

National Science Foundation (NSF) – Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU)
Site Program on Immigration Policy and Border Communities

Summer 2025
Las Cruces, El Paso, and Ciudad Juárez

Syllabus and Schedule of Activities - May 19-July 19, 2025

Principal Investigators:

Dr. Neil Harvey (New Mexico State University) and Dr. Jeremy Slack (University of Texas-El Paso)
nharvey@nmsu.edu and jmslack@utep.edu

Program Overview

Welcome! We are very excited to host the NSF-REU Site Program on Immigration Policy and Border Communities in Summer 2025. We will work with a variety of community partner organizations in Las Cruces, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez. You will also attend workshops on research methods in the social sciences, discuss assigned readings, and participate in collaborative research projects on migration and asylum at the US-Mexico border.

Assignments

1) CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS: You will all be asked to present your final product to our community partners. Due July 18, 2025.

2) REFLECTIVE ESSAY: You will also write a reflective essay on your own individual experiences and main insights that you gain this summer (10-12 pages, double-spaced, 12-point font). Due July 25, 2025.

3) FIELD NOTES JOURNAL: Finally, you will keep a daily log of activities (use a Word document that you can save each day on your computer). This will be your field note journal in which you can summarize daily work activity as well as your thoughts and ideas about the readings, workshops, project activities and interactions with other members of the team. This journal will be very helpful when writing your final reflection essay and is a good way to make connections and draw out important themes from the wide array of issues that you will engage with during the summer. You will submit an electronic copy of this journal at the end of the program on July 18, 2025.

4) READINGS AND DISCUSSIONS: We will assign some useful background readings that we will discuss in workshops during the summer session. See the schedule of activities for details.

The overall learning outcome of this program is students' ability to gain and apply research skills and social scientific knowledge in ways that contribute to greater awareness of the impacts of immigration policy on migrants and residents of border communities.

We look forward to discussing the above details more when we meet on zoom for our first session on Monday, May 19, at 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Please send any questions about the program, including logistics, travel, accommodation, stipends, etc. to either Dr. Neil Harvey at nharvey@nmsu.edu or Dr. Jeremy Slack at jmslack@utep.edu

NSF REU Site Program on Immigration Policy and US-Mexico Border Communities

Schedule of Activities for Summer 2025 program

Week	Dates in Summer 2025	Student Activities (during Mon-Fri). *Note: Weekends will be used for debriefings, social gatherings, and relaxing trips to nearby parks, cinemas, and area attractions such as White Sands National Monument. Students will also have daily access to campus pools, gyms, and recreation centers at UTEP. List of area attractions and upcoming events will be provided by our graduate assistants.
Week 0 (online)	5/19-23	<p>Online Preparation Workshops (presented on Zoom).</p> <p>Monday 5/19: 10 am – 12 pm. Introductions & Program Overview and updates on schedule of activities, including details about international travel forms for our proposed trips to Ciudad Juárez (10.00-11.00 am); followed by Pre-Program Survey in which our external evaluator, Dr. Rachel Boren, will administer survey for program evaluation purposes (11.00-12.00 noon)</p> <p>Tuesday 5/20, 10 am – 12 pm. Workshop: Dr. Harvey presentation on political economy and the historical development of the US-Mexico borderlands. Discussion of Ganster & Collins, <i>The US-Mexican Border Today</i> (4th edition), 2021, as well as Community-Based Participatory Research & Field Notes – why we adopt a CBPR approach (with examples from previous years of our program), qualitative research methods, and the importance of keeping field notes)</p> <p>Wednesday 5/21 10 am – 12 pm Dr. Slack presentation on Intro History of Immigration Policies and Border Enforcement, deportation and violence (discussion of assigned readings, including Dr. Slack's book <i>Deported to Death: how drug violence is changing migration on the US-Mexico border</i>)</p> <p><i>*for faculty mentors only – zoom meeting with Dr. Harvey and Dr. Slack, Weds. 5/22, at 3.30-4.30 pm. MST.</i> https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/84571759955 Meeting ID: 845 7175 9955 Passcode: 674221</p> <p>Thursday 5/22 note: at 1:00-3:00 pm MST. Continuation of History of US-Mexico Borderlands and use of CBPR – Dr. Harvey, plus: Responsible Conduct of Research and Expectations of Behavior, including policies against discrimination and sexual harassment of NSF, NMSU, UTEP, and this REU.</p> <p>Friday 5/23 Dr. Slack workshop on asylum policy and practice. 10 am – 12 pm MST</p>

Week 1	5/25-6/1	<p>Sunday 5/25 El Paso.</p> <p>Arrival of students coming from outside the area; pick up from El Paso airport and settling into dorms at UTEP campus. Purchase of food and other items from local stores in El Paso as needed, assisted by program staff.</p> <p>Monday 5/26 (Memorial Day)</p> <p>Settling in and welcome meal for all student participants. Details TBD.</p> <p>Tuesday 5/27 10.00 am – 3.00 pm. UTEP, El Paso.</p> <p>Meeting on the goals of the NSF REU, history of past activities, and opportunities for presenting research from this program. Reiteration of expectations of behavior and policies against discrimination and sexual harassment.</p> <p>Lunch break</p> <p>Workshop on Research Ethics and Data Collection: Developing our qualitative research questions</p> <p>Wednesday 5/28 10 am – 5 pm.</p> <p>Meeting with representatives of community partner organizations, including Border Servant Corps (BSC) in Las Cruces, New Mexico, at 11 am.</p> <p>Thursday 5/29 – 10.00 am – 2.00 pm. UTEP El Paso</p> <p>Workshop on Research methods and students' ideas for projects this summer. Location: UTEP Dept of Sociology & Anthropology. Seminar room.</p> <p>Friday 5/30 10 am – 2 pm UTEP El Paso:</p> <p>Introductions of students with faculty mentors (dialogue with each sharing research interests, background, Q&A on doing research on migration/border issues (10 am – 12 pm followed by lunch) UTEP Dept Sociology & Anthropology, Old Main; lunch at Ke Flauta, El Paso.</p> <p>Visit to Border Book Festival - Feria del Libro de la Frontera (FELIF), Ciudad Juárez</p>
--------	----------	--

Week 2	6/2-6/6	<p>Mon. 6/2 : 11.00 am – 12 pm Zoom meeting with Dr. Bertha Bermudez Tapia, faculty mentor, followed on same Zoom at 12 pm – 2 pm for discussion of Court observation procedures. See Court observation manual and poster of findings from 2018 REU, sent in “Announcements” in CANVAS on 5/31/25.</p> <p>Submit international travel authorization forms to Dr. Harvey by 5.00 pm</p> <p>Assignment of Students and Faculty Mentors by 6.00 pm</p> <p>Tues. 6/3: Court observation in El Paso.</p> <p>Weds. 6/4: Continued court observations in El Paso.</p> <p>Thurs. 6/5:</p> <p>12.30-1.00 pm: Debriefing on court observations</p> <p>1.00 – 3.00 pm: Seminar Room, Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, Old Main Building, UTEP, El Paso</p> <p>Discussion of book with Dr. Bejarano and Dr. Cristina Morales, authors and editors of <i>Frontera Madre(hood)</i> (Univ. Arizona Press, 2024). 1.00-3.00 pm.</p> <p>Fri. 6/6: Visit to Cristo Rey. 7.00 am – 5 pm</p> <p>June 6 and 7 (optional): Feminist Border Arts – Film and Zine Festival, NMSU, Las Cruces: https://www.fbarts.org/</p>
--------	---------	--

Week 3	6/9-6/13	<p><u>Monday 6/9: Las Cruces, NM</u></p> <p>8.00 am – meeting with Amanda Skinner, Federal Public Defender, US District Court, Las Cruces, followed by court observation until 12.00 noon, approximately.</p> <p>12.00-1.00 pm meeting with Judge Ritter at the US District Court, discussion of the proceedings today</p> <p>1.00-3.00 pm visit to Mesilla, lunch</p> <p>3.30-4.30 pm, meeting with Amanda Skinner, discussion of today’s court observation</p> <p><u>Tues. 6/10:</u></p> <p>10 am-12 pm. Presentation - Dr. Harvey on violence and resistance in the borderlands. Zoom: https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/81303542134 Meeting ID: 813 0354 2134 Passcode: 586173</p> <p>Discussion of Roberto D. Hernández’ <i>Coloniality of the U-S///Mexico Border</i> (2018)</p> <p><u>Weds 6/11 :</u></p> <p>1:15-3:00 pm Preparing to conduct interviews and field work (practice in selection of interviewees, use of consent forms, audio recordings, transcriptions, etc.)</p> <p>3:00-11.00 pm – Trip to White Sands National Park</p> <p><u>Thurs. 6/12 and Fri 6/13:</u> field work</p> <p><u>Fri 6/13:</u> 4.00 – 5.00 pm Zoom weekly debriefing meeting to discuss research progress https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/87409476720 Meeting ID: 874 0947 6720 Passcode: 213851</p> <p>Establishment of three research sub-groups: 1. NGOs and the changing policy environment on the border; 2. Migrant testimonies and artistic representations; 3. Court observations of different proceedings.</p> <p>Sat 6/14 free day</p> <p>Sun 6/15 free day and submit Field Notes so far (in CANVAS)</p>
--------	----------	---

Week 4	6/16-6/20	<p>Monday, 6/16 to Fri 6/20 field work including court observations in El Paso and Las Cruces, interviews with staff of community organizations and local film makers and artists.</p> <p>Weds 6/18: 4.00-4.30 pm. Mid-program survey by Dr. Doug te Duits, Southwest Outreach Academic Research (SOAR) Evaluation & Policy Center,</p> <p>Friday 6/20: 4-5 pm zoom - weekly debriefing to discuss research progress https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/87409476720 Meeting ID: 874 0947 6720 Passcode: 213851</p> <p>Sat. June 21 – free day</p> <p>Sun. June 22, - travel to Ciudad Juárez (Hotel Holiday Inn Express and Suites – Las Misiones).</p>
--------	-----------	--

Week 5	6/23-6/27	<p>Field work in Ciudad Juárez</p> <p>Monday 6/23:</p> <p>10.00 am meeting with staff of office of United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) – overview of migration at Mexico’s northern border and the work of IOM</p> <p>12.00 pm meeting with staff of Centro de Atención Integral al Migrante (CAIM-COESPO (office of the State Government of Chihuahua) – overview of the work of CAIM and current trends in migration</p> <p>Tuesday 6/24:</p> <p>10 am meeting with staff of Casa del Migrante (Catholic Diocese of Cd. Juárez), overview of the work of the Casa del Migrants, current trends and issues; and interviews with migrants at the Casa del Migrante.</p> <p>2.00 pm visit to artist colectivo Rezizte, and El Edificio de los Sueños, Plaza Cervantina, Cd. Juárez.</p> <p>Wednesday 6/25: meetings and discussion with local researchers and students</p> <p>Thursday 6/26: visit to the campus of El Colegio de Chihuahua – presentation by director and staff of non-profit, Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción (DHIA), and faculty and students.</p> <p>Friday 6/27 – Visit to Mexican federal government’s main migrant shelter (Centro Integrador para Migrantes “Leona Vicario”) – overview of the shelter’s work and current trends and issues, followed by interviews with migrants and staff members.</p> <p>Check-out from hotel and return from Cd. Juárez to El Paso</p> <p>Saturday 6/28 – rest day</p> <p>Sunday 6/29: 5-page Draft reflective essay due by 11:59 pm</p> <p>Students set up meetings with faculty mentors to discuss research progress and main findings and impressions from this week in Ciudad Juárez.</p>
--------	-----------	--

Week 6	6/30-7/4	<p>Continue field work, as determined by each student or group of students.</p> <p>No debriefing meeting on July 4</p> <p>Sat. July 5: sight seeing day in Las Cruces and Mesilla and meeting former REU Grad Assistants, Angeline Sunday (2019) and Esperanza Chairez (2024).</p> <p>Business Meal for discussion of progress in research projects, at La Nueva Casita restaurant, 195 N. Mesquite Street, Las Cruces.</p> <p>Sunday, July 6 – free day</p>
--------	----------	--

Week 7	7/7-7/11	<p>Monday 7/7 to Weds 7/9: Upload of transcriptions of interviews and other qualitative data collected so far, due by 11.59 pm on Wednesday 7/9. Upload to OneDrive folder “REU 2025 Transcriptions”</p> <p>Tues. 7/8: 10.00 am – 12.00 pm:</p> <p>Seminar Room, Dept of Sociology and Anthropology, Old Main Building, UTEP, El Paso - Discussion with Dr. Carina Heckert, Dept of Sociology & Anthropology, UTEP, about her book <i>Birth in Times of Despair: Reproductive Violence on the US-Mexico Border</i> (NYU Press, 2024)</p> <p>Weds. 7/9 Writing and further research as necessary</p> <p>Thurs. 7/10 – 10.00 am – 4.00 pm. Day at NMSU, Las Cruces.</p> <p>10 am – 11 am: Workshop on applying to graduate school. Presentation by Nathan Trevizo, Student Program Coordinator, NMSU Student Success Center. Location: Breland Hall, room 179, NMSU.</p> <p>Followed in the same room at 11.00 am – 12.00 pm – meeting with some former REU students via zoom and in person:</p> <p>Zoom: Use passcode 574951 for Zoom Meeting ID: 878 6853 4612 https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/87868534612</p> <p>Ava McElhone Yates (2019) – zoom; Brennan Ramsey (2020-1) – in person Angel Amabisco (2023) – in person; Elsie Yang (2023) – zoom; Leo Montenegro (2024) – zoom; Lauren Grace Jones (2024) - zoom</p> <p>12.00-1.00 pm, discussion meeting with Dr. Río López, Director of Latin American Programs, Garcia Center 138, NMSU.</p> <p>Lunch 1-2 pm on campus, Corbett Center, NMSU</p> <p>Followed at 2.00-4.00 pm, presentation by Dr. Sabine Hirschauer on qualitative data analysis and the use of NVIVO. Breland Hall, room 175, NMSU.</p> <p>Friday 7/11: Working on data analysis, transcriptions, etc. in preparations for next week’s presentations.</p> <p>4.00 – 5.00 pm last of Zoom debriefing meeting to discuss research progress https://nmsu.zoom.us/j/87409476720 Meeting ID: 874 0947 6720 Passcode: 213851</p>
--------	----------	--

Week 8	7/14-7/18	<p><u>Mon. 7/14</u></p> <p>Data analysis, writing drafts, and preparing for presentations.</p> <p><u>Tues. 7/15</u> – at UTEP Dept Sociology & Anthropology, Seminar Room, Old Main</p> <p>10 am – 12:30 pm Final presentations to REU team and community partners</p> <p>Group 1: NGO responses to the current environment and National Defense Areas (NDA's) (Iker, Gio, Madison, and Camryn)</p> <p>With presentations by students from Colech, UACH, and UACJ under direction of Dr. Emilio Lopez Reyes.</p> <p><u>Weds. 7/16</u> 10.00 am – 3.00 pm. Las Cruces. NMSU, Breland Hall, room 179.</p> <p>(plus: end of program survey for program evaluator Dr. Doug te Duits, with faculty mentors only, 9.00 am, Breland 179)</p> <p>Final presentations to REU team and community partners:</p> <p>Group 2: Migrant women and artistic representations of the border (Melanie, Irma, and Noemi)</p> <p>Group 3: Court observations in El Paso and Las Cruces: (Ruben, Tina-Maria, Pedro, and Mia)</p> <p>followed by application of final end-of-program survey with Dr. Doug te Duits, for program evaluation. Lunch at NMSU.</p> <p>End of afternoon meeting at Keva Juice, University Ave., Las Cruces</p> <p><u>Thurs. 7/17</u> – Revising products to be given to community partners</p> <p><u>Fri. 7/18</u> – Submit final version of products for community partners. Finalize field notes and submit them by 11.59 pm.</p> <p>5.00 pm – Despedida party in El Paso at Dr. Slack's home. Details TBD.</p> <p><u>Saturday 7/19</u> – Travel day, returning home.</p> <p>Final version of reflective essay due by 11.59 pm on <u>Friday 7/25</u> (in CANVAS)</p>
--------	-----------	---