

In Memory of Darlyn Cristabel Cordova-Valle (10 years old)
In Memory of Jakelin Caal Maquín (7 years old)
In Memory of Felipe Gomez Alonzo (8 years old)
In Memory of Juan de León Gutiérrez (16 years old)
In Memory of Wilmer Josué Ramírez Vásquez (2 years old)
In Memory of Carlos Gregorio Hernandez Vasquez (16 years old)
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This syllabus is also dedicated to Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his daughter, Valeria Martinez Ramirez (1 year old) and to all those rendered numberless, nameless, stateless, and documentless in the empire of borders. Y a todxs que siguen la lucha—
Live synchronous Zoom sessions Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 11:00 a.m. - 11:50 a.m. EDT

Professor Scott Challener (sdchallener@wm.edu)
In Person Office Hours Outdoors (weather permitting), TBD
Virtual Office Hours Mondays & Wednesdays, via Zoom, 12:30-2:30 p.m. EDT (https://calendly.com/sdchallener/30-minute-conference-virtual-office-hours)
Course Twitter handle: @border_new

LAND AND SLAVERY ACKNOWLEDGMENT
As the author of this syllabus and as a faculty member at William & Mary, I acknowledge the Indigenous peoples who are the original inhabitants of the lands our campus is on today – the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway), Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Mattaponi, Monacan, Nansemond, Nottoway, Pamunkey, Patawomeck, Upper Mattaponi, and Rappahannock tribes – and share my regard for tribal members past and present.

I also underscore that William & Mary acknowledges that it “owned and exploited slave labor from its founding to the Civil War; and that it had failed to take a stand against segregation during the Jim Crow Era.”

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 Cherríe 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, including Moraga’s “Mexican Medea,” The Hungry Woman, and Sara Uribe’s Antígona González, as well as several novels--Carmen Boullosa’s Texas: The Great Theft, Yuri Herrera’s Signs Preceding the End of the World, and Valeria Luiselli’s The Lost Children Archive. We’ll also spend significant time with contemporary poets, including Daniel Borzutzky, Juan Felipe Herrera, Valerie Martínez, 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 prejudice? 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—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** (All of the texts below, with the exception of Valerie Martínez’s *Each and Her*, are available digitally from Swem. In some instances, Swem has purchased three (3) licenses for electronic versions; in others, .pdfs are available. You may purchase print editions through W&M’s [Official Bookstore](https://www.wm.edu/bookstore) or online. Please consider supporting local independent bookstores by using Bookshop.)

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

As a COLL300 course, we will be watching two lectures:
micha cárdenas, “*We Want More than Just to Live*” and Daniel Hernandez-Salazar, “*Guatemala: History in 25 Images*.”

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**

25% PARTICIPATION
As with an in-person, on-ground class, regular attendance and active, thoughtful participation are required. You are expected to present at every virtual class meeting. Our virtual classroom will be a mix of pre-recorded and real-time lectures, small-group and large-group discussions, and asynchronous writing. 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 or have a special situation that will affect your participation, please see me during office hours at the start of the term. If you fall ill or miss class for a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible. Lateness, lack of preparation, and disruptive behavior will affect the participation grade.

GROUPME
Our course has a [GroupMe](#). Click on the link to join. Our GroupMe will function as an informal space for “uncritical” responses that zero in what is typically left out of traditional “critical” interpretation. See the [assignment sheet](#) for details on this difference. Participation in our GroupMe will not be graded; however, regular contributions can increase your overall participation grade.

10% CRITICAL READING BLOG POSTS (approx. 250 words each)
Weekly analytical close reading responses that engage key ideas and skills from the class. Each week, two students will reframe posts as questions for further inquiry and discussion. See the [assignment sheet](#) for details. Graded complete/incomplete.

20% PAPER 1
An interpretive essay (4-5 pp.) making an argument about one text. Choice of topics distributed in advance. You will not have an opportunity to revise this paper. See the [assignment sheet](#) for details.

25% PAPER 2
An interpretive essay (5-7 pp.) making an argument about one text, making appropriate use of secondary sources. Choice of topics distributed in advance. You will not have an opportunity to revise this paper. See the [assignment sheet](#) for details.

20% FINAL PUBLIC-FACING PROJECT
This project may be print or digital. In the past, students have made both digital and handmade zines (see the “Zine Assignment Sheet” for more details), podcasts, animated videos, interactive lesson plans, and multimedia essays; they have also written more traditional “public-facing” articles (e.g. op-ed) for a general audience in the digital public sphere. The project should engage with some aspect—troubling, special, distinctive, dense, problematic, provocative—of the literature of the period and consider, in turn, what it means to study this literature today. This project may grow out of the concerns of your papers or blog posts, or it may engage with a different problem or question. The final project is due on the day of our final exam period. See the [assignment sheet](#) for details.

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.

**CONTRACT GRADING**

In this course we will use an evaluation method known as contract grading. Please read the Grading Contract and sign it. Upload signed contracts via the “Assignments” section of our course website. If you breach the contract, the final grade is subject to my discretion. If you do not complete the major assignments, it is not possible to pass the course.

**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 & JUSTICE
You are welcome 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 begin 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. Justify your perspective with evidence; pose questions from your experience. 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, joy, and all the mixtures thereof, for which we may not have a language. Read my latest “Diversity Statement” here.

CHosen 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.

William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student...
Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation.

**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.

**WMFIRE** (formerly UNDOCUTRIBE) **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.

Tahirih 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.

National Bail Fund Network
The National Bail Fund Network is made up of over eighty community bail and bond funds across the country.

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

Social media to follow:
@Undocumedia
@UndocuBlack
@FWDus
@NILC_org
@UnitedWeDream
@TPSAlliance

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 share them with 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”
- The Fronteras Desk, a project of KJZZ
- NACLA, the North American Congress on Latin America
- Letras Latinas Blog, the blog of the literary initiative of the Institute for Latino Studies (U Notre Dame)
- El Faro, the first online Spanish language newspaper in Latin America (El Salvador)

SCHEDULE (subject to change)

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

Week 1
Wednesday, January 27: Introductions, Syllabus

**Read:**

**In class:**
Watch: John Begley, “Best of Luck with the Wall” (The Intercept, Oct 26, 2017).

**Recommended:**
John Alba Cutler, “The New Border” (College Literature, vol. 44, no. 4 Fall 2017).

Friday, January 29   Chronology.

**Read:**
Cristina Henríquez, “Everything Is Far From Here” (The New Yorker, 17 Jul 2017) (PDF available via course website; listen [here](#)).

**Recommended:**

Sunday, January 31. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.

Week 2

Monday, February 1

**Read:**

**Recommended:**
Wednesday, February 3

Read:
“The Combahee River Collective Statement” (1977), including Adolph Reed, Jr.’s comments on “The limits of anti-racism” (scroll to the end).

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

Friday, February 5

Read:
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera*, first two chapters, “To live in the Borderlands means you.”

Sunday, February 7. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.

Week 3

Monday, February 8.

Read:
Gloria Anzaldúa, “Speaking in Tongues,” “Speaking Across the Divide,” “I Want to Be Shocked Shitless,” “When I Write I Hover,” “Enemy of the State,” “Postmodern Llorona.”

Wednesday, February 10.

Read:

Friday, February 12. No classes.

Sunday, February 14. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.
Week 4

Monday, February 15. Paper 1 assigned.  

Read:  
Cherrie Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*.  

Tuesday, February 16.  

6:00 PM CDT; 7:00 PM EDT. Optional Event: “Translation and Language Justice in Border Zones” with JD Pluecker and Jen Hofer (Antena Aire collective), and Don Mee Choi, moderated by Rachel Galvin. Part of the Exploratory Translation seminar team taught by Jennifer Scappettone and Haun Saussy. Register [here](#).  

Wednesday, February 17.  

Read:  
Cherrie Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*.  

Friday, February 19.  

Read:  
Cherrie Moraga, *The Hungry Woman*, complete.  

→ COLL300 Noticing party, micha cárdenas, “We Want More than Just to Live.”  

Sunday, February 21. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.  

II. LITERATURE AGAINST FEMICIDE  

Week 5

Monday, February 22. Paper 1 working claims due.  

Read:  
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, February 24.

Read:

Friday, February 26.

Read:


Sunday, February 28. No blog posts due this week.

Week 6

Monday, March 1. Paper 1 draft due.

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


Recommended:

Wednesday, March 3.

Read:

Recommended:
Sergio González Rodríguez, *Femicide Machine*, 7-97. (course website)
Thursday, March 4. No classes.

Friday, March 5.

Read:
Valerie Martínez, *Each and Her*, 1-36.

Sunday, March 7. No blog posts due this week.

Week 7

Monday, March 8. Paper 1 due.

Read:
Valerie Martínez, *Each and Her*, complete.

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

Wednesday, March 10.

Read:

Friday, March 12.

Read:

Sunday, March 14. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.

Week 8

Monday, March 15.

Read:
Aaron Bady, “Border Characters,” an interview with Yuri Herrera.
Wednesday, March 17. No classes.

Friday, March 19.

Read:
Recommended:
Listen to “The Out Crowd” (*This American Life*, November 15, 2019).


Week 9

Monday, March 22.

Read:

Wednesday, March 24.

Read:

Friday, March 26.

Read:

Sunday, March 28. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.

Week 10

Monday, March 29.

Read:
Carmen Boullosa, *Texas: The Great Theft*, 212-244.

Wednesday, March 31.
Read:

Friday, April 2

Read:

Recommended:
Pat Mora, *Borders*, selections.

Sunday, April 4. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.

Week 11

Monday, April 5.

Read:
José Olivarez, “Mexican-American Disambiguation” (notacult.media, Feb 9, 2019); selections from *Citizen Illegal*.

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

Recommended:

Tuesday, April 6.

Wednesday, April 7.

Friday, April 9.

Read:
Week 12

Monday, April 12. Paper 2 assigned.

Read:

Wednesday, April 14.

Read:
Wendy Trevino, *Cruel Fiction*, complete.
“Mexican Is Not a Race,” an interview with Wendy Trevino.

Friday, April 16.

Read:

Recommended:
Listen: Alt.Latino interviews Salvadoran Journalist Óscar Martínez.
Q&A with Óscar Martínez, Author of *The Beast* (Texas Observer).
Watch: Speech, Duke Humanities Institute, 2014 Human Rights Award.


Sunday, April 18. Blog posts due by midnight EDT.

Week 13

Monday, April 19. Paper 2 working claims due.

Read:

Wednesday, April 21.

Read:

Friday, April 23.

Read:

→ noticing party, *The Infiltrators* (2020, dir. Alex Rivera)

Sunday, April 25. No blog posts due this week.

Week 14

Monday, April 26. No classes.

Tuesday, April 27. Paper 2 draft due.

Wednesday, April 28.

Read:

Friday, April 30.

Read:

Sunday, May 2. No blog posts due this week.

Week 15


Read:

Wednesday, May 5. Course evaluations.

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

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

Friday, May 7. Last class.

**In class materials**
Watch: Daniel Borzutzky, “*The Performance of Becoming Human*” (U Chicago, 29 Jan 2015).

**Recommended:**
Carmen Giménez Smith, “*Make America Mongrel Again*,” *Poetry Foundation* Apr 9 2018.
Daniel Borzutzky “*Are We Latino: Memories of My Overdevelopment*,” *Entropy* Sept 29 2014.

Tuesday, May 18. **Final Projects** are due by 12 p.m. EDT to Blackboard.

[*] Special thanks to Michael Dowdy for his help in the construction of this syllabus.