

Tales from the Chihuahuan Desert: Borderlands Narratives about Identity and Binationalism

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

A Summer *Virtual* Institute for Secondary School Teachers (Grades 6–12)
at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP)
in collaboration with Center for Inter-American and Border Studies (CIBS),
Institute of Oral History (IOH), and Creative Studios

July 18th – August 1st, 2021

E-Application

When is the deadline for the E-Application for the 2021 Summer Virtual Institute?

The deadline to apply is March 1, 2021, by 11:59 PM (Mountain Time).

What will I need to include in my E-Application?

The E-Application will include the following five items:

- a) your personal contact information
- b) school address
- c) recommendation letter
- d) personal essays
- e) professional resume

Who will read my E-application?

A Selection Committee will read your E-Application. The Committee is comprised of the two directors and two or more colleagues, at least one of whom is a 6-12 teacher. They evaluate all complete applications to select a group of NEH Summer Scholars and identify alternates.

When will I be informed if I am accepted to participate in the Institute?

All applicants will be notified of their status on March 26, 2021, by email. Please contact us should your email address change at any point.

If I am accepted, by when must I formally decide to either accept or decline the participation offer?

Applicants must accept by April 2, 2021.

Books

Which books are we reading?

We are reading the following books, which will be provided by the Institute and sent to the address provided on your application form. Should that address change at any point prior to May 15th please let us know ASAP.

1. Alvarez, C. J. [*Border Land, Border Water: A History of Construction on the U.S.–Mexico Divide*](#). University of Texas Press, 2019.
2. Bowles, David. [*They Call Me Güero: A Border Kid's Poems*](#). Cinco Puntos Press, 2018.
3. Longoria, Margarita, editor. [*Living Beyond Borders: Stories about Growing Up Mexican in America*](#). Philomel Books, 2021.
4. Luiselli, Valeria. [*Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in 40 Questions*](#). Coffee House Press, 2017.
5. Luiselli, Valeria. [*Lost Children Archive: A Novel*](#). Penguin Random House, 2019.

Each Summer Scholar will receive a copy of *Write Yourself a Lantern: A Journal Inspired by The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo.

<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/write-yourself-a-lantern-a-journal-inspired-by-the-poet-x-elizabeth-acevedo?variant=32116593360930>

When will we receive our books?

The books will be shipped to Summer Scholars by May 15th, 2021.

By when should I have read each book?

Summer Scholars will have read the books by July 15th, 2021.

Can I read the books in other world languages if the versions are available?

Yes. A few of the books are available in Spanish and French. However, we will be sending everyone the English version of all the books.

Contacts

Who can I contact for more information?

The directors are Drs. Ignacio Martínez and R. Joseph Rodríguez. We can be reached via email at borderlandsnarratives@utep.edu.

Where else can I go online to read about NEH, UTEP, or the 2021 Summer Virtual Institute?

The website address is updated regularly and can be found at: borderlandsnarratives.utep.edu.

Content

What is the purpose of the Institute?

This Summer Institute for Secondary School Teachers (Grades 6-12) is sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and offered by The University of Texas at El Paso. Borderlands narratives have historically been seen as peripheral to the development of American history and identity.

In middle and high-school textbooks across the country, borderland populations have received minimal attention. The binational spaces border people occupy have been portrayed as dangerous, illegitimate, and as part of a distinct counter-culture. We aim to place these forgotten regions and their populations at the center of the debate about American history and identity by focusing on the multicultural region and narratives of the El Paso-Ciudad Juárez metroplex.

What methods will we study?

This NEH Summer Institute will incorporate a variety of methods in telling the story of border people for use in providing content and pedagogical training for 6–12 educators and will adopt a diverse set of instructional methods with the aim of benefiting teaching and scholarship in the humanities. The Institute will provide teachers with a focused understanding of the dynamic nature and literacies of border people’s narratives and of their social, cultural, and political adaptations across time.

What will happen each week?

In **Week One**, we will introduce the concept of historiography, foundational concepts and terms, the role of the chronicler, geographies of the Chihuahuan Desert, and resources for classroom application and analysis for the e-portfolio development projects with units and lesson plans for instructional delivery.

In **Week Two**, we will advance the concept of historiography with narratology, classroom applications of Institute concepts and content, and presentation of Summer Scholars' e-portfolios with instructional lesson plans for delivery. In addition to classroom work, we will visit a number of historical sites around the El Paso/Juárez metroplex.

Overall, Summer Scholars will be tasked with comparing and synthesizing various perspectives offered by our invited faculty and guest lecturers in order to make important connections across time and space. Along the way, invited scholars will develop E-Portfolios that will allow them to incorporate teaching material for their students.

What will we create or design?

As an integral component of the Institute, Summer Scholars will have the opportunity to take part in individual classroom-implementation projects such as e-portfolios with instructional lesson plans that will provide them with content knowledge applicable to a wide range of secondary grade levels (6-12). In particular, subject areas include History, English Language Arts, Literature and other related fields; geographic locations; and time periods.

What are the essential questions that will guide the Institute?

Each week we will focus on a broad theme related to borderlands narratives. View our [Essential Questions and Learning Outcomes](#).

Documents

Which documents will I be required to provide to participate?

All accepted applicants will be asked for documents required to process the stipend payment. This includes the completion of payroll forms required by the [UTEP Payroll Office](#), Business Services.

What will I need to provide to process my stipend payment?

We will be requesting copies of your driver license and social security card. It is imperative that these documents be submitted in a timely manner so as to ensure on-time payment during the summer. Payments will be delivered in two installments: at the end of Week One and at the end of Week Two.

Important Dates

Which dates should I keep mind for the Institute?

The 2021 Summer Virtual Institute dates are July 18th – August 1st, 2021

Are the dates likely to change?

The dates will remain as listed. Any changes will be approved by NEH in advance.

What if I cannot attend all of the Institute or my plans change?

Please inform us as soon as possible of your withdrawal or change in plans. This will affect the stipend payment.

Participation and Credit

Will I receive any acknowledgement of participation?

Yes, upon completion of the Institute, NEH Summer Scholars will receive a certificate indicating their participation.

Are Continuing Education Units available?

Yes, Summer Scholars can apply for CEUs through UTEP Extended University. We will provide more information in early July 2021. <https://www.utep.edu/extendeduniversity/>

Is undergraduate or graduate-level credit available for the Institute?

There is the option to seek UTEP credit, but this will require applying for admission to UTEP and, depending on residence, out-of-state tuition for a three-credit course.

Start Time (login) and End Time (logout)

If this is a Summer Virtual Institute, when am I expected to be present for live sessions?

All Summer Scholars must be logged in 10 minutes before the morning Start Time, which will be 8:30 AM (Mountain Time).

Summer Scholars will be visible via Zoom at **8:20 AM (Mountain Time)**.

What is required for access?

Summer Scholars will be in a space conducive to learning and with access to the books, Internet, readings, and their machine (iPad, laptop), camera, and microphone.

Summer Scholars must be prepared to use the require hardware, software, platforms, and tools with universal design and access.

What will be the Start Time (login) via Zoom?

Summer Scholars will be visible and active via Zoom login at 8:20 AM (Mountain Time) during the weekdays.

What will be the End Time (logout) via Zoom?

The 2021 Summer Virtual Institute will have an End Time of 12:30 PM (Mountain Time) on during the weekdays. Individual asynchronous work as well as any group work should be conducted in self directed afternoon sessions. Institute directors will remain accessible via Slack from 2:00 PM (Mountain Time) until 4:00 PM (Mountain Time).

Will breaks be provided during the morning sessions?

Yes, Summer Scholars will have stop breaks, ranging from 5 to 15 minutes and will be on Zoom less than four hours per weekday.

Responsibilities

What are my responsibilities as a participant or 2021 Summer Scholar?

Be present. Engage in discussions. Consider ways of joining the conversation and inviting others as well.

Will our responsibilities change or increase?

The responsibilities will remain consisten and will vary based on individual, pair, and group work.

What else should I think about as far as responsibilities?

In order to ensure that things run smoothy, It is important that you respond to emails from directors or university officals in a timely manner. Once the Instutute begins, we ask that you participate with an open mind. Ask questions. Consider various viewpoints. Permit doubt or skepticism, but lean toward understanding.

E-Portfolio Project

What is the E-Portfolio project that we will be submitting as participants?

The E-Portfolio project based on concepts and content under study in the 2021 Summer Virtual Institute will include the following:

1. Teacher background and reflection
2. Mini-lesson with activities on a concept with at least one of the following: history, literary works, language arts, visual or performing arts, or world language acquisition.
3. Artifacts or photographs to complement concept under study.

How can I prepare early on for the E-Portfolio deliverable?

Consider the books, readings, and presentations and what complements or enhances your content area at your institution or in your program.

Stipend

How much is the stipend?

NEH Summer Scholars will receive the NEH-stipulated stipend of \$2,200 to cover their expenses during the institute. Applicants should note that supplements will not be given in cases where the stipend is insufficient to cover all expenses.

Is it a taxable stipend?

Yes. The payment will require completing a W-9 form, including your Social Security number, and taxes will apply to this stipend payment.

When will I receive my stipend?

If all documents required are received BEFORE the deadline AND processed by the UTEP Payroll Office, the first check will be paid during the first week and the second during the final week.

Stipends are intended to help cover any research expenses and ordinary living expenses.

What must we accomplish responsibly to receive the full stipend?

Institute participants are required to:

1. Attend all virtual meetings.
2. Engage fully as professionals and colleagues in the work of the Institute and programming.
3. Complete and submit the E-Portfolio.

Participants who, for any reason, do not complete the full tenure of the program must refund a pro rata portion of the stipend.

Travel

Will any travel be required for the 2021 Summer Virtual Institute?

No travel will be required.

Can I still travel to El Paso for the Institute?

Yes, you may do so, although we will not be hosting any Summer Scholars at UTEP or for our virtual tours at selected sites.

Virtual Institute

How will the Institute be organized?

We will be using an inquiry-based model of learning and teaching.

Also, Summer Scholars will establish Community Norms of Engagement along with a Social Contract.

All Summer Scholars will follow the [NEH Principles of Civility](#).

Will I need any special hardware, software, applications, or tools on my machine to participate?

Please have a working machine that can access the Internet and Zoom as well as a working camera and microphone.

Will there be technical assistance and support available?

Yes. We will be assisted by the UTEP Creative Studios: Technology Solutions for Teaching, Learning, and Research.

What if I dislike technology such as using Zoom? What can I do?

We must take deep breaths and plan ahead now. We can do this and work together as a community and team.

How will we maintain an engaging, community-oriented Institute?

We will practice community leadership, critical and reflective thinking, dialogic inquiry, and mindful breathing.

Website

What content is available on the website?

The website includes the Institute content background, our community, selected readings, and archived E-Portfolios.

How often will be the website be updated?

The website is updated every week with new, revised, or updated content.