



Political Science 2260G (570)
BORDERS, BODIES AND BOUNDARIES
Fall/ Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: B. Muller
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Course Information

Calendar Description:

Students explore causes, consequences and experiences of borders and the bodies that cross them. Examining geographically diverse examples, across academic disciplines (i.e., anthropology, geography, sociology, history, politics, journalism, fiction), we investigate how borders and boundaries emerge and how related forms of circulation and suppression are lived and shape our world.

Antirequisite(s): Social Justice and Peace Studies 2260F/G and the former Interdisciplinary Studies 2277F/G.

Extra Information: 3 hours. Cross-listed with Social Justice and Peace Studies 2260F/G.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: POLISCI

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

King's University College
POL/SJP 2260G S570 BORDERS, BODIES AND BOUNDARIES

Course information:

POL/SJP 2260G S570 Borders, Bodies and Boundaries

Professor Benjamin J. Muller, PhD

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<https://biometricstate.com/>

Office hours by appointment: <https://calendly.com/bmuller/winter-2026-office-hours>

Course description:

Students explore causes, consequences and experiences of borders and the bodies that cross them. Examining geographically diverse examples, across academic disciplines (i.e., anthropology, geography, sociology, history, politics, journalism, fiction), we investigate how borders and boundaries emerge and how related forms of circulation and suppression are lived and shape our world. See also: [Minor in Migration and Border Studies](#)

Course learning outcomes:

- Engage complex literature on borders, borderlands, immigration, asylum, and refugees.
- Become familiar with the ongoing social, political, economic, and cultural challenges and injustices in contemporary borders and mobility.
- Develop, enhance, hone, and apply critical thinking skills.
- Develop, enhance, hone, and apply critical writing skills.
- Develop, enhance, hone, and apply professional communication skills.
- Develop student presentation and argumentation skills in a range of formats (oral, written, video/podcast).

Mode of Instruction: *This is an in-person seminar course with some lectures.*

Required Course textbooks/materials (these are available through the UWO Bookstore):

Diener, A. C., & Hagen, J. (2024). *Borders: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated. <https://global.oup.com/academic/product/borders-9780197549605?cc=ca&lang=en&#> [there is an eBook format for this text which is at a reduced price]

Nguyen, Viet Thanh., ed. (2018) *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives* New York: Abrams Press. <https://thedisplaced.abrams.link/>

Part of the evaluation will be an oral book review, and students are responsible for obtaining their chosen text, selected from a list to be provided at the end of January. Nearly all books are available through the UWO library, online, or if you wish, through a range of booksellers. Additional readings for each week will be made available electronically through Brightspace.

Grading Rubric

A+ >90% Excellent. Mind-blowingly good.
A >80% Extremely good.

70-79%	Very Good work at this level of university; Mostly exceeds expectations.
C 60-69%	Satisfactory work; Average; You did what you had to do, but nobody is overly excited about it.
D 50-59%	Subpar. This is why I have office hours. Let's chat.
F <49%	Oops. It's obvious that there is a problem unless this was the result of a careless error in judgement. That error is often the assumption that no input will result in stellar output.

Method Of Evaluation:

Class Participation & Reflection Tutorial Journal	15% [ongoing]
Jigsaws exercise	15% [20 January; 10 February; 17 March]
Concept/Thinker Podcast (incl. script)	20% [3 February]
Oral Book Review	20% [10 March]
Final Reflection Essay	30% [Due the day of last class]

Participation & Reflection Journal/Discussion Groups (15%)

In class participation, your weekly journal, together with "jigsaws" accounts for a total of 30% of students' final grade. Marks will be awarded for raising questions and concerns pertinent to the readings, expressing cogent arguments, and general participation in the discussion that demonstrates some comprehension and critical engagement in the required material covered for that specific session. Simply talking to fill time and space will not result in positive marks. Before coming to class, students ought to have read, viewed, and/or listened to the appropriate material listed in the syllabus, and consider the following before attending the seminar: what is the primary argument? What is particularly interesting and/ or relevant about the material? Is the argument persuasive? Attempt to critically evaluate the internal and external logic of the argument(s) presented; reflect on the broader implications for the themes in our course; and raise at least two interesting and provocative discussion questions.

The journal expectation refers to the fact that students will come to class with prepared notes and/or questions for discussion related to the materials from the assigned readings from *The Displaced* that will form the basis of small group discussions, tutorial style. Each class will end with approximately 40-50 minutes of group discussion based on these brief readings, during which time you will have an opportunity to raise the questions, concerns, points, etc. raised in your reading journal. You should also reflect in your journal afterwards about the discussion you had. What did you learn? What remains puzzling? Are there issues unanswered with which you want to engage further?

Jigsaws 15% [20 January; 10 February; 17 March]

A jigsaw exercise is a collaborative learning strategy where students become "experts" on one part of a topic and then share their knowledge with peers. A handout is provided for each Jigsaw exercise, available in this tab. Please come to class on the Jigsaw Day, prepared to present your assigned topic to your peers. You will be placed in groups with students who have become experts on **different topics**, and you will present and share your expertise respectively with the members of your group.

Concept/Thinker Podcast 20% [3 February]

There are several historical thinkers and key concepts covered in the course and our course materials. Most figures included in our reading list are fair game. You are required to choose one individual or concept and provide a 5-minute podcast. Ask yourself, what would someone interested in borders, mobility, boundaries, and so on, want to know about this thinker and their contribution to the field? Or, how influential and important has this concept been to the evolution of borders, bordering practices, and/or the study of borders and borderlands? Remember, that you should create this for someone not in our course, who is interested in the issues we discuss, so make this accessible, pitched for a broad, non-expert audience. Students are required to submit their script along with the podcast. More details will be provided in the first week of class and the assignment is DUE 3 February.

ORAL BOOK REVIEW [10 March – 20%]

You are required to complete an oral book review for this course. You will receive a more detailed handout on this assignment in the first few weeks of class. The book is required material for the course but will be a book of your choosing from a provided list. The Book Review will be done **orally** on March 10 during our class time. A random schedule will be generated that will indicate the time of your oral review and whether you are questioned by the Professor or the course tutor. You will receive a list of potential questions one week prior to the review, from which the **three questions** you are asked will be chosen.

FINAL REFLECTION ESSAY (30%)

You will receive further information regarding this assignment as the course progresses. This will be built on previous assignments (oral book review and podcast) and relate to a specific border/migration issue that is germane to the work you have been doing over the course of the semester. There is a requirement to provide an outline **no less than 3 weeks prior to the assignment deadline**. The outline is worth 10% of your final grade, and the final write up is worth 20%, for a total of 30%. The final write up will be due at 11:59pm on our last day of class.

Academic Considerations:

- *Any course elements with built-in flexibility (e.g. grading on n-2 quizzes; submission windows)*
- *One in-semester assessment (e.g. group presentation, midterm test, final essay) requiring formal documentation for academic consideration (if using)*

Academic Integrity:

- *Link to Western Scholastic Discipline policy:*
https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf
- *The instructor reserves the right to use **Turnitin** for written assignments for this course*
- *Please note: The information below is intended for the outline, and further information will be provided on the course Brightspace page.*

Absences and Late Assignments

Penalties for late papers or projects may be avoided if extensions are requested in advance. Otherwise, a two-mark deduction will be taken for each of the first five days it is late (including weekends). After 5-days without communication, a zero will be assigned.

Students are expected to schedule appointments and other responsibilities around class time. To be excused from participatory requirements (attendance or homework, etc.) due to temporary illness or an unavoidable scheduling conflict, contact the instructor directly via email as soon as you are aware of the problem. *Ordinary problems of this nature do not require documentation or communication with the Dean's Office; they will be dealt with by the course instructor.*

If a student experiences a disruption in their ability to study or participate in the course for more than one week, or if there is a personal loss or trauma of a serious nature, they may request more extensive accommodations, counselling, and other forms of help. The best way to do this is to contact the instructor and/or the Academic Dean's Office.

AI Clarification

Any usage of artificial intelligence or language generation or translation applications by students to complete assigned work for this course must be approved by the instructor *and* noted by the student in the submitted work itself. Writing text and then feeding it into a computer application to improve *or* translate your own words, changing a few words, and then submitting this text as if it was your own constitutes plagiarism. You must compose text, choose words, construct logic flow, structure sentences and paragraphs to organize, synthesize, interpret information with your own mind. When you borrow language or ideas from another person or from a machine this must be acknowledged with quotation marks and/or citations.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Friday Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams and tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under Special Examinations).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University

College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-supportservices/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safecampus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammarchecking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.