

## Investigating Social Inequalities of Hispanic Immigrants through the U.S. – Mexico Borderland Experience

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**Participating Faculty:** Participating Faculty: Dr. Shani P. Wilfred, Department of Women's and Gender Studies

**Number of Undergraduate Student Participants: 15**

The U.S. - Mexico Borderland Experience was an interdisciplinary, experiential research program for undergraduate students. The El Paso—Ciudad Juarez border region was chosen for this program because it is the largest border community in the world (736,000 residents in El Paso; 1.5 million residents in Ciudad Juarez; 2005 Census) with a long standing bilingual and bi-national culture. The Borderland Experience immersed students in the border culture and realities of the diverse Hispanic people who live and work in the region by placing students in local agencies to engage in qualitative research via ethnographic interviews and participant observation. The agency and organizations in which students were placed consist of a variety of non-profit programs that serve the needs of the Hispanic population in the area.

The Borderland Experience involved students in disciplined based inquiry (through field work) to analyze how the social construction of race, ethnicity, class, and gender affect Hispanics residing in this region. In addition, students analyzed how globalization created by the North American Free Trade Agreement impacts El Paso's Hispanic population.

During the Borderland Experience, students investigated: How social barriers created by gender, race, ethnicity, class, and nationality status (documented versus undocumented) affect Hispanics residing in the Borderland region, and how globalization impacts migration, immigration, poverty, and oppression of Hispanics residing in the Borderland region. Further, they investigated how oppression affects intimate partner violence of Hispanics in the Borderland area, and how diverse communities are organizing to meet needs and create positive social change to end oppression of Hispanics in the Borderland area.



### Presentations:

Cosgrove, W., Sullivan, A., Hurley, E., Patterson, A., Bryant, S., Bruner, J., Grant, K., Buchanan, C., and Patterson, O. (2011). Borders, immigrant and national values: shaping immigration policy to benefit everyone.

Patterson, A., Bruner, J., Bryant, S., Sullivan, A., Hurley, E., and Grant, K. (2011). Borderland culture immersion experience: a qualitative analysis. Valdosta State University Undergraduate Research Symposium, Valdosta, GA, April 5-6, 2012.

Bruner, J., Bryant, S., Patterson, A., and Sullivan, A. (2012). Social change: a borderland cultural immersion experience on the U.S.-Mexican border. Southeastern Women's Studies Association Conference, Fairfax, VA, March 29-31, 2012.

