



Department of History
University of Wisconsin–Madison

US-MEXICO GENDERED MIGRATIONS: ARCHIVAL RESEARCH, ORAL HISTORY, AND MEMORY
History 901–002

COURSE INFORMATION

SPRING 2025

Tuesdays, 3:30–5:25 PM
5255 Mosse Humanities Building

Professor: Marla A. Ramírez, Ph.D.
Office: 4126 Mosse Humanities Building
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
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Course Credit: 3 credits
Course Designation: This is a graduate level course
Course Modality: In-person
Requisites: Graduate standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar invites students to explore the history of gendered migrations across the US-Mexico borderlands during the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will analyze the social, political, labor, economic, and legal debates surrounding ethnic Mexican gendered migrations and their effects on migrants and their families. The assigned readings include books and articles that utilize diverse methodologies including memory, archival research, and oral history. Students will engage in the process of conducting archival research and oral histories. To do so, students will engage in critical discussions of assigned readings that employ diverse intersectional methodological approaches. This will serve as a way of introduction to help students decide on the methodology they want to use as they begin their own research.

OBJECTIVES – Upon completing this course, students will be able to:

- Identify key themes and methodological approaches in US-Mexico borderlands history
- Understand themes and debates in the subfield of Mexican gendered migrations history
- Improve skills in academic writing, textual analysis, intersectional methodological applications, and public speaking
- Apply the approaches of Mexican gendered migrations history and intersectional methodological approaches to their own research areas

COURSE CREDIT

The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course's learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated class time, reading, writing, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students are required to write a weekly reading summary (1.5–2 pages) including:
 - a. Full citation of the assigned reading
 - b. 3-5 keywords to describe the assigned reading for the week
 - c. A paragraph about the author (expertise, trajectory, and affiliation)
 - d. 250-300 words summary of the reading
 - e. An analysis of what the student considers as the strengths and areas of improvement for the assigned reading
 - f. A methodological analysis explaining why the author's chosen methodology might have been used and how it helps uncover new knowledge on the historical event under examination
 - g. Write 2-3 questions for discussion to be addressed during our weekly seminars
2. Active participation and listening are required in every seminar meeting
3. Each student will lead two discussions during the semester
4. Students will be trained in oral history methodology and required to conduct an original oral history interview or transcribe and analyze an archived interview.
 - a. Interview must be conducted no later than the end of week 8.
5. For the final, students will use their oral history as one of their primary sources to write a 20-page research paper
6. Students will deliver a presentation in a conference style format based on their final papers

GRADING

Attendance & Participation:	10%
Weekly Reading Summaries (12):	20%
Leading Discussion (twice):	20%
Final Paper:	35%
Final Presentation:	15%

GRADING RUBRIC

92-100% = A	87-91.9% = AB	82-86.9% = B	77-81.9% = BC
72-76.9% = C	67-71.9% = D	0-66.9% = F	

PARTICIPATION, LEADING DISCUSSION, AND ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Excellent (90-100)	Good (80-90)	Competent (70-80)	Inadequate (60-70)	Fail (0-60)
-Mastery over readings and previous discussion -Explores questions rigorously -Comes to class with interpretations and questions -Engages others	-Knows readings well -Consistent preparation and involvement -Offers analysis of texts in class	-Basic grasp of reading -Mostly offers facts or surface-level interpretations -Contributes when called upon but not actively engaged	-Insufficient command of reading -Attempts to contribute facts or interpretations when called but unable to offer substance	-Uninvolved -Unexcused -Disruptive

REQUIRED TEXTS

The following required books will be available at the university bookstore. They can also be ordered through various online vendors. Most of these books are currently available for free as eBooks through the [University of Wisconsin Library website](#).

- ☐ Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.–Mexico Border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).
- ☐ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2016).
- ☐ Anna Pegler-Gordon, *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).
- ☐ Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018).
- ☐ Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire & Revolution in the Borderlands* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2022).
- ☐ Monica Perales, *Smeltertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
- ☐ Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).
- ☐ Melita M. Garza, *They Came to Toil: Newspaper Representations of Mexicans and Immigrants in the Great Depression* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018).
- ☐ Mireya Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, & Political Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016).
- ☐ Natalie Lira, *Laboratory of Deficiency: Sterilization and Confinement in California, 1900–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022).
- ☐ Miroslava Chávez-García, *Migrant Longing: Letter Writing Across the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).
- ☐ Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- ☐ A series of articles will also be required and available through Canvas.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the

integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary [sanctions](#) include, but are not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

CHATGPT AND AI WRITING TOOLS

The use of ChatGPT and other AI tools can enhance your learning if used appropriately. However, if this technology is abused, it could infer with the development of your critical thinking and writing skills. *As such, the policy of this course allows the use of AI tools but only for the transcription assignment.* However, you must carefully revise the transcription draft provided by your selected AI tool to catch all spelling, grammatical, and erroneously transcribed sections. You have to turn in the transcript produced by your selected AI tool and the revised draft you corrected. *This course prohibits the use of AI tools for all other assignments.* If you use AI tools for any assignment in this course, except for the transcription, it will be considered academic misconduct and you will receive a zero on that assignment.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy ([UW-855](#)) require the university to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to access and participate in its academic programs and educational services. Faculty and students share responsibility in the accommodation process. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations during the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible after being approved for accommodations. Faculty will work either directly with the student or in coordination with the McBurney Center to provide reasonable instructional and course-related accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. (See: [McBurney Disability Resource Center](#))

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: *The Art of Finding Historical Sources*

January 21, 2025

Zachary M. Schrag, "Finding Sources," in *The Princeton Guide to Historical Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

- ☐ Introductions and course overview
- ☐ Sign-up to lead discussion
- ☐ During class, read and discuss "Finding Sources" by Schrag

Week 2: Excluding Women from US Citizenship & The Creation of the US–Mexico Border

January 28, 2025

Virginia Sapiro, "[Women, Citizenship, and Nationality: Immigration and Naturalization Policies in the United States](#)" *Politics & Society* 13, no. 1 (1984): 1–26.

Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.–Mexico Border* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

Assignment # 1: Due on Monday, 1/27th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas) for the assigned reading.
 - Upload response to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 3: Oral History Methodology

February 4, 2025

Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2016). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

[The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide](#) (Smithsonian Institution)

- ☐ Workshop on oral history methodology approaches and best practices
- ☐ Students must decide if they will conduct an oral history or use an archived one
 - If the former, contact your selected narrator to schedule preliminary meeting and interview

Assignment # 2: Due on Monday, 2/3rd by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), one for each reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 4: Visualizing Race & Constructing Illegality

February 11, 2025

Anna Pegler-Gordon, *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ Students will draft an oral history interview guide during class

Assignment # 3: Due on Monday, 2/10th, by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 5: *Using Oral History to Uncover Hidden Histories and Commemorate Past Injustices*

February 18, 2025

Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (New York: Routledge, 1998), 32–42.

- ☐ Students will peer-review their oral history interview guides

Assignment # 4: Due on Monday, 2/17th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), one for each reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 6: *Magonistas and the Rise of the Mexican Revolution*

February 25, 2025

Kelly Lytle Hernández, *Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire & Revolution in the Borderlands* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2022).

- ☐ During class, revise interview guide based on last week's peer review

Assignment # 5: Due on Monday, 2/24th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 7: *The Making of the Urban West through Transnational Capitalism*

March 4, 2025

Monica Perales, *Smeltertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ Mock oral history interviews during class

Assignment # 6: Due on Monday, 3/3rd, by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for each of the assigned readings.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 8: *The Making of the “Illegal Alien” Problem*

March 11, 2025

Mae M. Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ Workshop on oral history transcription best practices

Assignment # 7: Due on Monday, 3/10th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar’s discussion

Week 9: *Examining Newspapers to Historicize Mexican Exclusion during the Great Depression*

March 18, 2025

Melita M. Garza, *They Came to Toil: Newspaper Representations of Mexicans and Immigrants in the Great Depression* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ Research workshop using an online newspaper database

Assignment # 8: Due on Monday, 3/17th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar’s discussion

Week 10: *Spring Break*

March 25, 2025

No class, have a good spring break!

Week 11: *Queering the Historical Record*

April 1, 2025

Mireya Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, & Political Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, “Gay Latino Histories/Dying to Be Remembered: AIDS Obituaries, Public Memory, and the Queer Latino Archive” in *Beyond El Barrio: Everyday Life in Latina/o America*, eds. Gina M. Pérez, Frank A. Guridy, and Adrian Burgos, Jr. (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

- ☐ **Note:** This seminar might have to be held virtually pending travel confirmation for conference I will be presenting at in the Netherlands. I will keep you posted.

Assignment # 9: Due on Monday, 3/31st by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar’s discussion

Week 12: *Analyzing Medical Records to Historicize Reproductive Justice and Sterilization*

April 8, 2025

Natalie Lira, *Laboratory of Deficiency: Sterilization and Confinement in California, 1900–1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ Take oral history audio recordings to class to practice the transcription method

Assignment # 10: Due on Monday, 4/7th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 13: *Letters and Personal Collections as tools to Document Migrant Experiences*

April 15, 2025

Miroslava Chávez-García, *Migrant Longing: Letter Writing Across the U.S.–Mexico Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ During class, select specific quotes from your oral history transcription to develop at least one-page of critical analysis by pulling from other primary and secondary sources

Assignment # 11: Due on Monday, 4/14th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 14: *Mexican Women Claim US Citizenship and Belonging*

April 22, 2025

Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). [Free eBook through UW libraries](#).

- ☐ Provide peer-review on your one-page analysis of the oral history interview

Assignment # 12: Due on Monday, 4/21st by 11:59 PM via Canvas

- ☐ Complete the reading summary worksheet (posted on Canvas), for the assigned reading.
 - Upload responses to Canvas
 - Share observations and questions during our seminar's discussion

Week 15: Final Presentations

April 29, 2025

Students will present their final papers in a conference style format. Each presentation will be 15 minutes followed by Q&A.

Final Paper: Due Monday, 4/28th by 11:59 PM via Canvas

Important Note: This syllabus, course assignments, and due dates are subject to change. It is the responsibility of the student to check the course's Canvas page and wisc email for course updates.