About the Conference

The U.S.-Mexico border is a site of human suffering and a showcase of human resilience. This conference brings together scholars, practitioners, student organizations, and grassroots movements from the San Diego and Tijuana regions to collectively consider issues of human rights and racialization in our borderlands. The conference will focus on the human tolls and triumphs that flow across this border every day. We will consider the hindrances and costs, the lives and human sacrifice, and the stories of hope and justice that intermingle in the liminal space of the borderlands.

The Tijuana-San Diego border is not only the busiest border in the world, but also one that is teeming with life and productive capacity. We want to recognize and celebrate that also. This binational conference focuses on scholarly collaboration, community building, and movement of ideas and people in the region. “Race and the Borderlands” also provides opportunities to hold space, and integrate frameworks for collective activism and set the agenda for new collaborations.

APRIL 7 -8, 2023
San Diego State University

supported by

The Peacemakers Fund at the San Diego Foundation

SDSU College of Arts and Letters
Bruce E. Porteous
Professor in Political Science

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FRIDAY, APRIL 7 | VIERNES, 7 DE ABRIL
Aztec Student Union Theatre and Legacy Suite

8-8:45 a.m. REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST | Legacy Suite – Union

8:45-9 a.m. WELCOME REMARKS
Ronnee Schreiber | Interim Dean, San Diego State University College of Arts and Letters

9-10:15 a.m. KEYNOTE SPEAKER
Union Theatre
Nandita Sharma | University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa | Postcolonial Racism: National Sovereignty and the Institutionalization of Separation

10:15-10:30 a.m. BREAK

10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. SESSION I | Racialized Bodies, Criminalized Movements
Union Theatre
Moderator: Ramona Pérez | San Diego State University
- Jessica Aguilar | University of California San Diego
- Crossing Mexico: Migrant Bodies, Testimonies, and Human Rights in Las Tierras Arrasadas
- Emma Newman | Texas A&M University
- Migrant Rutas of South Texas: Preliminary Results from Brooks County Texas
- Scott Bennett | Point Loma Nazarene University
- Hostility, Horses, and Haitians: Interpreting Paul Ratje’s “Whip” Photo
- D. Emily Hicks | San Diego State University
- A Complexity Approach to the Mexico-US Border, Border Writing and African American and Afro-Indigenous Identities: Octavia Butler and Melissa Cardoza

12-1:30 p.m. LUNCH BREAK | Legacy Room – Union

1:30-3 p.m. SESSION II | No Right to Life: State Violence That has Shaped a Humanitarian Crisis in the Arizona Borderlands
Legacy Suite – Union
Moderator: Isidro Ortiz | San Diego State University
- Katherine Kauflka Waits | Loyola University, Center for the Human Rights of Children
- A History of Racism: Context for the Rule of Border Law
- Madeline Brashier | Loyola University, Center for the Human Rights of Children
- Border Policy and Migrant Deaths: How We Got to the Status Quo
- Perla Torres | Colibri Center for Human Rights
- On the Ground: Repatriating Remains for Those with No Right to Life
- Sarah J. Díaz | Colibri Center for Human Rights
- The Right to Life: What Could Tomorrow Look Like?

3:3-15 p.m. BREAK

3:15-4:45 p.m. SESSION III | Narratives of Race, Rights, and Security
Legacy Suite – Union
Moderator: Robert Guzmán | San Diego State University
- Odessa Gonzalez Benson | University of Michigan
- The limits of Human Rights Discourse Within Sovereign Territory: Examining U.S. Refugee Policy Formation
- Abby Wheatley | Arizona State University
- Challenging Border Security from Below: Migrant Critiques of “Closed” Borders
- Ernesto Hernández | Chapman University
- Border Myths, Legal Justifications, and Racial Realities

4:45-5 p.m. BREAK

5-6:30 p.m. FIRST PLENARY SESSION
7 p.m. Dinner for presenters – K&B Bistro

SATURDAY, APRIL 8 | SÁBADO, 8 DE ABRIL
Arts and Letters Building (AL-101)

8:30-9:45 a.m. SESSION IV | Health Interventions: A Novel Collaboration to Support the Health of Children Asylum Seekers
Moderator: Haley Ciborowski | San Diego State University and UC San Diego
In March 2022, in response to a request from the Sidewalk School for Children Asylum Seekers (SWS), pediatricians from the San Francisco Bay Area partnered with the SWS and Global Response Management (GRM) in Reynosa, Mexico to pilot a pediatric telehealth clinic to address the health needs of children seeking asylum.
- Felicia Rangel Samponaro and Víctor Cazavos | co-directors, Sidewalk School
- Work at the Sidewalk School, Anti-Black Racism Faced by Haitian Asylum Seekers, and the Need for a Medical Collaboration
- Brendon Tucker | Medical Needs in Reynosa, the Safety Challenges Faced by the Medical Team and Asylum Seekers, and Their Collaboration
- Jyothi Marbin | Telehealth Consultation Partnership, How we Have Been Able to Recruit Doctors to Volunteer, and the Impact of the Clinic

9:45-10 a.m. BREAK

10-11:15 a.m. SESSION V | Aid as Disruptive Resistance in the Borderlands
Moderator: Kristal Bivona | San Diego State University
- Dr. Jacqueline Arrellano | Luis Osuna
- James Cordero | Victoria Vazquez
- Thelma Navarro | Dulce Real
- Sophia Rodriguez

11:15 a.m.-12 p.m. Artivism and the Borderlands Presentation and Exhibit
Moderator: Sophia Rodriguez | San Diego State University
12-1 p.m. LUNCH BREAK | AL-102

1:2-1:5 p.m. SESSION VI | Reimagining the Border/Re-imaginando la Frontera: Play/Juego, Art/Arte and/e Imaginaries Resistance/Imaginarios de Resistencia
Moderator: Rebecca Bartel | San Diego State University
- Roxana Rodríguez Ortiz | Universidad Autónoma de la Ciudad de México
- Frontera Ecológica: del Afecto a las Afecciones
- M. Isabel Martin-Sanchez | University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Teeter-Totter Wall (Rael y San Fratello): Un Balancín Performativo y Binacional
- Juan Carlos Camacho Molina | Universidad Autónoma de Baja California
- Toy and Horse, Reciclando Imágenes, Universalizando Fronteras. Sitiando el Sitio: la Garita Frontera Ecológica: del Afecto a las Afecciones
- Ymoat Luna

2:15-2:30 p.m. BREAK

2:30-4:45 p.m. ROUNDTABLE | Reflections on Race and Migration Over the last 5 years in the San Diego-Tijuana Region
Moderators: Grace Cheng and Rebecca Bartel | San Diego State University

2:30-3:30 p.m. FORUM | San Diego-Tijuana Peace and Justice Organizations
- Survivors of Torture International | Etleva Bejko, executive director
- Armadillos
- Detention Resistance | Ymeat Luna

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