

BORDERS & BORDERLANDS

University of Maine, Orono
Honors 334 (0001) Junior Tutorial • Fall 2021
FACULTY: Kathleen Ellis (English)
TuTh 9:30-10:45 AM

COURSE DESCRIPTION



Do borders empower or disempower people? Why is the idea of “crossing a border” both appealing and dangerous? This tutorial will seek to identify and analyze the processes of border-making, the impact of borders on everyday life, and border permeability in North America through literature, art, and film.

We will explore the historical origins of borders and define the notion of borders, which includes not only territorial, geographical, and political borders, but also cultural and metaphorical borders, imagined spaces where interest and ideologies overlap and compete. Assignments will be project based, and students are encouraged to take innovative approaches to the course topic. The last part of the course will focus on the Penobscot Nation and its land and water rights cases.

SAMPLE TOPICS WE WILL ADDRESS

- How did building walls allow civilization to flourish?
- Do nations make borders, or borders make nations?
- What are the structures of power that produce & police borders?
- Transgressing the limits: racial & gender movements as crossing borders of empowerment
- Borderlands as liminal boundaries, both politically & metaphorically

SAMPLE TEXTS

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (2007)

Nicole Chung & Mensah Demary, eds., *A Map Is Only One Story* (2020)

Franz Kafka, “The Great Wall of China”

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* (2017)

William Yellow Robe, *Where the Pavement Ends: Five Native-American Plays* (2009)

Colin Woodard, *American Nations* (2012)

Supplemented by articles, maps, films, artwork, poetry, short stories, & guest visits

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