MEETING TIME/PLACE
Class meets every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:10 to 3:25 PM in CLS 321.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Professor: David Spener, Associate Professor of Sociology and Anthropology  
Phone: 999-8562  Email: dspener@trinity.edu  Office: CLS 312  
Office hours: By appointment on T/Th between 8:00 to 9:30 AM and Wednesdays between 8:00 AM and 12:00 noon.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this seminar we will examine a variety of social, cultural, political, and economic phenomena that characterize the Mexico-United States border region. Topics covered this semester will include the historical processes that contributed to the formation of the contemporary borderlands following the U.S.-Mexico War in the mid-nineteenth century; Mexican migration, U.S. border control policy, and human rights issues since the mid-twentieth century; the industrialization of the region and the consequences of this process for borderlands society and environmental quality along the border; culture and social relations in the borderlands; and the impacts of North American free trade on the border region. Class activities will include guest lectures by border experts and activists, local field trips, and an optional overnight excursion to communities located on the international boundary itself.

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

The following texts are required for the course and may be purchased at the Trinity University Bookstore.


Other reading assignments will be available on-line or on reserve at the circulation desk of the Coates Library. Audiovisual materials will be available on reserve at the circulation desk of Instructional Media Services on the first floor of the library.
USE OF SPANISH AND ENGLISH IN THE COURSE

This course is part of the Spanish across the Curriculum component of Trinity University’s International Studies Program. It will be conducted bilingually in Spanish and English, i.e., in both languages of the Mexico-U.S. border region. Concretely, that means that we will read books and articles in both languages, view/listen to audiovisual materials in both languages, have guest speakers who make presentations in Spanish as well as English, and engage in writing assignments in both languages. Competence in speaking, reading, writing, and listening in both Spanish and English is thus a requirement for participation in the course.

A note on evaluation of students’ use of Spanish in course assignments: The minimum level of Spanish competence required for successful participation in the seminar is completion of Spanish 2302, Reading and Composition, or its equivalent. Spanish will be used as a medium of instruction in the course, but this is NOT a Spanish course. Therefore, students’ use of Spanish in class, both orally and in writing, will be evaluated at the level of communicative competence (i.e., getting their message across), rather than in terms of grammatical correctness. Nevertheless, for written assignments, students should make use of MS Word’s Spanish grammar/spelling correction tool to avoid egregious errors that impede the reader’s comprehension of their arguments.

REQUIREMENTS

Reading, attendance, and participation

The course will be run as a reading and discussion-intensive seminar. Class attendance is mandatory, as is active participation in thematic discussions during class meetings. Successful participation in class discussion will depend on your timely completion of reading assignments. You should always come to class with questions/comments about readings assigned for that day as well as a copy of the reading itself.

Presentation of a border news story

Once during the semester, you will be required to make a formal presentation to the class of a border issue currently in the news. You will need to present the issue as covered by the U.S. and Mexican press and discuss similarities/differences in perspectives on the issue from people on both sides of the border. Your comments on the issue may be made in Spanish or English, but both Spanish and English-language sources must be consulted and cited in your presentation. Each presentation will be the collaborative product of 2-3 students. Specific instructions and a schedule for presentations will be distributed by the instructor early in the semester.

Take-home assignments

There will be 3 written, take-home assignments given during the semester in which you will address several questions that require you to apply key concepts developed in the course. Each of these assignments will have a Spanish component. Assignments will be distributed to students on February 12, March 25, and April 22. The first two completed assignments must
be sent to the instructor as an email attachment no later than the beginning of the next class meeting. The last take-home assignment will be due no later than 5:00 PM on Thursday, May 6.

**Semester project**

The single most important element of your participation in this seminar is your semester project. Each of you, either individually or in concert with other students, will conduct research into some aspect of Mexico-U.S. border relations throughout the semester. This research will result in an individual or collective product that may take a variety of forms--a term paper, a research report, a piece of creative writing, a comic book, an audio or video production, a dramatic or comedic performance, a debate or talk show, or a work of art. You should feel free to be as creative as you wish. Nevertheless, whatever form your project's final product takes, it must explicitly or implicitly embody theoretical approaches and/or empirical research findings on border relations.

If the product itself (e.g., a short story or a comedic performance) embodies border theory and research *implicitly*, it will need to be accompanied by a text that explains its relationship to theoretical and/or empirical concepts. Written/aural aspects of your semester project can be completed in either English or Spanish, or a combination of the two, but sources in both languages must be consulted and cited. All projects and their final products will need to be documented electronically on the course web site. Project proposals must be submitted to the instructor as an email attachment no later than **5:00 PM on Friday, February 27**. Final projects, including electronic documentation, must be submitted to the instructor no later than **5:00 PM on Friday, April 30**.

**GRADING**

The final course grade will be calculated using the following weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of news story</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take-home assignments</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester project</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BORDER EXCURSION AND EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS**

Students enrolled in the course have the option of participating in a 2-day excursion to the Texas-Mexico border as an extra credit assignment. The trip is tentatively scheduled for Friday-Saturday, February 20-21. Plans for the trip include a tour of a maquiladora, a "ride-along" the Rio Grande/Rio Bravo with the Border Patrol, interviews with Mexican workers in the shantytowns where they live, a visit to a church-run shelter for undocumented migrants, and a sampling of border cuisine and musical entertainment. Photos and student comments from two previous field trips for this course are posted on the web at http://www.trinity.edu/dspener/soci_3326_free/laredos-1999-2000.htm. Other extra credit opportunities will be available for students who are unable to participate in the field trip.
**WEBSITE**

The seminar is supported by a web site that will be updated throughout the semester. Go to the website for information about assignments, copies of lecture outlines and other class materials, instructions for assignments, to get contact information for fellow students, and to view samples of their exemplary papers and presentations.

The address for the website is


To access portions of this site, you will need a username and a password. The instructor will supply you with both of these during the first week of classes.

**EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST**

An email distribution list has been created in order to facilitate communication among participants in the seminar. To send messages to all other seminar participants at once, use the address DSpener-b@trinity.edu. It will be necessary for you to check your Trinity email account regularly throughout the semester since important course information will routinely be communicated via this distribution list. Do NOT use this distribution list to communicate one-on-one with the instructor or fellow students--use their personal email addresses instead. If you have any trouble sending or receiving messages to/from the distribution list, be sure to contact the instructor immediately.