



NO201/GG201: North American Transborder Regions

Wilfrid Laurier University

Fall 2016

Instructor: Kelley A. McClinchey

Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30-6:50p.m.

Classroom: BA208

Email: kmclinchey@wlu.ca

Office Hours: TBA

Office: TBA

*Wilfrid Laurier University uses software that can check for **plagiarism**. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism.*

*Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier's **Accessible Learning Office** (<https://www.wlu.ca/accessible-learning/index.html>) for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Academic Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.*

Additional information on Foot Patrol, Counselling Services the WLUSU Food Bank can be found on the last page out this outline.

Course Description

This course will present an overview of key transborder regions within the larger North American region. The course will consider the physical, socio-economic and political geography of specific regions on the Canada-U.S and U.S.-Mexico borders.

The goal of this course is to incorporate geographic perspectives of culture, landscape, economy, physical environment and resource use to facilitate an integrated analysis of transborder regions and their role within the wider North American region. The course will encourage students to think beyond the individual nations of North America, and instead recognize and appreciate the interconnectedness that exists between nations, particularly as it is demonstrated in specific border regions.

Course Objectives

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

- Recognize and evaluate different forms of interaction that connect border regions.
- Assess the historical development of border regions in terms of various economic, environmental, social, cultural or political processes
- Assess the present and future role of border regions within an increasingly integrated continental North American landscape, and critically evaluate the social and environmental impact of such transformations

Course Outline

Through a historical and critical lens, we will recognize the main factors that created and impacted important policy change in the North American transborder regions. In doing so, we will incorporate important geographical concepts such as time, space, scale, place, region, environment and interaction. Relevant eras in the transborder regions covered will be the history of border creation, and policy changes before, during and beyond NAFTA. Also discussed will be current regional and global events that have impacted transborder policy such as 9/11, climate change, and the 2008 global recession.

Required Text

These are required books for the course. Lecture material, class discussions, assignments, and exams are based, in part, on the readings in these texts. They are available from the Laurier Bookstore.

- 1) Clarkson, Stephen. (2008). *Does North America Exist? Governing the Continent after NAFTA and 9/11*. Toronto, Ontario: University of Toronto Press.**

*This is the required text for lecture-based content, position paper/essay and to assist students with the inquiry project research.

You must select one of the following*:

- 2) Urrea, Luis Alberto. (2005). *The Devil's Highway: A True Story*. New York, New York: Little Brown and Company.**

Or

- 3) Urrea, Luis Alberto. (1993). *Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border*. New York, New York: Anchor Books.**

*These two texts are needed for the Book Club/Coffee Talk Assignments and Discussions. Please see the assessment criteria described below.

Course Philosophy:

Inquiry Learning

This course involves a teaching pedagogy known as Inquiry Learning. Inquiry learning allows students to engage with their learning environment by using and developing critical thinking

skills. Students answer open-ended questions applying their own knowledge and perspectives and actively seek out information that enables them to be critical thinkers of the world around them. It is encouraged that students ask *their own* questions about what they are learning, dig deeper into their own knowledge base and seek new knowledge in order to answer those inquiries.

Equity and Diversity

This course provides an open and welcome environment for students of varying needs, abilities, orientations and backgrounds. It is also a course that optimizes a positive and enjoyable learning environment for *all* students. Any action/behaviour that negatively impacts other students, the instructor, or the class as a whole, will not be tolerated. As such, the student may be required to leave the class. Please do speak to the instructor in person and/or in writing if you have any concerns regarding equity and diversity needs. Please also seek any additional help through the Accessible Learning Centre.

Use of Technology

Laptops/tablets are allowed for taking notes or for accessing specific on-line course content during lectures when needed. However, it may be asked at times to close or shut down said devices for the purpose of polite, person-to-person discourse. Browsing the internet, playing games, accessing social media, completing other assignments, emailing, and any other on-line/technological activity is strictly forbidden. Mobile phones are not permitted, please turn them off, and keep them on person. Failure to comply with the expectations of this course, as well as the Laurier Policy on the Classroom Use of Electronic Devices, may result in dismissal from class. http://www.wlu.ca/documents/50202/9.3_Electronic_Device_Policy.pdf

Assessment and Evaluation

Assignment	Due Date	% of course grade
Readings Top Ten (10x1%=10%)	TBA	10%
Position Paper/Essay	October 20	10%
Midterm Exam	October 6	15%
Inquiry Project	December 6	15%
Book Club/Coffee Talk (3x5%=15%+5%=20%)	TBA	20%
Final Exam	TBA	30%

Assignments/Activities

Readings “Top Ten”

Weekly readings supplement the course whether it is sections of the required text or an academic article listed for that particular week. Completing the readings before the scheduled class demonstrates accountability and enables you to be prepared for our activities as well as group and class discussions. Therefore, to provide incentive for completing the readings, you will be required to submit a “Top Ten” for each required reading. The Top Ten is as follows: five interesting points you learned from the reading; three uncertainties, concerns, aspects you did not quite understand; and two stimulating critical comments/questions about the reading you can offer for class discussion. Top Ten’s assignments should be 1-2 pages in length.

Position Paper/Essay:

Many of the topics discussed in class have multiple perspectives associated with them; they are complex and wrought with conflict. This is likely why we have so many concerns with the political, economic, environmental and social interactions in transborder regions at different scales. Your task is to select from the given topics discussed in class and provide your point of view on that topic. Your position paper should be approximately 2-3 pages using applicable sources to help justify your opinions. You may use any of the general topic areas, specific case

studies discussed in the text chapters or academic readings, films or other media clips shown in class to justify your arguments. More details about the paper guidelines and requirements will be discussed in class and on MyLS.

Midterm Exam:

The midterm exam will be based on lecture content and assigned readings up to October 4. Questions will be short answer.

Inquiry Project:

Individually **or** in a small group you will select a research topic that further stimulates your understanding of changing policy within the North American border regions before, during and beyond NAFTA. Your task will be to complete a research paper and be given the option of completing an oral presentation. More details about the paper and presentation guidelines will be discussed in class and on MyLS.

Book Club/Coffee Talk:

The best transfer of knowledge is from individuals that have experienced a situation for themselves; this is especially true for the stories of those living in the US-Mexico border region. By choosing **one** of the two Luis Alberto Urrea texts listed above, you will have the opportunity to learn about the very personal everyday experiences of individuals in this conflicted region. Through 'diary-like journaling', you will complete three assignments recording your thoughts/feelings associated with the narrative as well as how the text contributes and applies to the content learned in the course. Through three "Book Club/Coffee Talk" meetings you will share your own narratives of the reading with peers who have also read the text. More details about the assignments and meetings will be discussed in class and on MyLS.

Book Club/Coffee Talk Reading Schedule:

Book	Meeting #1: Sep. 22 Assign. #1 Due: Sep. 22	Meeting #2: Nov. 1 Assign. #2 Due Nov. 3	Meeting #3: Nov. 29 Assign. #3 Due: Dec. 3
The Devil's Highway	Pgs 3-83	Pgs 84-161	Pgs 162-235
Across the Wire	Pgs 1-56	Pgs 59-121	Pgs 125-190

Final Exam

The final exam will be based on lecture content and assigned readings from after the midterm. Short answer and long answer/essay questions will be included. The final exam will be scheduled by the registrar.

Weekly Schedule

*Subject to change at the discretion of the instructor

Week 1: What is a Transborder Region? Why might Geographical Thinking be Important for understanding North American Transborder Regions? (September 8)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Course philosophy, learning goals and expectations of the course
 - Mini-lesson: How to write a Reading Top Ten
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 3-25
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #1

Week 2: *No pude cruzar la raya*: Historic factors in the creation of the US-Canada and US-Mexico Borders (September 13 and September 15)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**

- Physical geography, environment and resource use, political, economic, socio-cultural implications
- Mini-lesson: How to write a Book Club/Coffee Talk Assignment
- Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 26-30, 37-45
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #2

Week 3: The Pillar of Public Policy: Conceptualisations, Curiosities and Critical Issues

(September 20 and September 22)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - NAFTA and Beyond, Political, socio-cultural and economic factors
 - Mini-Lesson: How to write a Position Paper/Essay
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 51-53, 73-75
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #3
 - Meeting Book Club/Coffee Talk #1 Sept 22
 - **Book Club/Coffee Talk Assignment #1 Due September 22**

Week 4: Forgotten Territory: First Nations in the Border Regions (September 27 and September 29)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Marginalization of First Nations in Mexico-US, Canada-US border regions
 - Film: *Frozen River*
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #4

Week 5: Brain vs Braun: Labour Migration and Governance Across US-Mexico and US-Canada Borders (October 4 and October 6)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 31-38, 95-112
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - **Midterm Exam (in class) October 6**

October 11 and October 13: **Fall Reading Week (no classes)**

Week 6: ***Ni Una Muerte Mas! Reforma Ya! Beyond Barbed Wire and Border Angels*** (October 18 and October 20)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Illegal migration across the US-Mexico Border
 - Reading: Ackleson, J. (2005). Constructing security on the US-Mexico border. *Political Geography*, 24(2), 165-184
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - **Position Paper/Essay Due October 20**

Week 7: **Planes, Trains and Automobiles (and Cruise Ships!): Tourism in the Border Regions** (October 25 and October 27)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Mexican Riviera Cruise Tourism, Gambling, Cross-border Shopping, Medical Tourism
 - Reading: Lopez-Lopez, A., Cukier, J. and Sanchez-Crispin, A. (2006). Segregation of tourist space in Los Cabos, Mexico. *Tourism Geographies*, 8(4), 359-379.
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #5

Week 8: **Where's the Beef? Governing Agriculture and Regulating Food Trade** (November 1 and November 3)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Mad Cow Disease, Growth Hormones, Agricultural Sustainability...
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 205-230
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #6
 - Meeting Book Club/Coffee Talk #2 Nov. 1
 - **Book Club/Coffee Talk Assignment #2 Due November 3**

Week 9: **NIMBY! Keystone Pipeline: Perceptions, Possibilities and Protests** (November 8 and November 10)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - SWOT analysis, stakeholder theory
 - Sign up for presentations timeslot
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 114-137
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #7

Week 10: **A River Runs Through It: Resource Management, Sustainability and Transborder Water Governance** (November 15 and November 17)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - St. Lawrence Seaway, Water in South Texas, Drainage basins of the west
 - Whose Mess is it: Policy and Pollution
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 138-162
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**

- Reading Top Ten #8

Week 11: **La Bestia y Los Corridos: Media Madness of Mexico-US Border Relations** (November 22 and November 24)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Power, media and politics
 - Music, Identity and Place-making
 - Reading: Flores, R.R. (1992). The corrido and the emergence of Texas-Mexican social identity. *The Journal of American Folklore*, 105(416), 166-182.
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Reading Top Ten #9

Week 12: **Border Security and Defence** (November 29 and December 1)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Presentations for inquiry project
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 370-393, 435-451, 394-415 (optional)
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - Article Top Ten #10
 - Book Club/Coffee Talk Meeting #3 Nov. 29
 - **Assignment #3 Due December 3**

Week 13: **Our Forgotten 'Borders': Sovereignty, Resources and Defence** (December 6)

- **Topics/Activities/Readings:**
 - Canada-Mexico, the Northern Frontier, Future of our Border Regions
 - Reading: Clarkson (2008) pages 417-434
- **Assignments and Due Dates:**
 - **Inquiry Project Due (written paper) December 6**

Course and University Policies

Academic Misconduct (cheating)

The University has an established policy with respect to cheating on assignments and examinations, which the student is required to know. Students are cautioned that in addition to a failure in the course, a student may be suspended or expelled from the University for cheating and the offence can have serious consequences for one's business or professional career. For more information refer to the current Undergraduate calendar see:

<http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwregi/ugcalendar/index.html>

Conversion of grades

Rubrics will be provided for the evaluation of your work and will also follow the WLU Grading System.

Percentage Mark	Equivalent grade	Grade Points
90-100	A+	12
85-89	A	11
80-84	A-	10
77-79	B+	9
73-76	B	8
70-72	B-	7
67-69	C+	6
63-66	C	5
60-62	C-	4
57-59	D+	3
53-56	D	2
50-52	D-	1
0-49	F	0

Grading system

Please refer to the current Undergraduate Academic Calendar for more information.

<http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwregi/ugcalendar/index.html>

Language proficiency

All students must demonstrate the ability to write clearly and correctly. Work which shows a lack of proficiency in the language of instruction is unacceptable for academic credit, and will either be failed or, at the discretion of the instructor, returned to the student for revision to a literate level.

Late penalties

The only acceptable reason for late or missed assignments is illness (supported by a doctor's statement) or extreme compassionate circumstances (funeral) which also must be supplemented with proof. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day including weekends, and will not be accepted more than 5 days after the due date. The end date as listed in MyLS is the final date an assignment will be accepted.

Plagiarism

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Special needs

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<http://www.mylaurier.ca/accessible/info/home.htm>

On behalf of WLUSU (**wlusu.com**)

Foot Patrol Walk Home Service:

1.519.886.FOOT x3668

Foot Patrol is a volunteer operated walk-home service, available daily during evening hours. Male-female, radio-dispatched teams trained in Emergency First Aid are available on request to escort students to and from campus as well as to off-campus destinations, either by foot or by van.

Counselling Services and Peer Help Line:

1.886.281.PEER x7337

Counselling Services are available to help students deal with emotional, psychological and social challenges of university. Counselling, consultation or referrals are available at the Student Wellness Centre. Peer Help Line, a confidential listening, referral, information and support line, is available during evening hours to provide support.

Student Food bank

All Laurier students are eligible to use the Student Food Bank. Anonymous requests can be made online at wlusu.com under the Services tab. All dietary restrictions are accommodated, and food hampers typically last up to a week.