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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will provide an overview of borders and border politics and policies around the world in an era of globalization, technological change, and world conflict. Students will explore different border issues and border policies through an analysis of selected case studies situated in different geographic contexts. The course offers a distinctive approach to border studies by drawing on multiple disciplines and including the post-colonial South and maritime borders with a focus on reducing inequalities and building institutions.

OBJECTIVES

a) Students in this course will analyze and compare borderlands in various contexts, within and across a variety of states, including the developing, post-colonial states.

b) We will discuss a variety of themes and substantive issues related to borders around the globe, and analyze the effects of specific border policies, with a special emphasis on security, migration, and trade.

c) We will examine how geographic, cultural, and symbolic dividing lines/borders are blurred and transcended, but also fortified and redrawn in a context of globalization, rapid technological advances, and world conflict.
d) The reality of borders, borderlands spaces, and border people (borderlanders) will be analyzed through a critical perspective and a focus on gendered research.

e) The reading material for this course will be complemented with visuals, including films.

Important note:
In the present course we will advance new border categories and innovative theoretical perspectives, highlighting the importance of greater equity, equality, and freedom of mobility across borders. According to this perspective, immigration would be seen “as an opportunity rather than as a burden.” This modern view of borders would allow us to advance practices “that move societies toward more open and cooperative borders as metaphoric bridges, rather than closed and conflictual borders as barriers.”¹

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

All course assignments and activities for this course are designed to support students to learn the knowledge and skills to successfully achieve the Student Learning Outcomes that belong to the Mason Core’s category of “global understanding.”

The goal of the global understanding category is to help students see the world from multiple perspectives, reflect upon their positions in a global society, and be prepared for future engagement as global citizens. While it may include a historical perspective, global understanding courses focus primarily on a contemporary understanding of one’s place in a global society.

The present course must meet a minimum of three of the following learning outcomes:

1. Identify and articulate one’s own values and how those values influence their interactions and relationships with others, both locally and globally.

2. Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies.

3. Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies.

4. Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field.

¹ Quotes from the book *Border Politics in a Global Era*, by Kathleen Staudt.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation (20%)
Each student is expected to complete the reading assignments for each week and contribute actively to class discussions. Credit will be given for regular and active participation in class meetings. This will involve discussion of the readings, oral presentations, case studies, and debates about controversial issues raised in the course.

A two-page critical summary of the assigned readings should be submitted at the beginning of every class. The student should very briefly state the main arguments in the readings and raise further questions for discussion. The assignments must be typed and finished prior to coming into the relevant class. In some cases, instead of writing a critical summary, the student should complete a short homework assignment or answer a specific question related to the relevant discussion (this will be specified one week in advance).

Participation grades will be thus based on: a) active participation in class meetings; and b) performance on homework assignments and critical summaries.

In-class presentations (20%)
Students will pick up one theme of the present syllabus and analyze it in the context of two or more specific borders in the world. Topics will be assigned on January 24 and January 31, 2018. Students will present their work to their fellow students and submit a written report to the instructor. Papers should be 500-800 words (approx. 2-3 pages double spaced). Oral presentations will be graded taking into account: a) clarity and content; b) critical remarks; and c) originality of the exposition.

Written exam (30%)
One in-class written exam is scheduled for April 18, 2018. This exam will cover the materials of weeks 1 to 12 of this syllabus.

Final paper (30%)
A semester-long research project will be required of each student. This project should compare the effects of a specific border policy initiative in two regions or states in the world. The final essay should be approximately 10 pages long, in scholarly format, with an introduction, sub-sections, conclusions, and properly referenced bibliography. This paper is due for submission on May 9, 2018 (no later than 7:15 p.m.). Students are required to submit an initial outline and bibliography at least three weeks before the paper is due. Documents should be printed and submitted electronically.

Papers will be evaluated according to their insight, clarity, and the effectiveness with which they answer the specific question. Writing style matters. Be clear and concise. Papers will
be evaluated according to their insight, clarity, and the effectiveness with which they answer the specific question. Writing style matters. Be clear and concise.

*Please note that you can miss examinations and quizzes only for medically certified incapacity or for the gravest adequately documented, crisis in your immediate family. Make-ups will be given only in the case of an illness or emergency that is properly documented.*

**GRADING**

Your final grade in the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

- 97-100 A+
- 93-96 A
- 90-92 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 70-76 C
- 67-69 D+
- 63-66 D
- 60-62 D-
- < 60 F

GMU’s grading policy can be found at: [http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/grading/#text](http://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/academic/grading/#text)

**STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students are expected to be diligent in their studies and attend class regularly and on time. Students are responsible for all class work and assignments. On recommendation of the instructor concerned and with the approval of the Dean, students may, at any time, be dropped from the course. This may result in an “F” on the student’s permanent record.

***Important:***

Please provide a respectful learning environment for your fellow students. Repeated tardiness, cell phone disruptions, reading materials unrelated to the course, and web browsing and texting during class will adversely affect your grade. Repeated disruptive behavior may result in your involuntary withdrawal from the course.
Please arrive at class on time and mute (or switch off) cell phones, pagers, and alarms during class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. GMU has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting.

UNIVERSITY HONOR CODE

Mason shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia since 1842. The code is an integral part of university life. On the application for admission, students sign a statement agreeing to conform to and uphold the Honor Code. Students are responsible, therefore, for understanding the code’s provisions. In the spirit of the code, a student’s word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Cheating and attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related materials constitute Honor Code violations. To maintain an academic community according to these standards, students and faculty members must report all alleged violations to the Honor Committee. Any student who has knowledge of, but does not report, a violation may be accused of lying under the Honor Code. (See http://oai.gmu.edu for more information)

The complete Honor Code is as follows:

To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.
SPECIAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

READING MATERIALS

REQUIRED TEXTS:

   ISBN-10: 144226618X

   ISBN-10: 1479847763

   ISBN-10: 0776606514

   ISBN-10: 1784784745

RECOMMENDED READINGS:


**ADDITIONAL READING MATERIAL:**

Further readings will be posted on Blackboard, so be sure to check the website often [Note: These materials will be posted one week in advance of the relevant session].

**PERIODICALS/JOURNALS**

Journal of Borderlands Studies
Eurasia Border Review
The Journal of Comparative Politics
Comparative European Politics
Comparative Political Studies
Comparative Strategy
Studies in Comparative International Development
Journal of African and Asian Studies
DISCUSSION TOPICS AND READINGS PER CLASS
(DRAFT-subject to change)

Week 1: January 24

Road map of the course - Introduction and explanation of course requirements

- Staudt, Introduction
- Naples and Bickham Mendez, Introduction
- Brunet-Jailly, Introduction
- Jones, Introduction

Week 2: January 31

Border Politics in a Global Area

- Staudt, Chapters 1-3
- Naples, Chapter 6

Week 3: February 7

North American Borders I

- Staudt, Chapter 4
- Naples, Chapters 2, 7, 12

Week 4: February 14

North American Borders II

- Brunet-Jailly, TBA
- Additional readings, TBA

Week 5: February 21

European Borders I

- Staudt, Chapter 6
- Brunet-Jailly, TBA
Week 6: February 28

*European Borders II*

- Naples, Chapters 8, 9, 11
- Brunet-Jailly, TBA

Week 7: March 7

*The Borders of Post-Colonial South Asia*

- Staudt, Chapter 5
- Naples, Chapters 3-5

Week 8: March 14

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

Week 9: March 21

*Other borders, border issues and policies in the world*

- Staudt, Chapter 7
- Naples, Chapter 10
- Additional readings, TBA

Week 10: March 28

*Freer and fairer trade in borderlands*

- Staudt, Chapter 9
- Additional readings, TBA

Week 11: April 4
Border security: Environment, safety, and survival

- Staudt, Chapter 8
- Additional readings, TBA

Week 12: April 11

Migrants, refugees and the right to move I

- Jones, TBA
- Additional readings, TBA

Week 13: April 18

WRITTEN EXAM

Week 14: April 25

Migrants, refugees and the right to move II

- Jones, TBA
- Additional readings, TBA

Week 15: May 2

Toward solutions in policy change, institutions and democracy: Global to borderlands

- Staudt, Chapters 11-13
- Naples, Chapter 13

May 9: FINAL PAPER DUE

*** The professor reserves the right to make reasonable changes to this syllabus as needed ***