

PROSPECTUS

Special Topics in Religion and Culture:
U.S. Borderlands: Context and Praxis
RECU 70970/80970/90970
3 hours

Instructors: Dr. Francisco Lozada, Jr.
Dr. Irasema Coronado, University of Texas, El Paso

Prerequisites: Permission of Instructors

Description of Course: The course studies the life and society in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The “borderland” denotes an area distant from the core of the nation; it is a zone of transition of ideas, goods, and peoples (Martínez, O. J. *Border People*). It is a place where people and institutions are shaped by economic, political, and social forces that are reflected in the lives of communities in the “greater” borderlands (e.g., Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California) and, most recently, in many rural and urban municipalities.

This semester the course travels to El Paso, Texas to study the ethical issues around migration/immigration and its effects on the people and communities. Along with studying the historical, socio-economic, and political issues that impact the daily life in this borderland region, students will also study how community and religious leaders have responded to the challenges of migration/immigration. The aim is for students to discover new ways to make a contribution toward a just and humane immigration policy and practice. N.B. The travel seminar fulfills 3 credits toward the second half of the contextualization requirement for MDiv students or 3 credits toward the Cultural/Global Context requirement for MTS and MATM students. The course can be used as an elective. **Permission of the Instructors needed.**

Highlights of the trip may include:

- a tour of the border by Border Patrol
- a visit to a processing center
- a visit to the International Boundary and Water Commission
- discussions with border studies scholars and community activists
- a visit to a colonia
- a visit with religious leaders and communities

Class Procedures: Travel Seminar (discussions, visits)

Information Session: Attend a 60-minute info session (TBD) on how to study in a travel seminar, travel, housing, food, financing, clothing, academics and more. Below are some pre-departure info.

- Travel Dates: Arrival: the afternoon (around 3pm) of Saturday, January 5th, and departure is Thursday, January 10th (around 3pm). ***If you choose to arrive prior**

to January 5th or depart after January 10, you will be responsible for your own ground transportation, lodging and food.

- Background Check: To participate in the El Paso tour to the border fence (“wall”) the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) vets all students prior to the trip. Personal information will be requested by DHS.
- Health: Students must provide proof of health insurance. Also, consult your physician about your health in light of your travel plans. While strenuous walking is not a regular part of the travel seminar, there may several occasions when a long walk is necessary to reach a certain location. Frequent movement in and out of a transport van will also be part of travel seminar. Please consult Francisco Lozada (f.lozada@tcu.edu) if you anticipate limitations.
- Food: Unlike many metropolitan cities, gluten-free foods might be limited in El Paso, TX. Also, many of the foods are Mexican/Southwestern in flavor. Please take this into consideration before agreeing to participate.

Requirements:

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1. Attendance and informed participation during the travel seminar
2. Journal
3. Final theological reflection paper (10-12 pages)

RECU 80970

1. Attendance and informed participation during the travel seminar
2. Journal
3. Final interpretative paper (12-14 pages)

RECU 90970

1. Attendance and informed participation during the travel seminar
2. Journal
3. Scholarly research paper (20-22 pages)

Texts:

1. Martínez, O. J. *Border People: Life and Society in the US-Mexico Borderlands* (Arizona: University of Arizona, 1984). ISBN 978-0816514144. \$29.99.
2. Jones, Reece. *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move* (London: Verso, 2017). ISBN 978-1-78478-474-4. \$16.95.
3. Myers, C, and Colwell, *Our God is Undocumented: Biblical Faith and Immigrant Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012). ISBN 978-1-57075-956-7 \$24.00.

Grading Procedures:

Class Participation: 30%

Journal: 40%

Paper: 30%