

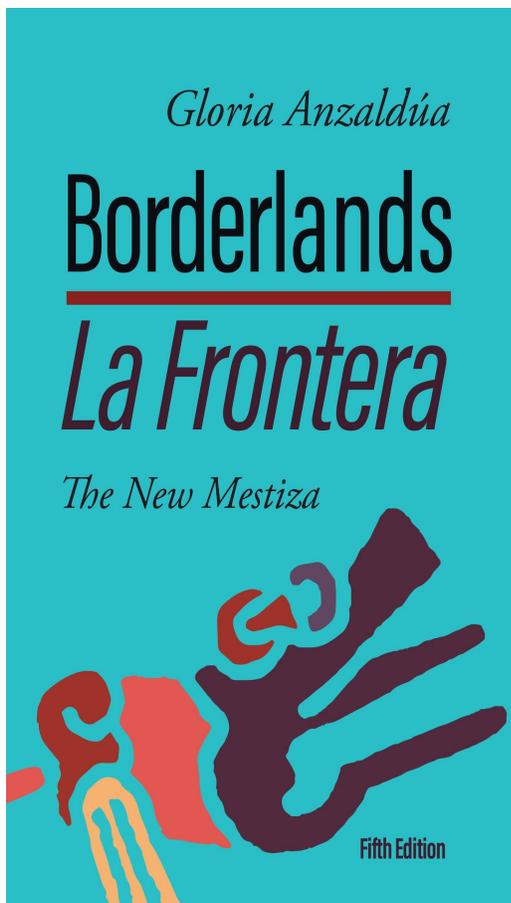
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Borderlands/La Frontera

The New Mestiza, Fifth Edition

By Gloria Anzaldúa

Resource Guide - 2023



Book Description

Rooted in Gloria Anzaldúa's experience as a Chicana, a lesbian, an activist, and a writer, the essays and poems in this volume profoundly challenged, and continue to challenge, how we think about identity. [Borderlands/La Frontera](#) remaps our understanding of what a "border" is, presenting it not as a simple divide between here and there, us and them, but as a psychic, social, and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us. This edition is a more condensed edition, containing only the original text from 1987, and will be at a more accessible price point for readers. For those looking for a scholarly context to this crucial work, [the Critical Edition is currently available](#).

About the Author

Gloria Anzaldúa was a Chicana-tejana-lesbian-feminist poet, theorist, and

fiction writer from South Texas. In addition to authoring *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute, 1987), she was the editor of the critical anthology *Making Face/Making*

Soul: *Haciendo Caras* (Aunt Lute, 1990) and co-editor of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Persephone, 1981), winner of the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award. Her works also include *Interviews/Entrevistas* (Routledge, 2000) and *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited with AnaLouise Keating (Routledge, 2002). She also authored three bilingual children's books, including *Prietita Has a Friend/Prietita tiene un amigo*. She taught Creative Writing, Chicano Studies, and Feminist Studies at University of Texas, San Francisco State University, Vermont College of Norwich University, and University of California Santa Cruz.

Gloria Anzaldúa passed away in 2004 and was honored around the world for shedding visionary light on the Chicana experience by receiving the National Association For Chicano Studies Scholar Award in 2005. Gloria was also posthumously awarded her doctoral degree in literature from the University of California Santa Cruz. A number of scholarships and book awards, including the Anzaldúa Scholar Activist Award and the Gloria E. Anzaldúa Award for Independent Scholars, are awarded in her name every year.

Praise for *Borderlands/La Frontera*

The emotional and intellectual impact of the book is disorienting and powerful...all languages are spoken, and survival depends on understanding all modes of thought. In the borderlands new creatures come into being. Anzaldúa celebrates this "new mestiza" in bold, experimental writing.

– *The Village Voice*

Anzaldúa's pulsating weaving of innovative poetry with sparse informative prose brings us deep into the insider/outsider consciousness of the borderlands; that ancient and contemporary, crashing and blending world that divides and unites America.

– *Women's Review of Books*

Awards

- Named one of the "Best Books of 1987" by Library Journal
- Selected by Utne Reader as part of its "Alternative Canon" in 1998
- One of Hungry Mind Review's "Best 100 Books of the 20th Century"

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Resources

Teacher testimonials

- “I teach *Borderlands* because it is the seminal work for border theory and because I teach a course on Chicana literature.” - Dra. Imelda Martín Junquera, Profesora Titular del Dpto. de Filología Moderna, Directora de la Revista Estudios Humanísticos: Filología, Universidad de León
- “I teach *Borderlands* because Gloria Anzaldúa is such an important contributor to Chicana and feminist scholarship, that I feel it is my responsibility as an Instructor of Latin American and Latinx Studies to teach my students about her work. For those of us who self identify as Latina or Latinx, I consider Anzaldúa's work essential to the field of study.” - Beatriz Herrera, City College of San Francisco
- “I have been teaching sections of *Borderlands* since I was assigned it in college. I think it's so important to unpack Gloria's facets of identity. We are never just one person. Specifically, we focus on notions of Othering. Anzaldúa points to the metaphor of the border and No Man's Land and how this applies to her in a personal way. The notion of "home" and "identity" are complex themes that Gloria delineates. It is also a book I recommend to Latina women as their representation is not what it should be within literature.” - Tina Bausinger, Southwest Texas Junior College Uvalde/Pearsall High School
- “I have taught *borderlands* in three different courses. *Borderlands* is the only text that I have assigned where students have consistently come up to me after class to ask for more readings or information about this author. “ - Beatriz Herrera, City College of San Francisco
- “*Borderlands/ La Frontera* is a classic in many of my fields: gender and sexuality studies, transnational feminisms and decolonial studies. It is also foundational to some of the most critical and creative sectors of many other important areas: Chicanx Studies, Latinx Studies, Comparative Literatures, American Studies, Cultural Studies. The book is not confined to disciplines and inter-disciplines in Turtle Island (the Native name for the land

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that colonizers named the U.S.) but rather is increasingly being recognized transnationally in its original version and/or in translation. The first translation of *Borderlands/ La Frontera* was into Italian by Paola Zaccaria; it is the only translation carried out in conversation with Anzaldúa herself. Today the book is available in Mexican Spanish, Castilian for Spain, Romanian, and French. A Brazilian Portuguese and a German translation are currently in the works.

I was honored to oversee the French translation of *Borderlands/ La Frontera* (published in October 2022) and to write its Preface. I chose to dedicate time and energy to bringing the book to interlocutors in France and the francophone world for many reasons. The book speaks to me intimately. I feel its many theoretical concepts and methodological approaches constitute an epistemic revolution that incites further epistemic revolutions. I feel it has the capacity to provoke kinds of discussion are vital for feminist and queer subjects of color, and allies, in France and across the francophone world. I feel the book is already and can be in dialogue in many different ways with broader audiences. Translating *Borderlands/ La Frontera* was not about presuming its theory and methods are “applicable” everywhere. Indeed, I would like to ban the term “applicable” from my vocabulary. We are not in the realm of a computer program. Instead, *Borderlands/La Frontera* offers kinds of points of departure (not arrival), inspiration, and incitement to nourish our own best critical and creative impulses here and elsewhere.” - Paola Bacchetta, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, University of California

Tips for teaching the text

- “It takes some time to engage fully with *Borderlands*, it helps to explain anthropological questions about the Aztecs and indigenous people's of America before hand. I do teach oral tradition in African American and Native American cultures first and then we reflect on the miscegenation that took place in America. It is then, that Anzaldúa proves very meaningful.” - Dra. Imelda Martín Junquera, Profesora Titular del Dpto. de Filología Moderna, Directora de la Revista Estudios Humanísticos: Filología, Universidad de León
- “Anzaldúa encouraged me to continue to develop my understanding of Mesoamerican cosmovisions and spirituality. I try to embed my teaching of her material with anthropological descriptions of prehispanic life, deities, and worldview. This is part of

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Anzaldua's decolonizing practice, and we need to continue to do that work to fully access the concepts she explores." - Beatriz Herrera, City College of San Francisco

- "We discuss the Mexico-US border for the first lesson. There are several news articles that can be brought in to show what the border actually looks like and its controversy in the news cycle. The setting needs its own lesson. Then, I discuss Anzaldua herself, and give a bit of background on her history. The idea is to create interest on these two fronts: Anzaldua represents so many students who don't feel they fit in anywhere, and Identity is such a relevant theme that won't ever go out of style.

Borderlands, in my opinion, is best started with the poem "To Live in the Borderlands." This poem is really popular, and we discuss how unnerving it is for non-bilingual speakers to navigate the parts in an unfamiliar language. We discuss how Anzaldua's use of language is a metaphor for how she always feels on the outside of who/what is acceptable. I've had students memorize it as part of a separate poetry unit." - Tina Bausinger, Southwest Texas Junior College Uvalde/Pearsall High School

- "I feel we each have to find our own way to teach Borderlands/La Frontera. Much will depend upon who exactly we are, what is happening in-context as we live and teach, whom we are trying to reach, in what kind of classroom, with what kind of preparation the students have for such a profound and complex book. Students enter the space of teaching and learning with many different kinds of knowledges: familial, ancestral, street, institutional... Here I can only speak about how I teach the book to both graduate and undergraduate students at University of California, Berkeley. This is, however, not meant to be prescriptive at all. It's just an account of my experience.

My approach to teaching Borderlands/La Frontera to both graduate and undergraduate students is to begin the book prior to the book, that is, to offer a multi-faceted introduction. I create a thick historical-contextualization. By this I mean that I provide elements and dimensions for reflection on several aspects: Gloria Anzaldúa's life and life trajectory; the context of the Texas-Mexico borderlands that nourishes Anzaldúa's thought about the physical, metaphoric and symbolic borderlands; histories of Chicana populations at the border; colonialism and racism in Abya Yala specifically in the site now called Mexico; the place of dominant and subaltern languages in-coloniality in that space that then surface in Anzaldúa's writing; the pre-suppositions and logics of

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dominant feminist and sexuality theorizations and how Anzaldúa's writing is situated on the outside; the earliest receptions of the book by dominantly-situated readers (who often reduced it to a personal narrative) and by subaltern readers and allies (for whom it was often vital as literature, theory and methods). To open up discussion of Anzaldúa's life, for example, it has been important for me to address her understanding of her relationship to her body, spiritualities, the sacred, familiarity, gender and sexuality binarism and non-binarism, the articulated and the suppressed languages she lived with, the communities of women, dykes and queers of color and allies with whom she was so intimately engaged.

In terms of entering the book, I feel it is important to help students understand the immense literary quality of Anzaldúa's writing across different genres: poetry, historiography, reflective essays, creative essays. I ask students to open themselves to the writing's flows, blockages, rhythmic repetitions, glidings, fluencies, gaps, multi-dimensionality, alternative rationalities, locuras and out-of-controlnesses. I request that together we enter into the immense theoretical and methodological content that the writing conveys. There are many ways to do this latter. One way is to ask students to enact a double reading; in a first they can focus on literary elements and in a second highlight throughout the book the concepts and methods that Anzaldúa invents and inscribes. There are many other possible readings as well and they are invited to prioritize and engage any that speak to them most intimately, most intensely. An example is a deeply thematic reading, such as for the book's spiritual and sacred content." - Paola Bacchetta, Department of Gender and Women's Studies, University of California

Classes assigned in

- Latinx and Latinx American Studies/Chicanx Studies
 - The Latinx Experience in the United States
 - The Border and Chicanx Texts
 - Latinx Histories
 - Introduction to Latinx Studies: Identity and Belonging Class
 - Latinas in the U.S./VOCES

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- Chicano Latino Studies, Chicana Feminism course
- Chicana/o Thought
- Critical Thinking and Ethnic Studies
- English
 - Composition I
 - Composition II
 - American Prose Since 1900
- Women's Studies
 - Sexuality, Gender, Myth and Reality class. WST 6036
- Other courses
 - Visionary Thinkers: Anzaldua and Moraga Course

Borderlands Pedagogy

- [Teaching Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Pedagogy and Practice for Our Classrooms and Communities](#), Edited by Margaret Cantú-Sánchez, Candace de León-Zepeda, Norma E. Cantú (2020) (University of Arizona Press)
- [Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza](#) (The Great Questions Foundation)
- [Lesson Plan: Gloria E. Anzaldúa \(The Legacy Project\)](#)
- [Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza | Study Guide](#) (Course Hero)
- [PRESERVING U.S. LATINO LITERATURE](#) (University of Houston)
- [Borderlands/La Frontera: El Feminismo Chicano de Gloria Anzaldúa Desde Las Fronteras Geoculturales, Disciplinarias y Pedagógicas](#) (Debate Feminista)
- [Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric: Gloria Anzaldúa on Composition and Postcoloniality](#) (JAC)
- [On Borderlands/La Frontera: Gloria Anzaldúa and Twenty-Five Years of Research on Gender in the Borderlands](#). (Journal of Women's History)
- [Knowledge from the borderlands: Revisiting the paradigmatic mestiza of Gloria Anzaldúa](#) (Feminism & Psychology)
- [Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera: Cultural Studies, 'Difference,' and the Non-Unitary Subject](#) (Cultural Critique)

Selected Critical Work

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- [Writing the Self: Gloria Anzaldúa, Textual Form, and Feminist Epistemology](#) (Michigan Feminist Studies)
- [Re-Thinking Margins and Borders: An Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa](#) (Discourse)
- [Gloria Anzaldúa: From Borderlands to Nepantla](#) (Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication)
- [Gloria Anzaldúa: La gran nueva mestiza theorist, writer, activist-scholar](#) (NWSA Journal)

More about Gloria Anzaldúa

- [Texas Historical Society](#)
- [Legacy Project Chicago](#)
- [Global Social Theory](#)

Impact of Borderlands

- [The Book That Changed The Borders](#) (WAMU)
- [Let's All Read Borderlands/La Frontera by Gloria Anzaldúa!](#) (Autostraddle)
- [My archive: 20 years of Los Angeles' LGBTQ+ movement](#) (High Country News)
- [11 Books and Movies That Explore Indigenous Connections to Land](#) (Global Citizen)
- [Gloria E. Anzaldúa Google doodle](#) (Search Engine Land)
- [Celebrating Latin American Heritage Month and Banned Books Week](#) (GLAD)
- [Let's Talk About Chicana Feminism and How We Might Apply It Today](#) (BE Latina)
- [During the pandemic, Latin American women writers' voices crossed borders, platforms](#) (Colorado State University)
- [Pan y Café: A love letter to the Spanish language](#) (Daily Trojan)

Where to get a copy

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Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan

Esos movimientos de rebeldía que tenemos en la sangre nosotros los mexicanos surgen como ríos desbocados en mis venas. Y como mi raza que cada vez cuando llega con esa esclandrosa de obediencia de callarse y aceptar, en mí está la rebeldía escondida de mi carne. Debajo de mi humillada mirada está una cara insolente lista para explotar. Me costó muy caro mi rebeldía—acalambrada con devoción y dudas, sintiéndome inútil, estúpida, e impotente.

Me entra una rabia cuando alguien—sea mi mamá, la Iglesia, la cultura de los anglos—me dice haz esto, haz eso sin considerar mis deseos.

Rapido. Hablé por "tú". Fue muy histérico. Era indiferente a muchos valores de mi cultura. No me daje de los hombres. No fui buena ni obediente.

Preso te creciste. Yo no sé cómo toda mi vida batallé las costumbres y los valores de mi cultura que me traicionan. También recibí las costumbres que por el tiempo se han preservado y las costumbres de respeto a las mujeres, but despite my growing tolerance, for this Chicana la guerra de independencia is a constant.

The Strength of My Rebellion

I have a vivid memory of an old photograph. I am six years old. I stand between my father and mother, head locked to the right, the toes of my flat feet gripping the ground. I hold my mother's hand.

To this day I'm not sure where I found the strength to leave the source, the mother, disengage from my family, my terms, my gene, and all that picture stood for. I had to leave home so I could find myself,

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