

Migration & Borders in a Globalized World LACB 3005 (3 Credits)

Mexico: Migration, Borders, and Transnational Communities

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

This course focuses on the various ways in which diverse individuals and communities are impacted by changes in the global economy and high levels of international undocumented migration. Students will examine historical and current trends in migration patterns and consider the different ways economic change and migration affect various sectors of society, such as youth, women, LGBTQ people, indigenous communities, Central Americans, urbanites, and rural farmers. As a result, students will be able to construct a nuanced understanding of migration and how people are responding to the consequences and opportunities.

The ongoing development of formalized, enforced borders will also be a major focus of this course. Students will visit Mexico's northern and southern borders and learn about state efforts to restrict human mobility across international boundaries while learning about how these efforts can generate greater levels of vulnerability for migrants, including serious human rights abuses. Other excursions and site visits in Oaxaca will provide various opportunities for students to hear directly from those people and communities deeply affected by undocumented migration to the United States. This course, and program, focuses on *undocumented* migration due to the immense human impact, political and social tension, and student interest.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- *Compare and contrast* the distinct eras of Mexican migration to the United States;
- *Analyze* how changes in US immigration and border policy have shaped and reshaped migration from Central America and Mexico to the United States;
- *Describe* how different populations and demographics are affected by migration;
- *Describe* how border enforcement strategies aimed at curbing unauthorized immigration to the US have changed in recent years and what consequences have resulted from these efforts;
- *Identify and Explain* policy changes that could address the causes of consequences of undocumented migration;

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English and Spanish, with readings, lectures, and discussions happening in either or both languages depending on the context.

Instructional Methods

SIT's teaching and learning philosophy is grounded in the experiential learning theory developed by Kolb (1984; 2015) and informed by various scholars, such as Dewey, Piaget, Lewin, among others. Experiential learning theory recognizes that learning is an active process that is not confined to the formal curriculum; "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 2015, p. 49). Learning involves both content and process. Learning is holistic and happens through various life experiences upon which students draw to generate new ways of knowing and being. Learning involves a community and is a lifelong endeavor. Learning is transformational. The suggested four step-cycle of a *concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation* embedded in the experiential learning model is not linear and might not always happen in that specific order, as any learning is highly context dependent. These stages of taking part in a shared experience; reflecting on that experience by describing and interpreting it; challenging their own assumptions and beliefs to generate new knowledge; and ultimately applying new knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes in a variety of situations and contexts are important for students to engage in to become empowered lifelong learners.

Course Schedule

**Please be aware that topics and excursions may vary to take advantage of any emerging events, to accommodate changes in our lecturers' availability, and to respect any changes that would affect student safety. Students will be notified if this occurs.*

Module I: Mexico's Northern Border

Module I will take place largely during the launch based out of Tucson, Arizona prior to the group's travel to Oaxaca. In this module, students will examine current trends in border crossing and the rapidly increasing border enforcement strategies, including the growing use of detention and deportation as deterrence. Students will consider the nature of restricted borders in a globalized world as they study how migrants arrive to the border, what they experience in their efforts to cross, and how current immigration policies are changing daily life in the US for unauthorized immigrants.

Nevins, J., & Aizeki, M. (2008). *Dying to live: a story of U.S. Immigration in an Age of Global Apartheid*. San Francisco: Open Media/City Lights Books.

Fernandes, D. (2007). *Targeted: Homeland Security and the Business of Immigration*. New York: Seven Stories.

- Chapter 1: "The Border Crackdown"

Roug, L. (2017, October 26) "'Our Backyard Has Become A Graveyard': Saving Lives On The U.S.-Mexico Border". Retrieved from https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/saving-lives-us-mexico-border_us_59f097b2e4b0cf6334a04137?ncid=inblnkushpmg00000009.

Conlon, D., & Hiemstra, N. (2017). *Intimate Economies of Immigration Detention: Critical Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

- Chapter 12: "Intimate encounters with immigrant criminalization in Arizona", Lowen, M.

The following module occurs during the first four weeks of program time in Oaxaca.

Module II: Migration to the United States: The Bigger Picture

This module will include several class meetings focused on Mexican migration to the United States since the early Twentieth Century with a specific focus on Oaxaca. Students will learn how international economics, US westward expansion, labor shortages, war, and changes in immigration policy created very different historical eras in Mexican migration to the United States. Students will use this knowledge to consider the nature of the current era of migration from Mexico.

Massey, D. S., Durand, J., & Malone, N. J. (2003). *Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Era of Economic Integration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Stephen, L. (2007). *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Chapter 2: "Transborder Communities in Political and Historical Context: Views from Oaxaca"

Cornelius, W. A., Fitzgerald, D., Hernandez Diaz, J., & Borger, S. (Eds.). (2009). *Migration from the Mexican Mixteca: A Transnational Community in Oaxaca and California*. San Diego, CA: Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California.

- Chapter 8: "The Economics of Migration: Agriculture, Remittances, and Investment", Erickson, E., Menéndez T., & Nichols, P.

Module III: Crossing Mexico: The Central American's Journey to the US Border

Most of this module takes place during an extended excursion to Mexico's southern border to the state of Chiapas. This module focuses on the causes of undocumented migration from Central America and the very different experiences Central Americans face in their attempts to cross Mexico and enter into the United States without authorization. Students will consider the economic, environmental, and political roots influencing people's decisions to leave home. In this module, students will learn about efforts to formalize Mexico's southern border and restrict Central American migration through the country and how this has reshaped the landscape for undocumented migrants.

Chomsky, A. (2014). *Undocumented how immigration became illegal* (pp. 64-70). Boston: Beacon Press.

- Selected Section: "Guatemalan Mayans: A History of Migration"

Documentary: "Voice of a Mountain": <http://voiceofamountain.com/>

Miller, T. (2017). *Storming the wall: Climate change, migration, and homeland security* (pp. 71-105). San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.

- Chapter 3: "The 21st Century Border"

Linthicum, K. (2017, October 27). The U.S. and Mexico want to slow migration from Central America. Will mass deportations help? Retrieved October 31, 2017, from <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-mexico-us-security-20171026-story.html>

Vogt, W. A. (2013). Crossing Mexico: Structural violence and the commodification of undocumented Central American migrants. *American Ethnologist*, 40(4), 764-780.

The following modules occur during the final three weeks of program time in Oaxaca.

Module IV: Migration, Gender, and Families

While more women participate in international migration, the largely male emigration patterns historically have also opened spaces for redefining gender relations in many Mexican communities. This module focuses on how gender and family culture has shifted in some places as a result of women taking on new leadership roles in Mexico and the United States.

Segura, D. A. & Zavella, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: A Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

- Chapter 14: “Transborder Families and Gendered Trajectories of Migration and Work”, Ojeda de la Peña, N.

Segura, D. A. & Zavella, P. (Eds.). (2007). *Women and Migration in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: A Reader*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (2007).

- Chapter 15: “Women, Migration, and Household Survival Strategies: Mixtec Women in Tijuana”, Velasco Ortiz, L.

Stephen, L. (2007). *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Chapter 6: “Women’s Transborder Lives: Gender Relations in Work and Families”

Module V: Viable Futures – The Right to Stay and the Freedom to Move

In the concluding module of the course, students will examine possibilities for change in which people have viable futures in their home communities and greater freedom of movement across international boundaries. Ethical, philosophical, and practical questions will be at the center of this module.

Bacon, D. (2013). *The right to stay home: how US policy drives Mexican migration* (Bacon, D. author). Boston: Beacon Press.

- Chapter 7: “The Right to Not Migrate and Radical Reform”

Nevins, J. (2008, December 10). In Age of Migration, Human Rights Declaration Falls Short. Retrieved October 31, 2017, from <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2008/12/10/age-migration-human-rights-declaration-falls-short>

Pritchett, L. (2006). *Let Their People Come: Breaking the Gridlock on International Labor Mobility*. Washington, D.C: Center for Global Development.

- Chapter 3: Immovable Ideas: Myths and Truths.

Evaluation and Grading Criteria

Description of Assignments:

Participation: Every student is expected to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings, to listen attentively to any lectures, to seek to understand the perspectives of their peers, to share thoughts and opinions about the topics of the course, and to otherwise engage in healthy exploration of the course themes in order to contribute to the collective learning of the group. (10%)

Facilitation: In pairs or small groups, students will be responsible for facilitating discussion on an assigned topic once during the semester. Students are responsible for meeting with the instructor prior to the discussion to review their proposed process for facilitation. (10%)

Critical Response Essays (5): Students will be assigned a 2-3 page critical response essay for each module of this course. The instructor will provide prompts for the essay asking students to first synthesize one or more arguments from the course readings and/or lectures and then articulate the reasons why these arguments are important for understanding the core themes of the module. (30%)

Book Review: Writers have penned enough books on the migration experience that they could be considered a small genre. The methods of research and the ways in which these authors depict migrants, the experience of migrating, the border and crossing, and lives as immigrants vary greatly. In groups, students will be assigned one of these books to review by drawing from what they have learned through the program's courses, excursions, homestays, and other activities. Each student will write an 6-8 page review of the assigned book, critiquing specific qualities. In groups, students will give a 15-minute presentation to the rest of the class. The book list will be provided during the program. (25%)

Final Project: Each student will choose a final project for this course that examines a topic related to migration or borders. The final project must be approved by the instructor and may take the form of a short research paper, a polished presentation based on research, a photo/video project, or a significant art project. Collaborative group work with other students is possible and all final projects will include presentations. (25%)

Assessment:

Participation	10%
Facilitation	10%
Critical Response Essays	30%
Book Review	25%
Final Project	25%

Grading Scale

94-100%	A	Excellent
90-93%	A-	
87-89%	B+	
84-86%	B	Above Average
80-83%	B-	
77-79%	C+	
74-76%	C	Average
70-73%	C-	
67-69%	D+	
64-66%	D	Below Average
below 64	F	Fail

Expectations and Policies

- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule, printed, and done accordingly to the specified requirements. This will help ensure that your assignments are returned in a timely manner.
- Ask questions in class. Engage the lecturer. These are often very busy professionals who are doing us an honor by coming to speak.
- Comply with academic integrity policies (no plagiarism or cheating).
- Respect differences of opinion (classmates', lecturers, local constituents engaged with on the visits). You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), research and ethics in field study and internships, late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.