

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Navigating Borders During the Pandemic: A Collaborative Multi-Sited Approach

by Paloma E. Villegas and Francisco J. Villegas



ALYSON SHOTZ. THE SHAPE OF SPACE. SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, NEW YORK PURCHASED WITH FUNDS CONTRIBUTED BY THE YOUNG COLLECTORS COUNCIL, 2004. © ALYSON SHOTZ

In November 2020 we logged on to a zoom meeting. Zoom, and other online platforms, had already become ubiquitous with virtual teaching. However, this class was different for us. It was held during Paloma's *Borders, Knowledges, and Identities* course time and included several students from Francisco's *Immigrants and Exiles* course, though our institutions are located 2,100 miles apart. Our students had met previously. Earlier in the term, we paired students from each class and asked them to informally interview each other: speak about their relationship to borders and migration and how course readings and discussions from their courses promoted different ways of understanding such spaces and subjectivities. Students had also worked on an assignment through a virtual platform where they analyzed media representations of borders, and responded to questions posed by their peers. That fall evening, near the end of our respective terms, we had an opportunity to debrief about the course and further engage with each other.

This collaboration was not new to us. As siblings, we have worked together countless times. We did our PhDs in the same program, at the same time, and have co-authored several publications. We have never co-taught, but we have spent a lot of time reviewing each other's syllabi and assignments as well as discussing pedagogic practices and concerns. While the pandemic caused too many losses to count, it provided an opportunity for us to collaborate on our teaching while located in very different parts of the country (California/Michigan), in different term formats (semesters/quarters), and in different types of institutions (public university/private liberal arts college).

In this paper we outline the strategies used to virtually connect our two classes in the fall of 2020. The courses examined borders, the material effects of citizenship designations, and the resultant production and consequences of non-citizenship. Thus, we explore the value of collaboration, the effects of Covid-19 in designing the courses, and the ways we navigated teaching about borders and immigration given the pandemic and current immigration landscape in the U.S.

Locating Ourselves, Our Classes, and the Border(s) Around Us

When the collaboration took place, we were both assistant professors of sociology (we are now both tenured). We also have complicated histories of migration and identities as Undocuscholars, growing up and attending higher education undocumented in the U.S (though we are no longer undocumented) (Villegas and Villegas, 2019). Because of our histories of migration and racialization, we have experienced myriad classrooms where curricula did not reflect our or our communities' lived experiences, and where deficiency and illegalization are the primary frames of analysis. We seek to address such absences in our research and teaching. To do so, we purposefully examine power dynamics and center community as a means for our work to be transformative. That is, to influence small scale, and potentially large scale, work towards justice. Immigration justice and anti-racism have always been central to our

pedagogical project. Even when teaching introductory and research methods courses that may not have those ideas explicitly in their titles, our subjectivities prompt discussions about immigration and race.

Our teaching is informed by antiracist and feminist pedagogies. As noted, we endeavor to create spaces that value experiential knowledges, question hegemonic ideals, and center the most affected (Dei, 1996; Alexander, 2006). This means that when teaching courses on migration, we set the stage for our respective classes by situating borders as "open wounds" on the land and peoples around them (Anzaldúa, 1987). We approach these topics with critical thinking and hope as means of transgression (hooks, 1994). That is, while we highlight that borders are enactments of violence, we highlight that they are also human constructs and we center the hope of projects to imagine and materialize their erosion (Paik, 2020; Walia, 2021).

It is important to note that we, as faculty members, and our respective students, are situated very differently socially and geographically as well as in terms of the current educational landscape. Paloma teaches at a regional university in Southern California in a semester schedule (California State University, San Bernardino). Francisco teaches in a liberal arts college in Michigan, operating in the quarter system (Kalamazoo College). Our campuses are both located a 2-hour drive from international borders, though they are taken up by the nation in completely different ways: one as a site of danger and requiring continuous surveillance given the presence of racialized (read: dangerous) others and the other as a space dividing two friendly neighbors who share relative safety through their establishment as white settler states. Both of these locations experience significant patrolling by immigration enforcement. Southern California is a primary space within the American imaginary where undocumented migrants live, and Michigan, given its proximity to the Canadian border (within 100 miles), provides the Border Patrol the ability to function virtually without limits. Paloma's students are primarily first-generation, racialized, from the local area, with many having immigration experiences in their families. Francisco's students come from across the country and span a broad diversity across race, class, and immigration experiences/histories. Both classes were primarily composed of students of color, enrolled few international students, and most students identified as women.

During the summer of 2020, we began to prepare our Fall 2020 courses. We had had some experience with remote teaching; however, we did not feel prepared to teach in this new modality. We both elected to teach synchronously. Paloma had taught asynchronously in the Spring of 2020 and had received feedback from her students about how alienated they felt not being able to interact with their peers in the ways they had face-to-face. Francisco had been on leave during the onset of the pandemic. While asynchronous teaching can be more accessible for students with internet connection issues as well as family and work responsibilities (Lederer, Hoben, & Gibson, 2020; Rodriguez-Planas, 2020; Soria et. al, 2020), we opted to prepare flexible synchronous courses with the goal of developing course communities.

Francisco's course *Immigrants and Exiles* focuses on the depictions, experiences, and limits of the concepts of immigration and exile. It pays particular attention to the methods of displacing populations across the globe and the resultant migratory patterns. Specifically, it tracks the social production of "illegality" (De Genova, 2002) as a global phenomenon that determines the politics of belonging across place and space. Further, it analyzes how differently positioned racialized, gendered, classed, queer, and trans bodies experience the boundaries of the nation. Paloma's course *Borders, Knowledges, and Identities* explores the production and reproduction of borders. While discussing physical/national borders, it focuses on how *bordering practices* operate in the world: how social, symbolic and physical borders affect social mobility and immobility, inclusion and exclusion, and how people interpret their social world, their identities, and resistance.

A primary goal for our respective classes was for students to understand the presence of multiple borders in everyday life and the ways that language about the physical U.S.-Mexico border seeps into national logics. We wanted students to collectively recognize the ways borders are present and affect some people while simultaneously appearing invisible to those who hold the power to navigate them. We also intended to examine the intersectional systems of oppression that inform bordering as a central aspect of the nation-building project that discursively employs immigration status as a mechanism to produce citizens and deportable populations through illegalization, and materially utilizes the threat of deportation as a means of exploitation and violence.

The collaboration

Developing the collaboration meant employing intentionality in how we interacted within and across our courses. Thus, it had various scaffolded layers. We worked together to design three different assignments that would 1) produce introspection regarding personal knowledges of borders and bordering practices, 2) analyze how media frames the ways borders are presented, and 3) share introspective ideas through a paired-interactive assignment for students to discuss how different borders and migration experiences had been discussed in their respective course. In this way, assignments took into account multiple subjectivities and centered the power differentials inherent in discussions about citizenship. Student collaborations occurred through a shared virtual platform (Padlet, see below) that hosted discussions and input as well as through one-on-one interactions across the classes. We also had a collaborative conversation at the end of the course.

Storymaps

The first assignment asked students to create a story layered onto a map. Students used the web resource storymap.knightlab.com to build their stories. The software works like a storybook, where one can flip the pages and see the story move across different geographical spaces. The assignment built the groundwork for our goal of having students connect their and their family's experiential

knowledge to course content. It asked students to present an autoethnographic story linking their relationship to borders and/or migration to course content. Pratt (1991) defines autoethnography as "text[s] in which people undertake to describe themselves in ways that engage with representations others have made of them" (p. 35). These representations emerge out of "contact zones," that is, encounters, or relationships of power, that construct people and communities in particular ways (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). Our students exist within these contact zones with varying relationships to power and privilege. The process of locating oneself within contact zones therefore demands an interrogation of social location and subjectivity. To model autoethnographic writing on borders, we shared a co-written text detailing our bordered experiences with students (Villegas and Villegas 2019). The text discusses our experience growing up and attending college undocumented, our decision to leave the U.S. to pursue doctoral studies in another country and the 10-year ban barring our return to the U.S. While there is significant literature on the experiences of undocumented college students, we included ours so students could see the ways our subjectivities and social location related to course content.

We collaborated on the Storymap assignment instructions and tutorials, building on an assignment Paloma has developed and assigned for several years and across different contexts: with precariously documented students (Villegas, 2018) and university undergraduates in the U.S. and Canada (<https://www.utoronto.ca/immigrantscarborough/immigration-storytelling>). For their Storymap, students could focus and frame their relationship(s) to migration and borders however they chose. Given the possibility of students' personal vulnerabilities and the resultant potential risks, we emphasized agency in curating and narrating stories (i.e., sharing sensitive content about themselves, their families and/or communities). We emphasized that Storymap is an online platform and if they did not want to use it, they could submit an alternative format. We were particularly attuned to this given our own experience having been undocumented college students and knowing that some of our students could be undocumented or part of mixed-status families. We offered Paloma's Storymap as an example, explaining that she chose not to include her current or previous immigration status in the Storymap (at the time of teaching the course, she had H1B visa status) despite having openly discussed it during class (<https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/765ff33fec4e8ba892f4350d01d24146/my-relationship-to-migration/index.html>).

We also emphasized that all students had connections to borders and asked them to reflect on those connections given the U.S. history as a white settler state. At the same time, while the class focused on borders and migrants, we were wary of the ideology of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants, particularly the ways that it inherently dismisses the histories and presence of Indigenous peoples. Rather, we hoped the assignment also demanded recognition that colonialism imposes borders across Indigenous peoples' lands. This was particularly important

to emphasize given the ways some histories of migration and racialization are more visible than others. It was also a way to push students to think through their relationships to borders when they could not identify recent immigration experiences in their families.

Some Storymaps focused on creating an emotive archive, which historian Ana Rosas (2020) describes as the curation of a record of the complicated experiences, images, and memories immigrant families face. The Storymap platform allows students to upload images, and some students included photographs of themselves and their families. One important outcome for students is the opportunity to connect with family members and learn information about their genealogy. They can also share their Storymap with family after it is finished. In this way, the Storymap can be seen as a collective process of recording local, often subjugated knowledges and histories.

Families are complicated institutions and we recognize that some students may not have wanted to discuss those relationships in a course assignment. For that reason, as mentioned above, the assignment was designed broadly, for students to have the option of discussing borders without sharing a family history. Those students discussed relationships to borders and migration in their communities. Their storymaps focused on policies and practices. For instance, one student focused on policies providing access to drivers' licenses for undocumented migrants. Another student discussed their experience as a census worker in immigrant communities. This was particularly salient at the time of the course since the nation was grappling with proposals to exclude undocumented immigrants from the census and the student discussed how this affected their work. Finally, another discussed feeling like a gatekeeper when having to engage in immigration verification at their job. The broad "relationship to borders and migration" prompt also encouraged students to think of themselves as embedded in communities.

In sum, through the Storymap assignment, students reflected on their bordered experiences and, to some extent, connected with their peers digitally despite the social isolation in place during the pandemic. It was a productive starting point towards our goal of students engaging in critical analysis and reflection. They analyzed how their personal lives and social context were related to course readings, particularly the construction of borders and how their logics are re/produced within the nation. Students connected their experiences to current events, visual representations of migration and borders and on the politics of storytelling, including the ways that borders and migrants were employed in political rhetoric during the 2020 U.S. presidential election.

Analyzing Media Representations

The second assignment used a different online platform to construct a communal message board for both classes. We utilized padlet.com to curate a gallery of recent immigration and border images (photographs published in news stories, cartoons, memes etc.). Specifically, we asked students to identify an image and draw from course theories

to analyze the discourse presented. Because images are meant to elicit a sense of shared understanding, we asked students to consider the assumptions made regarding the process of migration, migrants themselves, and the "impact" of migration on the nation, alongside the prescribed action suggested or demanded. We employed a common phrase to contextualize the assignment and asked students: "If a picture is worth a thousand words, what is your image telling us? How is it forming an understanding of the situation and the necessary response?" While each course assigned different texts, for this assignment, we both assigned a chapter from Leo Chavez's (2001) book *Covering Immigration: Popular Images and the Politics of the Nation*.

Students were directed to look at online media representations of migration and any text attached to them. We developed one shared, password-protected, Padlet site for both courses. On the site, each student contributed an image, short 300-word analysis, and discussion question for their peers to answer. Then, a week later, we asked students to respond to questions from their peers in the other class. This facilitated a sense of shared experience and discussion across the two classes with some students engaging in a continuous back and forth dialogue. The process allowed students to directly contribute to each other's learning, produced meaningful discussion on the ways to interpret specific images, and gave students insight into the discussions occurring in the other class.

Given the continuous preoccupation with migration by government officials and the media, students did not have trouble finding images or material to examine. For example, one student identified a photograph of primarily white people utilizing what the student described as "patriotic" imagery to demand the removal of undocumented migrants and the building of a border wall. In this image, one can see various people holding American flags and images of Uncle Sam alongside red, white, and blue posters describing migrants as threats, demanding that the government consider "America first," and calling for a further militarized border. The student described the ways that the colors and flag imagery served to determine protestors' belonging to the nation and non-belonging of peoples crossing the Mexico-US border. They also analyzed the way the symbols promoted a nativist stance and, drawing on course discussions of settler colonialism, how claims to build a border wall invisibilized the fact that they were occurring on stolen land. Finally in their questions to the two classes, they asked:

Will these people accept immigrants who 'assimilate' to American culture? Do they actually want immigrants to assimilate or just leave the country? What does it mean to assimilate to American culture?¹

The questions prompted responses about the ways that race serves to define non-white communities as 'others' regardless of immigration status. Furthermore, the student promoted a rich examination of formal/legal and civic citizenship and its relationship to race. They recognized that although race mediates the availability to citizenship, we cannot dismiss the value of the latter, particularly given the presence of deportability and its impact on undocumented communities. This analysis produced a greater

understanding of differential citizenship within the nation for peoples who shared permanent immigration status while highlighting the consequence of being illegalized and deemed deportable by the state. Finally, it problematized the idea of assimilation as a desirable end goal (rather than as a rupture from a sense of self and community).

Another student analyzed an image describing the normalization of a militarized border. They began their post by writing:

The Atlantic magazine's September 2018 [issue] displaces the commonly tweaked figure of the Statue of Liberty with a weathered nickel statue of an ICE agent on the pedestal...The nationally identified symbol of a "welcoming America" so considerably large from the "outsider" that it must now be replaced by a colossal status of an ICE agent.

The student connected Chavez's (2001) work on national grand narratives, where he outlines media discourses presenting migrants as "threats," with De Genova's (2013) concept of the border spectacle, a performative process of making borders hyper visible, to argue that:

The compositional elements employed like ICE agent's attire, the usage of an impending-doom like background, and expressions such as "immigration crisis" all weave in-and-out of the migrant threat discourse and become materialized. However, in excluding the representation of any racialized migrant bodies on the cover, the migrant is framed as that which is already known and ascribed to ominously represent the "national threat."

The student was particularly adept at analyzing the imagery utilized to represent the ideas of a nation at risk. Furthermore, they invested significant attention on how the image of the "other" was not necessary as the creators assumed a shared understanding that those deemed as not belonging would simultaneously present a danger to the nation.

The two submissions illustrated different aspects of bordering and the implications for migrants, particularly those who are undocumented. The pervasive narrative demanding assimilation while not recognizing the ways that race plays into ideas of non-belonging, alongside the ideas of the need to militarize the border to produce safety, were presented alongside images depicting the separation of families, child detention centers, and loss of life at the border. Placing these narratives in a single platform allowed students to visually engage with their peers while recognizing the discourses emanating about the border.

One unforeseen contention that arose was a student taking exception to a broad question by their peer regarding the legitimacy of incarcerating migrants (the student asked a yes/no question about whether the state had the "right" to hold migrants in detention). As the instructors, we understood that the student who posted the question was trying to "be analytical" by teasing out the concept of national sovereignty and analyzing its parameters, particularly who has the power to determine belonging and presence in the nation through citizenship categories,

including detention and expulsion. At the same time, their question, perhaps initially considered solely in abstract terms, produced an affective response from students with closer proximity to border politics. In such students' minds, the question of legitimacy discounted the materiality of violence produced through displacement, removal, and detention. In short, what was initially framed as an "innocent" conceptual question was received as a breach of trust and callous disregard for those most affected by migration policy. Similar to the study of race, students who are aware or experience the consequences of illegalization are highly surprised at how their peers can proclaim to not know (or demonstrate outright innocence) when they inhabit a social location imbued with higher access to power (Leonardo, 2004). Navigating these tensions while maintaining the trust of students is important. We teach students to examine *how* processes of illegalization occur in society. But we are also very explicit that these processes, like racism, heteropatriarchy, and other systems of oppression, are real. And, that our goal in analyzing them is to intervene and disrupt them. While we had experience facilitating such conversations, the pandemic made the process a bit more difficult.

Cross-course Interactions

Finally, the last assignment paired students with a peer from the other class and asked them to informally interview each other. This assignment was meant to mimic informal group work within a classroom. Students were invited to ask each other about how they understood borders, if their ideas differed to those they had prior to starting the class, and if so, what had made borders more visible.

Students were randomly assigned a partner, though as a result of differing class sizes, we developed two groups composed of three students. While mathematically we could have kept all groups as pairs, it would have meant a pairing from the same course and it was important for us to foster cross-course conversations.

The course collaboration culminated with an open invitation for Francisco's students to join a session of Paloma's class in November 2020. We chose Paloma's class because Francisco's was held at 8 am EST, a time less accessible to students on the West Coast. While not all students were available to attend the session due to scheduling conflicts, it was a great way for students to meet each other as well as for us, as instructors, to meet them. And the conversation brought up important insights from students who spoke about their experiences in the class as well as their political work and immigration expertise. For instance, during that time we were unsure about how vaccination availability would be determined, specifically undocumented immigrants' eligibility to testing, medical support, and vaccine "passports." However, students brought their community knowledge to bear and discussed immigrants' experiences in Michigan and California.

During our classes and in course evaluations, students for the most part remarked that they enjoyed meeting someone from another class (and often living in a different geographic region). For example, students had the following

to say in their course evaluations. Student 1 mentioned the link between course content and their lived experience:

The subject matter of this course was highly in tune with current events which made the course a lot more of an academic reality because a lot of the readings were informing a lot of the events that were occurring in the nation. I think it's essential.

Student 2 discussed appreciating the ways the curricular design (assignments and course delivery) came together:

This course was challenging, but not unreasonably or to a fault. The majority of the articles were really really good. The Storymap, image assignment and Padlet posts, and interview with another student all required [us] to consider issues from multiple perspectives, and these different ways of engaging were probably my favorite part of this course, and go to show the effort that was put into considering this course.

Finally, Student 3 discussed something many of our students have asked us across our years of teaching: now what? They connected the link between course content and lived experience to a sense of how affected individuals enact change, and hopefully, how they can insert themselves in modes of transformation:

This class required the most effort out of my classes this [term], and I think that effort has paid off. I know more about immigration as a phenomenon, why the immigration system has evolved the way it has, the purpose of immigration restrictions, and how people resist inhospitable environments.

Informally, students also commented on how the collaboration allowed them to discuss each other's classes, readings, and comprehension of the material. Furthermore, through the process of describing concepts, they could provide additional nuance to their understanding as well as discuss how they might operationalize them in a larger writing assignment. The conversation also gave students a chance to get to know a bit about the college experience of other students, and how they were negotiating the pandemic. Many discussed feeling a sense of collectivity despite their universities being so far away. Since we, as siblings, speak about each other in our classes and students read our written work, it also gave them a chance to discuss their experiences with us. However, the process was not without difficulties. Students were often in different time zones and had to negotiate each other's busy schedules, including work and family responsibilities, to meet. Internet connections were also not always ideal.

Lessons Learned

As we reflect on this experience, we have identified a few lessons learned. They center around our teaching the courses virtually during the pandemic with the goal of improving student engagement, the collaboration process, and our focus on borders. While the move to online learning was a minor inconvenience in comparison to the damage the pandemic has caused, it still presented a challenge. Given our respective institutional locations, where teaching in close

proximity is highly valued, the pandemic not only laid bare many of the present inequities in higher education and society at large, but also prevented many of our pedagogic strengths.

Specifically, the transition to online learning removed one of the most useful skills we have as professors, the ability to invite informal engagement without the need to raise virtual hands, forgetting to unmute, or stressing about overtaxed internet connections. For us, therefore, online classes severely limited the availability of community-making within the classroom. We tried to emphasize communal engagement through our collaborations and assignment choices, designing assignments that invited students to participate where they were: literally in terms of their physical relationship to borders, metaphorically in relation to their social location and subjectivity, as well as digitally, given the shift to online platforms. The use of online platforms, chats, and breakout rooms provided an additional layer of pedagogic flexibility and community engagement.

In retrospect, to produce more robust spaces of communal engagement, we realized that we should introduce students to each other earlier in our respective terms. This could lead to increased trust from students and a greater sense that they were forging more sustained relationships. One issue however, was that Paloma's term began in August and Francisco's in September, so aligning assignment due dates was difficult.

Another aspect of student engagement involved sharing students' assignments with each other. While we value traditional writing assignments as a tool to learn and share ideas, we were wary of the ways these assignments, given their often private practice, could further feelings of isolation among students. For this reason, the Padlet image assignment was intentionally designed as a virtual repository shared across classes. At the same time, to respect students' privacy, we did not share students' Storymaps across classes. Students in Paloma's class shared their Storymap links with each other and provided feedback as part of their assignment (those who opted to submit an alternative assignment did not share with their peers). Francisco's students did not share their Storymaps. We consider this a pedagogic choice informed by our readings of our classes and potential concerns about student vulnerabilities. We would not change this, particularly given that some students chose to submit alternate assignments to avoid disclosing personal information with their peers.

We are often told that each generation is more comfortable with technology than the last, and while it may hold some truth, we cannot subscribe to it wholeheartedly. Technology-related accessibility became a bigger issue during the pandemic. Thus, we recognize that asking students to learn multiple online platforms to submit their assignments might be a lot. While we used three platforms, Storymap, Padlet, and our respective Learning Management System, students were also experiencing demands to learn new software and virtual platforms as part of their other classes. It was crucial to us to limit the possibility of overwhelming students who were already managing significant stress, so we recorded tutorials for each platform,

provided examples to students, and increased our availability, primarily through flexible office hours (though we understand these tasks can increase faculty workload).

While we value the ways technology offered multiple methods of engaging with students, it was not always our friend, and technological mishaps can occur while discussing heavy material. Instead of shying away from that, we endeavor to open spaces to have difficult conversations together. To do this across both classes involved trust. Specifically, trust in each other that we would care for our respective students, and an intentional approach to develop trust within our classrooms. In that way, while learning on the fly, we sought to be honest about that process with students and treat each other with care.

We would not necessarily have done such a collaboration with someone else. Therefore, we are hesitant to promote that such collaborations can or should be mass-produced or institutionalized. However, our collaborative approach was intentional in countering practices that seek to individualize and alienate students. Such practices became heightened during the pandemic, with calls for the mass surveillance of students through exam panopticon programs. Instead, we advocate cultivating hope and trust across students, programs, and potentially universities.

The pandemic also increased instructors' workload, often with little recognition or institutional support. While some institutions offered to freeze or extend tenure clocks (Weissman, 2020), a large proportion of instructors in higher education are not tenure-track. And, even for those who are tenure-track, a temporary freezing, which defers the benefits of tenure and promotion, cannot repair the time and energy invested in teaching and researching in new modalities during a global disaster. In this context, how might cross-university collaborations be counted by university evaluation committees? Such collaborations require greater effort from instructors and while we do not want to fall into transactional ideas of developing teaching practices to receive "credit" from evaluation committees, we have thought about how to present our work to such stakeholders. It is difficult to distill our risk taking, or to describe our strategies, given expectations of condensed summaries and student evaluation tables and statistics. This signals more about evaluation of teaching effectiveness practices than anything. However, our student evaluations and informal conversations with students clearly pointed to students appreciating our efforts to provide different perspectives, collaboration experiences, and human connection.

The pandemic presented a space to consider additional aspects to the study of immigration, borders, and im/mobility. While teaching this course we saw the designation of migrant workers as essential while still considered deportable, the ongoing warehousing of refugees in detention centers or in makeshift camps in Mexico, and as mentioned above, amidst an election cycle that furthered the vilification of undocumented migrants. We also heeded important critiques raised by undocumented migrants about the prolonged social distancing and immobility they experience due to a lack of comprehensive immigration reform, a process that was occurring well before the

pandemic, and that we have experienced at different points in our lives. While our two courses cannot not fix these large, complex problems, our students critically examined how power structures defined and determined citizenship, the resultant consequences of migrant illegalization, and the ways that borders further colonial ideals that produce dehumanized "others."

Finally, we reflect on three valuable aspects of our teaching collaboration. First is the cross/inter-institutional aspect of the project. Co-teaching often occurs through faculty in the same institution, though in some places it can be quite rare. Connecting students to peers in another institution and having them share their experiences related to borders adds a layer of nuance to the focus on students' experiential knowledge as pedagogical practice. The approach also exposes students to a diversity of power dynamics and experiences related to border and bordering practices that are seldom discussed or understood by those who are not directly affected. Yes, reading texts, watching videos and other practices can also fulfill that objective, and we do all of those in our classes. However, this added experience among peers from different institutions adds another dimension. Second, we paid close attention to the politics of space and where our universities are located. We recognized our universities are situated within a couple hours' drive from national borders, but with completely different narratives attached to them. Thus, we emphasized how our locations served a pedagogic starting point in our classes. Finally, our personal and professional experiences are intertwined with borders and bordering practices, and we shared those experiences with students, when appropriate, as points of departure for them to think about their experiences with borders and to analyze the effects of those borders in the media and other institutions. In sum, we intentionally produced a shared curriculum and pedagogy with the aims to promote hope and transformative action.

Endnotes

1. We received permission to share this from the student quoted, while maintaining confidentiality. We were unable to receive similar permission from students who responded in the Padlet. This is also partly caused by the pandemic as many of our students were seniors and it was more difficult to remain in touch.

Suggested Readings

(see also our Works Cited references)

- Abrego, L., & Gonzales, R. G. (2010). Blocked paths, uncertain futures: the postsecondary education and labor market prospects of undocumented Latino youth. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 15(1-2), 144-157.

Alvarez, E. F. (2020). Finding sequins in the rubble: the journeys of two Latina migrant lesbians in Los Angeles. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, 24 (2), 77-93.

Aranda, E., & Vaquera, E. (2015). Racism, the immigration enforcement regime, and the implications for racial inequality in the lives of undocumented young adults. *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, 1 (1), 88-104.

Willen, S. (2014). Plotting a moral trajectory, *San Papiers: outlaw motherhood as inhabitable space of welcome*. *Ethos*, 42 (1) 84-100.

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: The new mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Book Company.

Alexander, J. (2006). *Pedagogies of crossing: Mediations on Feminism, sexual politics, memory, and the sacred*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Chavez, L. R. (2001). *Covering immigration: Popular images and the politics of the nation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

De Genova, N. (2002). Migrant 'illegality' and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31, 419-447.

Dei, G. J. S. (1996). *Anti-racism education: theory and practice*. Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood Pub.

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.

Lederer, A. M., Hoban, M. T., Lipson, S. K., Zhou, S., & Eisenberg, D. (2021). More Than Inconvenienced: The Unique Needs of U.S. College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Health Education & Behavior*, 48(1), 14-19.

Leonardo, Z. (2004). The color of supremacy: beyond the discourse of 'white privilege.' *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 36, 2, 137-152.

Paik, A. N. (2020). *Bans, walls, raids, sanctuary*. University of California Press.

Rodriguez-Planas, N. (2020). *Hitting Where it Hurts Most: Covid-19 and Low-Income Urban College Students*. IZA Discussion Paper No. 13644, IZA Institute of Labor Economics.

Rosas, A. E. (2020). Immigrant Deportability and Emotive Archive Creation: The Emotional Honesty and Urgency of Mexican Immigrant Families. *Southern California Quarterly*, 102(3), 274-305.

Soria, K. M., Horgos, B., Chirikov, I., & Jones-White, D. (2020). First-generation students' experiences during

the COVID-19 pandemic. SERU Consortium, University of California -Berkeley and University of Minnesota.

Villegas, P. E. (2018). Bridging borders: teaching a bridging course with precarious status students transitioning to the university. In Francisco Villegas and Janelle Brady (Eds.) *Critical Schooling: Transformative Theory and Praxis*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Villegas, F. J., & Villegas, P. E. (2019). Bordered Lives: An Autoethnography of Transnational Precarity. In *The Reflexivity of Pain and Privilege* (pp. 175-190). Brill.

Walia, H. (2021). *Border and Rule: Global migration, capitalism, and the rise of racist nationalism*. Haymarket Books.

Weissman, S. (2020). Universities are freezing tenure clocks. What will that mean for junior faculty of color? Inside Higher Ed. <https://www.higheredjobs.com/Articles/articleDisplay.cfm?ID=2238>

Francisco Villegas is the Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership Associate Professor of Sociology at Kalamazoo College. His work is focused on migration, race, social movements, and bureaucracy. He is currently working on projects related to maneuvering local governments as a space of possible support for undocumented migrants.

Paloma E. Villegas is an interdisciplinary artist and associate professor of sociology at California State University San Bernardino. Her research and teaching examine the production of migrant illegalization Mexico, the U.S. and Canada and its intersections with borders, race, gender, nation-building, and class.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



This journal is published by [Pitt Open Library Publishing](https://pittopenlibrarypublishing.com/).