

FRONTIERS IN THE IBERIAN WORLDS

Graduate Seminar, HIST 5130

SPRING 2026/THURSDAY 6:30-9:20, Room WH#262

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Office hours: Tuesday 3:30-4:30 pm, Thursday 3:30-4:30 pm, **and gladly by appointment**

COURSE DEFINITION

This course introduces graduate students to the key concepts, developments, and challenges in the history and historiography of Frontiers and Borderlands. It examines the phenomenon of frontiers and borderlands in the Hispanic world from the late Middle Ages to the early nineteenth century. Geographically, the course focuses on the Iberian Peninsula, the Americas, and the Philippines. It considers frontier regions such as the Christian-Muslim frontiers of late medieval and early modern Europe, the Philippine frontier, and various frontier zones in the Americas. The timeframe is therefore broad. The course explores porous geographical areas where human interactions were shaped by encounters and associations, often violent, between different cultures. It emphasizes the multicultural forces shaping the borderlands and their societies. Special focus will be given to conditions that created networks of interaction, the social realities they generated, the historical consequences of their existence, and what they reveal about understanding social space and identity. The class will adopt a strong comparative approach, highlighting similarities and contradictions in the development of different borderlands within a global historical context.

The course includes weekly discussions of assigned readings, short responses to some readings (each about 600 words), and a major historiographical paper (around 4,000 words – please have your computer provide a final word count and **note it** at the top of your paper). You will lead one of the class meetings of your choice, so be ready to master the historiography of that day's text.

Readings marked with * require reaction papers.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the course, students will be better able to:

- Describe the unique histories of the frontier zones of the Hispanic World from a long-term perspective.
- Understand the US-Mexico borderlands through the parallel study of alternative borderland experiences.
- Discuss the various historiographical traditions within the frontiers/borderlands fields.
- Understand how historians have described change over time.

DISCUSSION AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

This is a reading seminar, not a research seminar. The success of the seminar relies on everyone reading to build a foundation of knowledge for discussion.

Attendance and participation in seminar meetings are crucial. A seminar relies on the full involvement of its members. We meet only once a week. Missing more than two classes during the semester could jeopardize your place in the seminar, as the instructor has the authority to drop you through an administrative process. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for submitting the writing assignment; if no assignment was given that day, you should submit a summary or précis of the reading, at least 1200 words.

ASSESSMENT

Reading Responses: In addition to discussing readings, you are also asked to write about them. Weekly responses should include a summary of the main arguments and your own appraisal in a clear and scholarly manner. They are due no later than 5:30 PM on the day of class and should be uploaded to Turnitin on Canvas. Late papers will receive a 10-point reduction. I have marked the readings that require responses with an *.

Final Paper: In addition to the weekly assignments, you should write a final paper. Essays should be approximately 4000 words (please ensure your computer provides a final word count and **note it** at the top of your paper). You should write a historiographical essay on a borderlands theme, selecting it in consultation with me. You should at least use the books we discussed in class and other materials relevant to your topic. Your paper should compare some of the methods and concerns of the historiographies we have discussed in class.

A first draft of approximately 1000 words is due on March 25, before our class meeting. Please ensure your computer displays the final word count and record it at the top of your paper. This draft should include an introduction, your thesis statement, and a basic discussion of the historiographical issues you want to develop. It should also include a bibliography. The first draft is due by 11:59 PM on March 25 and should be uploaded to Canvas. The final paper is due by 11:59 PM on April 30 and should be uploaded to Canvas.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) refers to software systems and platforms that create new content, such as text, images, audio, or video, using generative models. These models identify patterns from large datasets, enabling them to produce data in response to specific prompts, which can often look like content made by humans.

Under the UNT Honor Code, using GenAI content without proper credit or replacing your own work with GenAI undermines the learning process and violates UNT's academic integrity policy. Therefore, submitting class work created with GenAI tools without attribution, or relying on them to complete assignments, breaches academic integrity and will be handled in accordance with university policy.

In-class Presentations

You will present your research paper to the class on April 30. You may use visual tools to support your presentation. You will have 15 minutes.

Grading balance (%)

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Weekly responses (3% each) | 24 |
| First Draft of Final Paper | 11 |
| FINAL PAPER | 30 |
| Class participation | 20 |
| In-Class Presentations | 15 |

Each assignment has a maximum of 100 points. Based on the percentage list, the final grade for the course will also have a maximum of 100 points.

Grading Scale (90+ = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C, 60-69 = D, Under 60 = F)

Accessibility

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Other basic norms

Office hours allow you to ask for clarification or find support with understanding class material. So, come visit me! I encourage you to connect with me for support. Additional in-person and virtual office hours may be offered as the semester concludes. You well know that we want you to be successful.

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage in an environment of respect and courtesy from others. We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement. I also encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct to start with the same baseline civility understanding (Code of Student Conduct) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012>).

Attendance: You should attend every class as part of the learning process.

Dean of Students

If serious illness or injury, death or illness in the family, mental health matters, economic instability, pregnancy and parenting, legal matters, etc., interfere with your academic success, you may want to speak with someone at the Dean of Students' office.

<http://deanofstudents.unt.edu>

Textbooks

Books to Buy: (please purchase all at the beginning of the semester)

- Travis Jeffres, *The Forgotten Diaspora: Mesoamerican Migrations and the Making of the US-Mexico Borderlands*. 13-digit ISBN: 978-1496226846
- Jonathan Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier: The "Reconquista" and the Jewish Community in Medieval Iberia*, Cornell University Press.
- Andrew C. Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier: A History of the Sixteenth-Century Ibero-African Frontier*, University Of Chicago Press,
- David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment*, Yale University Press.
- Juliana Barr. *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands*. 13-digit ISBN: 978-0807857908.
- Eugene C. Berger, *This Incurable Evil: Mapuche Resistance to Spanish Enslavement, 1598–1687*. 13-digit ISBN: 978-0817361105
- Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas*. 13-digit ISBN: 978-0674735385
- Mark Dizon, *Reciprocal Mobilities. Indigeneity and Imperialism in an Eighteenth-Century Philippine Borderland*. 13-digit ISBN: 978-1-4696-7644-9
- Jeffrey Alan Erbig Jr., *Where Caciques and Mapmakers Met. Border Making in Eighteenth-Century South America*. 13-digit ISBN: 978-1-4696-5504-8

Other Readings

All readings are available through the Library Guide.

<https://guides.library.unt.edu/hist5130>

TOPICAL OUTLINE

- #1 January 15 Introduction to the seminar**
- #2 January 22 Concepts: Frontiers, borderlands, and so on.**
Discussion: Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”; Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 3 (June 1999), pp. 814-41; “Responses: Borders and Borderlands,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (October 1999), pp. 1221-39; Fabricio Prado, “The Fringes of Empires: Recent Scholarship on Colonial Frontiers and Borderlands in Latin America;” and Joaquín Rivaya-Martínez, “Indigenous Borderlands: State of the Field and Prospects,” in *Indigenous Borderlands*, 15-34.
- Class leader: David Rex
- #3 January 29 Medieval/Religious Frontiers in Iberia**
Discussion, Ray, *The Sephardic Frontier*. *
- Class leader:
- #4 February 5 The Mediterranean Borderlands**
Discussion: Hess, *The Forgotten Frontier*. *
- Class leader:
- #5 February 12 Laws, Nations, and Frontiers on the Iberian Peninsula**
Discussion: Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*, Introduction and Part I.
- Class leader:
- #6 February 19 Laws, Empires, and Frontiers in Colonial South America**
Discussion: Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession*, Part II and Conclusions.
Meetings with students to discuss final paper topics.
- Class leader:
- #7 February 26 Cartography and Frontiers**
Discussion: Erbig Jr., *When Caciques and Mapmakers Met*. *
Meetings with students to discuss final paper topics.
- Class leader:
- #8 March 4 Violence and Exchange**
Discussion: Berger, *This Incurable Evil*. *
- Class leader:
- #9 March 11 SPRING BREAK**
- #10 March 18 Indigenous peoples and the Making of the US-Mexico Borderlands**

Discussion: Travis, *The Forgotten Diaspora*. *

Class leader:

#11 March 25 **Spaniards and Native Peoples on the Late Colonial Frontiers**

Discussion: Weber, *Bárbaros, Introduction&Ch. 1-3*. *

First draft due

Class leader:

#12 April 1 **Different Forms of Frontier Exchange in the Late Colonial Period**

Discussion: Weber, *Bárbaros, Ch. 4-6&Epilogue*.

Class leader:

#13 April 8 **Gender on the Texas Borderlands**

Read for Discussion: Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*. *

Class leader:

#14 April 15 **RMCLAS Conference**

#15 April 22 **Indigeneity and Imperialism in the Philippine Borderlands**

Discussion: Dizon, *Reciprocal Mobilities*. *

Class leader:

#16 April 29 **Presentations**

Final Paper due

Getting Help

Technical Assistance

At UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328)
(<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

Student Support Services

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Other student support services offered by UNT include

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)
- [MathLab](https://math.unt.edu/mathlab) (<https://math.unt.edu/mathlab>)

Course Evaluation

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course.

UNT Policies

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for

student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.