**Narrating the US-Mexico Borderlands**

ENGL-213-15 (graduate students)

ENGL-213-10 (undergraduates)

Session I -- June 6 to July 8, 2016

MTWR 10:45am-12:45pm

Maguire 103

# Instructor: Dr. Lisbeth Strimple Fuisz (pronounced “fuse”)

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Office hours by appointment. My mailbox is in the English office, New North 306.

**Course Description**:

From Donald Trump’s recent speech in which he negatively characterized Mexican immigrants to the success of the movie *Sicario* about the drug wars, representations of the borderlands and its inhabitants abound in US culture and inform contemporary conceptualizations of citizenship and nationhood. This course will examine a series of narratives -- in fiction, film and the news -- about this contested space, investigating the roles the tourist and the immigrant play in defining these spaces. We will also consider the work of visual artists and photographers who document life along the divide and the changes wrought by the building of the wall. Throughout the course, we will engage with theories by scholars from a variety of disciplines about why borderland spaces are instrumental in the construction of American geography, history and identity.

**Course Objectives**:

Students will be able to:

* Analyze ;
* Read critically to determine author’s purpose, assumptions, and meaning;
* Summarize and evaluate scholarly and non-scholarly arguments;
* Synthesize sources as effective support for students’ analyses and arguments;
* Use the writing process to shape meaning and achieve clarity and coherence;
* Provide meaningful feedback to classmates regarding their thinking and writing, creating a supportive learning environment; and
* Use self-evaluation and reflection to develop as writers.

**Required texts**:

Willa Cather, *The Professor’s House*

Margaret Regan, *The Death of Josseline*

Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Fourth Ed.)

Reyna Grande, *The Distance Between Us*

Diana Hacker*, A Pocket Style Manual* (Seventh Ed.)

Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen*, What it Takes: Academic Writing in College*

* We will also read scholarly articles and view several films/documentaries that will be available on electronic course reserve at Lauinger Library or through Blackboard. List of these additional readings will be provided at the beginning of the course.
* Please bring Hacker’s *Pocket Style Manual* and *What It Takes* to each class session.
* Please bring required readings to class on the relevant day. You will be expected to refer directly to passages in these sources when discussing the books and articles. If you have read the book/article electronically, you must be able to access it during class time and find passages in the text. Being prepared so that you can discuss readings and workshop writing in class is part of your reading response portfolio (see below).

**Expectations**:

Critical Reading Assignments (2x10%) 20%

Reading Response Portfolio 25%

Written Critique 25%

Rhetorical Analysis 30%

Detailed descriptions for each assignment will be made available at the appropriate time and posted on Blackboard. Briefly,

* Critical Reading: The assignments will consist of following Behrens and Rosen’s recommendations for a “Critical Reading.” On the two days you are assigned to formally complete a critical reading, you must print out a copy of the scholarly article and use highlighting and margin notes to demonstrate your understanding of the article’s main points and other important elements. An example and rubric will be discussed in class.
* Reading response portfolio will be a collection of writings demonstrating your ability to interpret and synthesize readings in a clear, concise manner. Daily agendas posted to Blackboard and reviewed at the beginning of each class session will list daily reading response activities to be completed during class or outside of class. Some of these daily assignments may receive feedback from classmates and be revised. Part of the expectations for this assignment is that you will come to each class prepared with a copy of the readings due that day.
* The Written Critique will be a summary and evaluation of an argument made by one of the articles we read in class. We will follow the guidelines in Behrens and Rosen’s book for constructing a critique.
* The Rhetorical Analysis will identify one document in public circulation and rhetorically analyze this document’s portrayal of the US-Mexico borderlands (or some aspect of it) using a combination of rhetorical concepts, including but not limited to those from the readings and listed on class handouts (genre, audience, purpose, situation, exigence, etc.).

For calculating grades, I follow Georgetown’s 4.0 scale:

A 4.0

A- 3.67

B+ 3.33

B 3.0

B- 2.67

C+ 2.33

C 2.0

C- 1.67

D+ 1.33

D 1.0

F 0

So, if you received a B+ on an assignment, it will be entered into the Blackboard grade book as a 3.33 and be weighted according to the percentages listed under “expectations.” Assignments that use a point-based system (as with some rubrics) will be converted to a 4.0 scale; these conversions will be provided with individual assignments. When calculating final grades, I round up if your grade is above the halfway point between scores, represented by 3.835, 3.5, 3.165, 2.835, 2.5 and so forth.

**Policies and Procedures:**

* Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.
* We will be using Blackboard in this class. Please check it regularly for assignments, readings, syllabus updates, and announcements. In the event of inclement weather and class cancellations, we will use Blackboard to make up missed time/assignments.
* Daily agendas with class objectives and topics will be posted on Blackboard and used to direct classroom activities. If you are absent, please refer to the appropriate daily agenda.
* MLA manuscript format required for this course; the Written Critiqu and the Rhetorical Analysis should be **typed, use standard font, be double-spaced, and have one-inch margins all around.** Failure to adhere to these requirements will result in a lowered grade.
* Please see University’s guidelines about the Honor System and plagiarism. Engaging in plagiarism, using false citations and data, and submitting work for multiple purposes will not be tolerated.
* Attendance is required. Please notify me in advance if you will be absent for any reason. You are responsible for making up missed work. Absences will only be excused if student provides proper documentation. Many of the above requirements are predicated on class participation, so missing class will affect your final grade.
* After **two** unexcused absences, your grade for the course will be reduced by one letter for each absence. Tardiness will also affect your overall grade. If you are not in class when I call roll, you will be considered absent.
* If you wish to receive participation credit for a missed class, whether your absence is excused or not, you must submit make-up work. Otherwise, you will receive a zero for that day, which will count against your overall participation grade.
* If accepted, late work can receive a grade no higher than the lowest grade received by students who turn work in on time. If you follow the schedule, doing assignments, drafts and revisions when required, you will have no difficulty meeting final deadlines.
* In the event of any unforeseen disruptions to the class schedule (like snow days), please look for emails from me about completing class work through Blackboard.
* Cell phones, pagers, PDAs, and other electronic equipment not being used for note-taking purposes or for writing assignments should remain in your bag/backpack. Phones being used for texting or other activities will be confiscated until the end of class.
* **Email policy**: I will not discuss grades on individual assignment or final grades via email. Please make an appointment if you wish to discuss any grades. In addition, I will not accept assignments via email unless prior arrangements have been made. You must always submit a hard copy of your assignments to me.

A detailed schedule of daily reading and writing assignments will be made available at the beginning of the course.