

**SO/PO/IR 347 – THE WALL: BORDERS, VIOLENCE, AND SEPARATION IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD**  
**IES Abroad Vienna**

**DESCRIPTION:**

The course examines the current process of wall building along borders experienced by diverse nation-states in the Western world in a comparative perspective. Even though common discourse on globalization dismisses borders as increasingly irrelevant to the human experience, the Western world is erecting new borders, both physical and virtual (i.e., challenges to the Schengen system in Europe, the Dublin convention, forced eviction of migrants/refugees, etc.), essentially aiming to control and contrast people flows. Wall building practices today are becoming a political strategy to respond to the security issue through the reinforcement of external but also internal borders (as in the EU case). Borders will be interpreted in their variability through an overview of the contemporary theoretical analysis of borders/borderlands, elaborating their complexity as spaces/lines, natural/constructed features, porous/fix territorial definitions, etc. Through the analysis of diverse cases of historical and recent wall/border construction, the course aims at highlighting the global dimension of the security issue in a comparative way. More attention shall be dedicated to the encounter/clash between local communities and the process of imposition of walls: borders create political, social and cultural distinctions, but simultaneously imply the existence of networks across them, movement of protest and the construction/reconstruction of group identities. The focus of the course revolves around people's agency at the border/wall and concentrates on how wall building has today a strong connection with the control of migration and people flows.

**CREDIT:** 3 credits

**CONTACT HOURS:** 45 hours

**LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION:** English

**PREREQUISITES:** None

**METHOD OF PRESENTATION:**

This class will be an interactive seminar based on

- Class lectures by the professor
- Seminar discussions and analyses of class readings
- Multimedia resources
- Presentations by students
- Moodle forums

**REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:**

- Class participation - 10%
- Group project and presentation - 15%
- Research paper - 20%
- Midterm exam - 25%
- Final exam - 30%

(1) EXAMS:

Midterm and Final Exams will be based on class lectures and discussions as well as the readings and additional sources required for the class. Students will answer five (5) essay-type questions, evaluating their argument structure and critical thinking.

(2) TERM PAPER:

Students will prepare a 2,000-2,500 word research paper on one of the topics analysed in class. A detailed description of this assignment will be available to students in Moodle. The paper is due at the end of week 11.

### (3) GROUP PROJECT:

Students will be divided in groups of 3 and they will propose a personal interpretation of the general topic of the course. Video, photos and/or other expressive methods can be used. If students want to include an interview in their projects, an informed consent must be obtained from all human subjects involved, unless a waiver of consent has been approved by the IES Institutional Review Board (IRB). The projects will be presented in class during week 12.

### (4) COURSE PARTICIPATION:

Lectures and assigned readings are designed to complement each other. The texts for each class should be read in advance since this will allow for better participation in class and a more fruitful interaction between students and the teacher. Students should read each item on the list closely and come to class for a detailed discussion. The following questions may help to prepare for the discussion:

- What outcome(s) is the author seeking to explain?
- What is this author(s) main argument?
- Where does this reading fit into the literature and how does it seek to contribute?
- What is the nature of this reading's empirical research design and findings?
- What are the paper's strengths and weaknesses?

This class is based on discussion of materials and topics and cannot function properly without an active participation of the students. Class participation includes:

- Asking questions and or commenting on the weekly readings and topics of the day
- Responding questions on the readings,
- Participating actively in the class discussions

	<b>Grading Rubric for Student Participation (Developed by Sam Viroslav, IES Abroad San Jose)</b>
<b>A</b> <b>90-100</b>	<b>Excellent participation</b> Student's contributions reflect an active reading of assigned bibliography. The student skilfully synthesizes the main ideas of the readings and raises questions about the applications and implications of the material; demonstrates, through questions and comments, that he/she has been capable of relating the main ideas in the readings to the other information discussed in the course, and with his/her own life experience; makes informed judgments about the readings and other ideas discussed in class, providing evidence and reasons; respectfully states his/her reactions about other classmates' opinions; is capable of contributing to the inquiry spiral with other questions. The student gets fully involved in the completion of the class activities.
<b>B</b> <b>80-89</b>	<b>Very good participation</b> Student's contributions show that the assigned materials are usually read. Most of the time the main ideas are identified, even though sometimes it seems that applications and implications of the information read were not properly reflected upon. The student is able to construct over others' contributions, but sometimes seems to interrupt the shared construction to go over tangents. He/she is respectful of others' ideas. Regularly involved in the activities but occasionally loses concentration or energy.
<b>C</b> <b>70-79</b>	<b>Regular participation</b> The participant evidences a regular reading of the bibliography, but in a superficial way. He/she tries to construct over others' ideas, but commonly provides comments that indicate lack of preparation about the material. Frequently, contributions are shallow or unarticulated with the discussion in hand.
<b>F</b> <b>0-69</b>	<b>Insufficient participation</b> Consistently, the participant reads in a shallow way or does not read at all. Does not participate in an informed way and shows lack of interest in constructing over others' ideas.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing the course, students should be able to...

- Analyse the complexity of borders/borderlands construction and interpretation;
- Interpret the cogent political aspect in the process of wall building;
- Interpret the global dimension of the political discourse on securitization;
- Identify and compare different wall building processes;
- Understand the global dimension of human flows and human interaction with borders/walls;
- Discover diverse/divisive narratives about walls and borders;
- Interpret the importance of walls/borders in shaping group identities;
- Analyse wall de-construction strategies.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY:

IES Abroad Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions including field study excursions, internship meetings, scheduled rehearsals, and all tests and exams. Attendance will be taken for every class. If a student misses more than three hours of class without an excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence. For more information, please see the full IES Attendance Policy, found in your Vienna Student Handbook.

## CONTENT:

WEEK	CONTENT	READING ASSIGNMENTS
1	<b>Introduction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1: Presentation: themes, problems, challenges</li> <li>• Section 2: Historical overview of wall construction in the Western World: The wall as security in medieval Vienna</li> </ul>	R. Jones, <i>Violent borders: Refugees and the right to move</i> . Verso Books, 2016, pp. 1-28 Heike Krause and Christoph Sonnlechner, "Landscape and Fortification of Vienna after the Ottoman Siege of 1529," <i>The Hungarian Historical Review</i> ("018), 451-476
2	<b>Border/Borderland and Identity Construction Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1: What is a border/borderland?</li> <li>• Section 2: Definitions and critical analysis of the concepts of space/territory/sovereignty</li> </ul>	P. Novak, <i>The Flexible Territoriality of Borders</i> , in "Geopolitics", 10 (2011), pp. 741-767 M. Longo, "Borders: Thick and Thin," in <i>The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11</i> . Cambridge University Press. 2017.
3	<b>The Berlin Wall and the history of political wall in practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1: The Berlin Wall and its importance in the contemporary conceptualization of walls</li> <li>• Section 2: Violence, refugees and insecurity at the border/wall</li> </ul>	P. Major, <i>Behind the Berlin Wall</i> , 2010, Oxford University Press, Introduction, pp. 1-22 L. Lucassen. "Peeling an onion: the "refugee crisis" from a historical perspective." <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i> 41.3 (2018): 383-410.
4	<b>EU Borders</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Section 1: Mare Nostrum and Frontex: different strategies of border control/border construction</li> <li>• Section 2: Refugees and the Poland-Belarus Border</li> </ul>	Katharyne Mitchell, Reece Jones, and Jennifer L. Fluri. "Introduction to the Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration." <i>Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration</i> . Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019. Maciej Grześkowiak, "The "Guardian of the Treaties" is No More? The European Commission and the 2021 Humanitarian Crisis on Poland-Belarus Border," <i>Refugee Survey Quarterly</i> (2023), 81-102.
5	<b>Austria and Its Walls</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1: Austria and The Iron Curtain</li> <li>Section 2: Borders, Fences, and the 2015 Migration Crisis</li> </ul>	Markus Rheindorf and Ruth Wodak, "Protecting Austria from Refugees: Metadiscursive Negotiation of Meaning in the Current Refugee Crisis," in <i>Identity Politics Past and Present: Political Discourses from Post-war Austria to the COVID Crisis</i> . University of Exeter, 2022.

		E. Gioielli, "From Crumbling Walls to the Fortress of Europe: Changing Commemoration of the 'Pan-European Picnic,'" <i>Cultures of History Forum</i> (2020).
6	<b>MID-TERM EXAM</b>	
7	<b>Ukraine and The Borders of Europe</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1: Bloodlands – A history of violence at Ukraine's borders</li> <li>Section 2: Contemporary Ukraine and the war for borders</li> </ul>	S. Plokhyy, "Hitler's Lebensraum," in <i>The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine</i> . Basic Books, 2015. C. Wanner, "Commemoration and the New Frontiers of War in Ukraine," <i>Slavic Review</i> , Vol.78:2 (2019): 328-335. * 20 Days in Mariupol, 2023, b Mstyslav Chernov ( <b>upon availability</b> )
8	<b>North America and the Wall</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1: The US/Mexico Wall</li> <li>Section 2: The historical process of bordering and re-bordering the US</li> </ul>	J. McC. Heyman, <i>Constructing a Virtual Wall. Race and Citizenship in the US-Mexico Border</i> , in "Journal of the South West", 50:3 (2008), pp. 305-333 D. Spener, Movidas Rasmaches. <i>Strategies of migrant resistance on the Mexico-US border</i> , in "Atzlan: a Journal of Chicano Studies", Number 2, Fall 2010, pp. 9-36 R. Jones, <i>Violent borders: Refugees and the right to move</i> . Verso Books, 2016, pp. 29-47
9	<b>Israel and the Wall</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1: The West Bank Wall: violence and resistance, contesting the wall</li> <li>Section 2: Imagined communities at the border</li> </ul>	E. Vallet (ed), <i>Borders, Fences and Walls. State of Insecurity?</i> , Chapter 13 (C. Leuenberger "Technologies, Practices and Reproduction of Conflict. The Impact of the West Bank Barrier on Peacebuilding"), 2014, pp. 211-230 B. Piquard, <i>Gated Population, Walled Territories</i> , in D. Day et al (eds) "Cities and Crisis", 2009, University of Bilbao Publications, pp. 65-72 Film viewing: • "Le fils de l'autre" (The son of the other), 2012, by Lorraine Lévy
10	<b>Resistance at the Wall</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1: Exclusion paradigms</li> <li>Section 2: Challenging walls: experience of resistance</li> </ul>	Gupta and Ferguson, <i>Beyond culture: space, identity and the politics of difference</i> , in "Cultural Anthropology", 7 (1992), pp. 6-23
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visit at the Archives of Austrian Resistance</li> <li>Wolfgang Schellenbacher (Archivist) – Guest Lecture on Austria and Borders during World War II</li> <li>Research papers due</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.doew.at/english">https://www.doew.at/english</a>
12	<b>Presentations of Group Projects and General Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 1: Group project presentations</li> <li>Section 2: General Review Final Exam</li> </ul>	

#### REQUIRED READINGS:

Diener A. and J. Hagen. *Borders: A very short introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2012. pp. 1-18.

Gioielli, Emily. "From Crumbling Walls to the Fortress of Europe: Changing Commemoration of the 'Pan-European Picnic,'" *Cultures of History Forum* (2020).

Grześkowiak, Maciej, "The 'Guardian of the Treaties' is No More? The European Commission and the 2021 Humanitarian Crisis on Poland-Belarus Border," *Refugee Survey Quarterly* (2023), 81-102.

Gupta and Ferguson, *Beyond culture: space, identity and the politics of difference*, in "Cultural Anthropology", 7 (1992), pp. 6-23.

Jones R. *Violent borders: Refugees and the right to move*. Verso Books, 2016, pp. 1-47

Korblayova, V. "Contemporary Ukraine: Borderland—Bloodland—Neverland?" in *Cultural Change in East-Central European and Eurasian Spaces: Post-1989 Revisions and Re-imaginings*. Springer Link, 2021

Krause, Heike and Christoph Sonnlechner, "Landscape and Fortification of Vienna after the Ottoman Siege of 1529," *The Hungarian Historical Review* (2018), 451-476

- Longo, "Borders: *Thick and Thin*," in *The Politics of Borders: Sovereignty, Security, and the Citizen after 9/11*. Cambridge University Press. 2017.
- Lucassen L. "Peeling an onion: the "refugee crisis" from a historical perspective." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 41.3 (2018): 383- 410.
- Major P. *Behind the Berlin Wall*, 2010, Oxford University Press, Introduction, pp. 1-22
- McC. Heyman J. *Constructing a Virtual Wall. Race and Citizenship in the US-Mexico Border*, in "Journal of the South-West", 50:3 (2008), pp. 305-333
- Mitchell, Katharyne, Reece Jones, and Jennifer L. Fluri. "Introduction to the Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration." *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019.
- Novak P. *The Flexible Territoriality of Borders*, in "Geopolitics", 10 (2011), pp. 741-767
- Piquard B. *Gated Population, Walled Territories*, in D. Day et al (eds) "Cities and Crisis", 2009, University of Bilbao Publications, pp. 65-72
- Plokhyy, Serhii, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. Basic Books, 2015.
- Rheindorf, Markus and Ruth Wodak, "Protecting Austria from Refugees: Metadiscursive Negotiation of Meaning in the Current Refugee Crisis," in *Identity Politics Past and Present: Political Discourses from Post-war Austria to the COVID Crisis*. University of Exeter, 2022.
- Spener D. Movidas Rasmaches. *Strategies of migrant resistance on the Mexico-US border*, in "Atzlan: a Journal of Chicano Studies", Number 2, Fall 2010, pp. 9-36
- Vallet E. (ed), *Borders, Fences and Walls. State of Insecurity?* New York, Routledge, 2014 (Chapter 1, 13)
- Wanner, C. "Commemoration and the New Frontiers of War in Ukraine," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 78:2 (2019): 328-335.

#### REQUIRED FILM VIEWING:

- "Le fils de l'autre" (The son of the other), 2012, by Lorraine Lévy
- "20 Days in Mariupol," 2023, by Mstyslav Chernov (**upon availability**)

#### RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Amhilat Szary L. *Walls and border art: the politics of art display*, in "The Journal of Borderland Studies", 2012, 27 (2), pp. 213- 228.
- Donnan H. and T.W. Wilson (eds), *Borders. Frontiers of Identity, Nation and the State*, Oxford, Berg, 1999 (Introduction)
- Jones R. *Border Walls: security and the war on terror in the United States, Israel and India*, London, Zed Books, 2012
- Korf B and Raeymaekers T (eds), *Violence on the Margins. State, Conflicts and Borderlands*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013
- Longo M. *The politics of borders: Sovereignty, security, and the citizen after 9/11*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Vaughan-Williams N. *Europe's Border Crisis*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015
- Vila P. *Narrative Identities: The Employment of the Mexican on the US-Mexican Border*, in "The Sociological Quarterly", 38:1 /1997), pp. 147-180