

On Borders and “Borderizing:” From Tijuana to Mexico City

UHI, Winter 2020, UCLA,

Maite Zubiaurre and Gabriela Barrios (UCLA)

In coordination with María Moreno Carranco (UAM-Cuajimalpa)

Mondays 6.15 pm-9.15 pm (Perloff 1209B) Office Hours: By Appt.



“A group of artists and immigration rights activists from both sides of the border came together to protest the wall by literally shining a light on what it represents. [...] On the evening of Nov. 18, the group gathered on the Tijuana side of the border and projected light graffiti onto the prototypes. Images included a luchador mask, an outline of the Statue of Liberty accompanied by the words ‘Refugees Welcome Here’ and the phrase ‘Build Bridges, Not Borders.’ [...] They also projected a video of a ladder going up the walls of the prototypes as a means to ridicule the hundreds of thousands of dollars that it will cost taxpayers to make something Holstin says can easily be defeated by a \$50 ladder.” <https://wearemitu.com/things-that-matter/activist-art-border-wall-prototypes/>

Seminar Description

This seminar looks at borders (Tijuana as borderland; the borders or “borderizing” practices that separate and section off urban space and social reality in Mexico City) through the lens of social justice, activist practices, and public art. It will provide extensive reflection on what it means to approach border realities and “borderized” urban spaces responsibly and ethically, and will resort to humanistic critical inquiry as its method: the “why” will be the constant companion and interlocutor of the “how.”

The first part of the seminar (three sessions) will concentrate on the urban and cultural realities of Tijuana as border city, and will culminate in a trip to Tijuana on February 1 and 2, 2020. The Tijuana award-winning artistic-filmic collective *Dignicraft* and renowned Tijuana artist and photographer Jofras will offer insight on border reality and ethically-infused activist interventions at the border, first during one of the seminar sessions at UCLA, and later in Tijuana.

The second part of the seminar (six sessions) will concentrate on Mexico City and its “borderized” urban and social landscapes, and will culminate in a trip to Mexico City from March 21 to March 29, 2020. It will introduce the complexity of the Mexican megalopolis to students, with one very specific goal in mind, namely, to collaboratively create proposals for ethically-responsible artistic and social interventions beneficial to communities in Mexico City. To that effect, Urban Humanities graduate students at UCLA will work in collaboration with graduate students and advanced undergraduate students from UAM-Cuajimalpa. From the second session on, students from both institutions will work together in teams via the virtual realm, and have the opportunity of meeting in person in Tijuana and later of course in Mexico City. Teams will have the choice to collaborate with and support one of the following established entities and artistic collectives, each of whom centers its attention on one aspect or theme of Mexico City’s urban reality:

1. **Urban Disasters: On Risk, Reconstruction, and Memorialization after an Earthquake:** *Ciudadanía19S*
2. **Urban Carceral Realities, Gender, and Social Justice:** *Mujeres en Espiral*
3. **Affordable Housing/Participatory Urban Design,** *El Cielo Arquitectos*
4. **Waste Management, Recycling, and Trash Art,** TRES

During the Winter Quarter, students will be able to add another means of artistic expression to their repertoire, muralism. UNAM Professor and activist Marisa Belausteguigoitia will teach a session on carceral activism, art, and muralism, and Chicana artist, and UCLA Professor Judy Baca will offer a weekend workshop on muralist practices at SPARC (Social and Public Art Resource Center, 685 North Venice Blvd, Venice, CA 90201--<http://sparcinla.org/>)

Seminar Session Structure:

The seminar sessions will have two distinctive parts: during the first part, course leaders (Maite Zubiaurre and Gabriela Barrios) or guest speakers will give a lecture followed by a discussion based on the lecture and the mandatory readings and viewings. (1. ½ hours). The lectures and following general discussion will introduce students to the various urban aspects and the “borderized” realities of Tijuana and Mexico City, but will also make reference to specific examples of urban activist practices and interventions.

The second part of the session will be devoted to group work (1. ½ hours). Teams will work on their projects, and be prepared to present an oral report on their progress each week, and also indicate what the next steps will be. A brief written version of the oral reports on progress and next steps will be shared in a google document. The structure of the sessions led by guest speakers may vary slightly, but the emphasis on collaborative team work will remain throughout the seminar.

Required Texts:

Tijuana Dreaming: Life and Art at the Global Border (edited by Josh Kun and Fiamma Montezemolo, 2012)

The Mexico City Reader (edited by Rubén Gallo, 2004)

NOTE: You are expected to read the entirety of the two edited volumes (Gallo, 2004; Kun & Montezemolo, 2012). They will be our foundational source of knowledge. The essays included in the weekly readings will be discussed in more detail during the seminar sessions.

Optional: We highly recommend that you read at least one of the following texts:

Modern Architecture and Mexico City: History, Representation, and The Shaping of a Capital (Kathryn O'Rourke, 2017)

The Interior Circuit: A Mexico City Chronicle (Federico Goldman, 2015)

Down and Delirious in Mexico City: The Aztec Metropolis in the Twenty- First Century (Daniel Hernandez, 2011)

First Stop in the New World: Mexico City, the Capital of the Twenty First Century (David Lida, 2009)

Grading

30% Attendance, Oral Participation, and Weekly Report on Progress and Next Steps

30% Project one: Public Art: Reflection Essay on Tijuana/Judy Baca UCLA Mural

40% Project two: Mexico City: Research Proposal and Mexico City Presentation

Part I: Tijuana

Session 1: January 6

Introduction to Seminar and Syllabus

Establishing of Course Ground Rules

Urbanized, Gary Hustwit, 2011 (**Film**)

TEAM WORK

Session 2: January 13

Lecture; discussion based on lecture, readings, and viewings.

“A Line in the Sand,” Ian Chambers

“The Factory of Dreams,” Josh Kun & Fiamma Montezemolo

“Community of Struggle: Gender, Violence, and Resistance on the US-Mexico Border,” Michelle Téllez

“The Migration of Urban Mexicans to the United States,” Rubén Hernández-León

Maquilapolis, Vicky Funari & Sergio de la Torre, 2006 (**Film**)

Logistics: UCLA/UAM-CUAJIMALPA Team Constitution and Organization/Theme Assignment.

TEAM WORK

Guest Speaker: **Judy Baca**

Session 3: January 27

Lecture on Tijuana; discussion based on lecture, readings, and viewings.

[Readings TBD]

Reflection of Expectations-Tijuana Trip.

Tijuaneados Anónimos, José Luis Figueroa and Paola Rodríguez 2009 (**Film**)

Guest Speakers: *Dignicraft* and **Jofras**

TEAM WORK

[TRIP TO TIJUANA] (February 1 and 2)

Part 2: Mexico City

Session 4: February 3

Reflection on the Tijuana Trip.

Lecture; discussion based on lecture, readings, and viewings.

Estilo Hindu: A Mexico City Travelogue, Krish Raghav (2015)

“A Feminist City Guide to Mexico City” (2019)

“The Golden Decades;” “Megalopolis,” Jonathan Kandell

“Introduction: Delirious Mexico City,” Rubén Gallo

Roma, Alfonso Cuarón (**Film**)

TEAM WORK

Session 5: February 10

Lecture; discussion based on lecture and readings.

“Earthquake,” Elena Poniatowska

“Life Above, Rubble Below: A Case of Historically Produced Risk & Perception in Mexico City: An Essay,” María Moreno Carranco

“Global Mexico Under Construction: The Santa Fe Megaproject,” María Moreno Carranco

Guest Speaker: **María Moreno Carranco**

TEAM WORK

WEEKEND of February 22 and 23: Workshop at SPARC with **Judy Baca**.

Session 6 February 24

Lecture; discussion based on lecture, readings, and viewings.

Readings [TBA]

Nos pintamos solas, Mujeres en Espiral (**Film**)

Guest Speaker: **Marisa Belausteguigoitia**

TEAM WORK

Session 7: March 2

Lecture; discussion based on lecture and readings.

Becerra, Maricela , Lucy Seena K. Lin, and Gus Wendel. “The 43: Remembering Ayotzinapa.” *Boom: A Journal of California*, 6.3, 2016, p. 33–41.

Fuentes, Carlos. ““Tlatelolco: 1968.”” *The Years with Laura Díaz*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000, p. 471–479.

Gibler, John. *I Couldn't Even Imagine They That They Would Kill Us: An Oral History of the Attacks against the Students of Ayotzinapa*. City Lights Books, 2017.
[Excerpts]

Paz, Octavio. “Olympics and Tlatelolco.” *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Grove Press Inc. , 1961.

Poniatowska, Elena. *Massacre in Mexico*. Viking Penguin, 1975. [Excerpts]

Guest Speaker: **Maricela Becerra**

TEAM WORK

Session 8: March 9

Lecture; discussion based on lecture, readings, and viewings.

The Folklore of the Freeway: Race and Revolt in the Modernist City, Eric Avila, 2014.
(Excerpts)

En el Hoyo (In the Pit), Juan Carlos Rulfo, 2006 (**Film**)

Rush Hour, Luciana Kaplan, 2018 (**Film**)

<https://vimeo.com/238436087> (Password: rhESP)

Guest Speaker: **Eric Avila**

TEAM WORK

Session 9: March 19

TEAM WORK