

MENLO
BORDERLANDS



EL PASO, TEXAS

Examining Immigration at the Border

May 18-May 29, 2026



Menlo Borderlands El Paso, Texas



IN BRIEF

Menlo Borderlands aligns with the goals of our global travel program: it aims to advance knowledge of self and others, connect students to diverse and distant communities, and community engagement activities. It also emphasizes transference of learned skills and knowledge to our home context so that students emerge with a better understanding of themselves and their world.¹



Borderlands: El Paso is offered in association with World Leadership School.

Dates: MTerm '26: May 18-May 29, 2026

(Participants will be in Texas from May 20-26)

Enrollment Limits: 16 students

Enrollment Eligibility: Menlo students in grades 9-11. For medical questions or exemption requests contact the school nurse's office.

Trip Leaders: There will be two Menlo teacher/trip leaders: Upper School Spanish Teacher Perla Ameal and Upper School History Teacher and Junior Class Dean Matthew Nelson. When we are in Texas, we will be joined by one or two instructors from World Leadership School.

All-Inclusive Fee²: \$3400. Financial aid is available for one Menlo sponsored trip for students on financial aid. Current financial aid recipients should contact Rose Garza regarding financial aid (rgarza@menloschool.org).

¹ Borderlands is an elective option for MTerm and is considered and assessed as an MTerm course.

² Fee includes all flights • hotel accommodation • all meals • all surface transportation • museum, park, and temple entrance fees • reading materials • administrative support 24/7 • The fee does not include trip cancellation insurance or expenses for petty cash expenditures (est. at \$100), or baggage fees.

A Note About Phones: In order to maintain the integrity of Borderlands' immersive experience, students should not take Smartphone or any Internet-connected device on the trip..

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El Paso, Texas



COURSE OVERVIEW

Borderlands, El Paso, is a deep dive into issues involving immigration. The program begins with two days on the Menlo campus, orienting, researching, and preparing for travel. The travel, the experiential part of the course, is designed to give students access to different perspectives and to provide them with a unique and humanizing view of immigration.

With the assistance of World Leadership School (WLS), we visit various local non-profit organizations around the border wall. Students will have a chance to see U.S. government agencies, including the U.S. Border Patrol, the Federal Court System, as well as non-profit and religious organizations working on behalf of migrant workers, undocumented immigrants, and asylum seekers. In this way, students get a first-hand glimpse into the complexities of immigration and the struggles of those working in this area. There is also a break for a hike at the nearby White Sands National Monument in New Mexico. Once we return to the Menlo campus, students share their findings with students on other Borderlands trips and prepare final projects for the Borderlands / MTerm Expo.



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El Paso, Texas



Borderlands is an investigation of a topic, a journey into the field nested between two periods in the Menlo classroom. It is broadly divided into three phases. The first is orientation, preparation and research on campus; the second phase is the overnight trip for discovery and project work; the third is debriefing, project completion and showcase on campus

Phase 1: Menlo Campus: Monday, May 18 - Tuesday, May 19

- Introduction and orientation
- Essential questions
- Group agreement
- Project descriptions and group work
- Library research
- Travel dos and don'ts / health and safety
- Packing checklist

Phase 2: El Paso, TX: Wednesday, May 20 - Tuesday, May 26.

This phase takes place primarily around the town of El Paso, Texas. Below is a sample of activities the group might engage in during the week.

- Transfer from SFO to ELP
- Return to SFO from ELP
- Settle in at Holy Cross Retreat Center (all lodging and most dinners)
- Orientation with World Leadership instructors
- Community orientation with Border Service Corps
- Visit to Las Cruces Hospitality Center
- Lunch at Cafe Mayapan
- Interviews at Federal Immigration Court and Processing Center
- Meeting with federal public defender
- Meeting with Border Patrol
- Morning visit to Las Cruces farmers market
- Afternoon visit and sunset hike to White Sands National Monument*
- Morning visit with NM Cafe, community organization
- Afternoon discussion with human rights advocate
- Lunch and exploration of Old Mesilla
- Visit to the Mexico / US Border and visit to Border patrol Museum

Phase 3: Menlo Campus: Wednesday, May 27 - Friday, May 29

This phase involves discussion and reflection, contextualizing and making sense of the experiences in the field as well as presentation preparation.

- Extended check in and reflection with cohort
- Structured discussion with other Borderlands group
- Project work and completion
- Debriefing and wrap up
- Showcase presentations

*This visit might include a border patrol checkpoint.



Menlo Borderlands El Paso, Texas



TIMELINE OF APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS

January 9	Announcement of Menlo Abroad and Borderlands programs at upper school assembly
January 27	Applications due
February 6	Participants notified
February 10	Forms and Payment due by 3:00 pm
April 21, 6:00 pm	Pre-departure information night (MS Garage) for enrolled students and their parents (meeting is mandatory for student and at least one parent)
May 18, 9:00 am	Borderlands El Paso begins on Menlo campus.
May 20- May 26	El Paso trip
May 27 - May 28	M Term Borderlands: El Paso resumes on Menlo campus
May 29	Final Day - Borderlands / M Term Showcase

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Menlo Borderlands El Paso, Texas



BORDERLANDS AND MENLO ABROAD ASPIRATIONS

1. Knowledge and Global Competency ⁵: Borderlands and Menlo Abroad programs advance students' self-knowledge and global competencies, including intercultural capabilities, historical perspectives, and attentiveness to diversity. Through direct experience, students develop awareness of global systems and issues impacting host communities.
2. Dispositions of Global Engagement ⁶: Borderlands and Menlo Abroad programs cultivate internationally minded students who recognize their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet and strive to create a better and more peaceful world. Among the many positive dispositions they develop are agency, leadership, confidence, empathy, compassion, humility, feelings of interconnection, and respect.
3. Relationships: Borderlands and Menlo Abroad programs build sustaining relationships between students and diverse, underserved communities and individuals through shared common experiences of everyday life.
4. Community Engagement: Borderlands and Menlo Abroad programs contribute to solutions based on mutually beneficial work, apprenticeship, or study, activities that support students' knowledge and appreciation for local cultures and the challenges they face.
5. Transference: Borderlands and Menlo Abroad programs generate sustaining interest and connections with Menlo curricula and programs.

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⁵ *Global competency* includes the ability to investigate the world beyond the immediate environment, the recognition of one's own and other perspectives, and the ability to communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences.

⁶ By *Global engagement*, we mean the dispositions necessary to be connected and of service to others, including those beyond national borders.





Menlo Borderlands El Paso, Texas



TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The program is being offered by Menlo School in conjunction with World Leadership School. In cases of programs offered in conjunction with other organizations, participants are required to complete forms, registration, waivers, and medical forms provided by both Menlo School and the third-party organization.

By February 10: To secure a place in the program each of the following must be submitted.

1. A check payment payable to Menlo School for \$3400. Write participant's name and *El Paso* on the memo line. Financial aid recipients will be contacted by the financial aid with a revised program fee. Deliver to Dorelia Arias at Reception.
2. All required Menlo and third party forms via Permission Click.

Equipment lists, air travel instructions, and further information about the program will be provided subsequently.

Our intention is to address the goals and curricular elements listed in the program description, but all participants are advised that course itineraries will likely change to incorporate participant goals and interests, to adjust to the health of members of the group, or in response to weather conditions, problems with transportation, political or social unrest or other unforeseen problems. Regardless of such changes, we will always work to structure and implement the course so that it stays true to the original intent.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Given the uncertainty of conditions at the current time, Menlo encourages participants to consider the purchase of a travel insurance or trip cancellation insurance policy for the Borderlands trip. Check your primary medical insurance provider to assure your child will have medical coverage while traveling. If that is in question, travel insurance including medical coverage should be purchased.

If the participant is on financial aid, travel insurance purchases for this trip will be reimbursed at the rate of financial aid.

You might consider purchasing a travel insurance package through an organization such as InsureMyTrip to provide some financial protection against unforeseen circumstances or withdrawal. Menlo makes no recommendation regarding these options: Please read all policies carefully to ensure that your needs are met.

CANCELED TRIPS: A full refund will be made for canceled trips that arise out of insufficient registration, though Menlo is not responsible for other costs incurred by the student or family preparing for the trip. For trips canceled due to any other circumstance that is beyond Menlo's control, Menlo will refund all recoupable tuition. If Menlo decides to cancel the trip at its own discretion, Menlo will fully refund participants' payments.

REFUND POLICY: If Menlo does not cancel the trip but a participant chooses to withdraw, the participant must inform the Global Programs Director (pbrown@menloschool.org) and the Program Director of (erin@worldleadershipschool.com) in an email communication. Menlo will refund recoupable fees:*

MEDICAL AND EVACUATION EXPENSES: It is the responsibility of the student and the student's family to understand the limits of any medical and evacuation policy, and to provide up-front payment of emergency services when required.

CELL PHONES: No cell phones or internet-connected devices are allowed on the trip.

VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS: If a participant acts in a way that is injurious to himself or herself, people of the host community, or other participants on the trip, or generally conducts himself or herself in a way that is disruptive to the trip, we reserve the right to send the participant home without refund or to require parental pickup at the travel site. Underage use of alcohol and the use of illegal drugs are cause for dismissal. Participants sent home early or who choose to return for any reason, including sickness, personal emergencies or injury, will be responsible for all medical costs and will absorb travel and related costs associated with an unscheduled departure.

*Recoupable fees do not include airline fees and deposits Menlo pays to travel organization on the student's behalf.

Please contact Peter Brown with any questions at 650.330.2001 ext. 2238 or email pbrown@menloschool.org.

READ THIS DESCRIPTION CAREFULLY BEFORE SIGNING FORMS.