The following syllabus is the teaching and learning guide for the last time this course was taught. It will give you a good idea of the descriptions of the course, how it was taught, the reading, the papers and other assignments, the intended outcomes, and the workload. By examining this syllabus and others, you will be able to form an impression of what graduate theological education at Phillips Theological Seminary requires of students.

Due to periodic curriculum revisions, course names and/or numbers may be different on this syllabus than what the name and/or number of the current offered course may be.

This syllabus is provided for your information only. The faculty reserves the right to revise the curriculum, and each professor reserves the right to decide how best to meet the learning goals of the curriculum. Therefore, the following syllabus is an historical artifact rather than a promise of how the course will be taught in the future, or that the course will be taught again.

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TC 900 BorderLinks Context Immersion Study Course
Phillips Theological Seminary
Fall Semester 2013

Instructor: Mindy McGarrah Sharp, PhD
Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology and Ethics
mindy.mcgarrah.sharp@ptstulsa.edu (preferred); Office phone: 918-270-6452

BorderLinks provides interpreters and group facilitators who will guide the programing during the Delegation. The PTS course instructor for 2013 is Dr. McGarrah Sharp who will frame the immersion experience in the broader context of theological education. This is her third BorderLinks Delegation.

Course Description

The BorderLinks Context Immersion Study Course investigates the complex situation(s) along the border between the United States and Mexico, a significant site where the so-called first world meets the so-called developing world (note: now referred to by many with the term: two-thirds world). The US-Mexico border, a tense militarized zone, is subject of many political, moral, and theological debates in current US history.

A part of the seminary’s effort to engage and better understand globalization as a matter of theological and moral importance, this course proceeds from study to experience to reflection. The course introduces the complex matrix of socio-economic and intercultural relationships affecting the lives of people living along the border near Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. These issues are not confined to the border region only, but indeed raise difficult theological issues for all faith communities.

For students entering PTS before Fall 2013, this course fulfills a course requirement in “Global Realities and Cross-Cultural Issues.” For students entering PTS Fall 2013 or after, this course fulfills the “Immersion” requirement (prerequisite: Context Matters Portal Course).

Course Schedule

The course is divided into Pre-Delegation, Delegation, and Post-Delegation requirements. Pre-Delegation requirements include independent reading and writing. For the Delegation, the heart of the course, students will meet in Tuscon on Friday, October 18 and depart Friday, October 25. Following the Delegation, the class will convene for one session—if necessary by Skype—on a date to be arranged.
Costs

Students pay normal tuition and fee charges for the three semester-hour credits, less any tuition assistance they receive from the seminary. PTS offers grants to each registered student to cover the daily on-site program fee for the BorderLinks program—which includes guides, translators, meals, housing, and local transportation. In addition, each student receives a subsidy (the amount depends on the course enrollment) to help with airfare, which the seminary will purchase for the group in consultation with each student. Students who register for the course are responsible for the remaining cost of their airfare. If for any reason students must cancel their participation in the trip after airline tickets are purchased, they will be responsible for the actual cost of the airfare without subsidy.

Additional costs: Twenty-five dollars may be charged for visas in Mexico. Students must be prepared to pay this in cash, if required. Students will also want a small amount of cash to support purchases en route to and from Tuscon, any snacks purchased between meals, and occasionally but not always the group has had an opportunity to support local businesses for souvenirs and to support local craftspersons. It has been the habit of PTS to join the BorderLinks guides for a restaurant meal in Tuscon the last evening of the immersion experience as a shared, not subsidized, expense.

Required Texts*


- Required E-reserve Articles (posted on Moodle):

All materials must be read prior to the immersion experience so that all participants are prepared to engage the issues through dialogue during the trip. Because of the complex nature of economic realities and policies on the border, readings that address these themes have been included to support dialogue.
Required Films

In addition to the required reading, students should view the following films:

- **“Crossing Arizona”** directed by Joseph Matthew and Dan DeVito (see http://www.crossingaz.com/; the film is also available for streaming rental through sites such as Amazon.com)
- **“Wetback: the Undocumented Documentary”** National Geographic Film (available through the national geographic online store or other distributors)
- **Recommended Film:** “Beyond Borders: Faith and Action in the Arizona Desert” produced for churches by DisciplesWorld

_Films should be viewed prior to the immersion experience so that all participants are prepared to engage the issues through dialogue during the trip. Furthermore, the films introduce some of the leaders we may encounter on the immersion experience._

Preparing for the Delegation

BorderLinks has compiled a helpful document to support preparations for the delegation. Please review this carefully. The **Preparation Instructions** and the most recent **BorderLinks Statement of Safety** are posted for your reference on the moodle site for the course and always available on the BorderLinks webpage. Safety is a primary concern and every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of delegation participants. All participants must travel with **a valid Passport**—with an expiration date more than six months in the future. A copy of your passport is due to the Dean’s office (staci.copenhaver.ptstulsa.edu). Both BorderLinks and PTS also require participant signatures on **Limited Waiver of Liability Forms**.

PTS BorderLinks Chapel Service

Normally students who have completed the BorderLinks context immersion study course collaboratively plan and lead a PTS chapel service prior to the next opportunity other students have to register for a subsequent offering of the course. Participation is encouraged but not required. In the past, BorderLinks students have participated on-campus or remotely through planning, reading, preaching, singing, sharing photos and stories, or other parts of the worship service. The worship service for this course will probably be scheduled in the Spring 2014 semester.
Course and PTS Policies

**Attendance:** According to PTS policy, any student who misses 20% or more of the class contact hours for a course, for any reason, cannot pass or successfully audit that course. The intention of this policy is not to be punitive, but to recognize that students should retake courses for credit if they miss a significant number of the class contact hours. Missing any Delegation sessions will result in reduction in the overall participation grade.

**Language:** In all writing and on the delegation, use inclusive language and think critically about your use of language, particularly in relation to gender, race, ethnicities, cultures, differently-abled bodies, and theological differences. For example, use ‘he’ and ‘man’ when you want to refer to males or to be truthful to the sexist language of a text (with [sic])—these terms can no longer be assumed to denote all humans. If you choose to use male pronouns to denote the Divine, footnote your use with theological rationale and recognition of the harmful nature of this choice for some in your congregation or ministry setting. On the Delegation, we will critically examine language around persons and places in relation to border issues.

**Academic Integrity:** Do not plagiarize. Make sure that you understand plagiarism in all its forms. Pay careful attention to PTS policy on “Academic Misconduct.”

**Professional Confidentiality:** We will follow the canons of professional confidentiality for all personal disclosures and case deliberations. Anonymity will be preserved in written materials presented. When you are referring to someone outside of the class (i.e., in your church or other experiences), please remove names and identifying information (whenever possible) from your reflections, writing assignments, and in-class discussions. Reporting laws of the State of Oklahoma will be followed with respect to child abuse and neglect, homicide, or suicide. All cases in which there is reasonable suspicion that one of these actions is imminent or actually occurring shall be reported to the professor and to the proper authorities. See “Safe Space and Professional Behavior” in the PTS Fall 2013 Catalog.¹

**Submitting Assignments:** Please submit electronic copies of assignments. The professor will accept drafts of written assignments received no later (and preferably sooner) than seven days prior to an assignment’s due date.

**Extensions and Late Assignments:** Turn in assignments on time. Extensions are not automatic and must be justified. Please discuss with the professor as soon as possible any need you foresee for an extension for a particular assignment. Extensions considered up to three days prior to an assignment due date. Penalty for late assignments is one half of a letter grade per day late.

**Incompletes:** An incomplete for this course is discouraged. According to PTS policy, an incomplete may be granted for extenuating circumstances, but the approval is not automatic and must be justified. Approval must be requested on required forms and granted prior to the announced deadline, normally the next to last week of classes.

**PTS Institutional Resources:** Theological education in general is personally demanding, requiring your time, energy, personal reflection, and serious attention. This is certainly the case in this course. In addition to informal advising provided by members of the faculty and staff, the seminary provides access to licensed professional counselors and spiritual directors on a limited basis. Funds available through student fees provide confidential counseling services free of charge for individual students. For more information, contact the Chaplain. PTS aims to provide reasonable accommodation for qualified individuals with a disability (based on clinical documentation) to ensure their access and participation in Seminary programs. For details, see “Disabilities Policies and Procedures” in the Student Handbook. Please contact the Dean’s office for consultation.

¹ Adapted from professional confidentiality statement by Dr. Carrie Doehring.
Assignments and Evaluation

A final grade is earned in this course for the following:

Pre-Delegation:

**Registration for Delegation**, ungraded but required. DUE Friday, September 6
All participants need to complete the BorderLink’s program registration at:
https://www.borderlinks.org/index.php?option=com_chronoforms&chronoform=BLXRegistration
and register online as a PTS student. Please review the form before filling it out, as several
questions require your thoughtful engagement, while other questions require referencing specific
documents you’ll need before you can complete the registration. Please save a copy of this form
**before you submit it** and forward by email to mindy.mcgarrah.sharp@ptstulsa.edu.

**Critical Book Review of Required Texts**, 30% of final grade earned
8-10 page paper that critically engaged the assigned reading. Assignment guidelines posted on
Moodle. DUE 5pm Friday, October 4 (grace period until midnight).

Delegation:

**Preparation for and Active Participation in the Delegation**, 40% of final grade earned

Post-Delegation:

**Final Theological Reflection Paper**, 30% of final grade earned. Due date tba
Assignment Guidelines will be distributed and discussed on the Delegation.

**Participation in Group Reflection Session**, ungraded but required
Reflection to be scheduled during the Delegation for some time at the end of the semester.
Students may participate remotely.

**Calendar of Important Dates**

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, September 6</td>
<td>Registration Due to professor and BorderLinks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 4</td>
<td>Critical Book Review Due to professor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, October 18-</td>
<td>DELEGATION</td>
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<td>Friday, October 25</td>
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<td>Date tba</td>
<td>Post-Delegation Group Reflection Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date tba</td>
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PTS BorderLinks Course, Fall 2013