

Social Sciences Unit 2 Project — Latinx Game Development Grant Proposal

For our second unit project, you will draft a grant proposal for an update to a video game that focuses on the experience of crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. For the purposes of our social sciences unit, your grant proposal will require social sciences research on Latinx social issues in order to elaborate on the connection between a video game and the representation of border crossing. You will find more information about the video games you may choose from below, and we will spend time playing both in class.

Ultimately, your grant proposal will describe how and why you will update or expand a currently existing video game to better convey or investigate issues of the border and border crossing from a Latinx studies perspective. We will discuss the field of Latinx studies and social science research, as well as read and watch materials as a class to take a sensitive and nuanced approach to (im)migration and “the border.”

The Grant Proposal Genre

A grant proposal is a genre of writing you will find in every discipline; in short, it’s an official way of asking for money for a specific project. Scientists write grants often, asking for funding for large-scale projects; they might turn to a funding organization like the National Science Foundation to complete a project, [such as this recent discovery about drug therapies funded through the NEH](#). Similarly, someone working in the humanities might turn to the National Endowment for Humanities to fund a project, such as [this NEH-funded exhibition at Duke’s Nasher Museum](#).

Nonprofits, academics, small businesses, and many other professions turn to grant proposals to acquire the funding needed to achieve their goals. Grant proposals outline their projects with enough context for a non-expert and describe their goals, their needs (financially, and otherwise), and the importance of their project.

For your grant proposal, you and your team will envision yourself as game developers with a vested interest in Latinx issues and Latinx people in gaming. Choosing from one of the two games we play as a class, you will draft a grant proposal that envisions an update to one of these games to extend or amend how the game presents border-crossing at the U.S.-Mexico border. Using social science and critical game studies approaches, you will propose how, where, and why you would update the game to account for your research on border crossing as well as the role of aesthetics and player experience in conveying this iteration of border crossing. You will present your proposal to the class in addition to submitting a written grant proposal.

Learning Objectives

- Gain an understanding of the scope and importance of the field of Latinx studies
 - Be able to employ a critical approach to a text from a Latinx studies perspective
 - Grasp key terms related to border theory and border crossing
- Ability to successfully conduct research in the social sciences, including navigating research databases, evaluating relevant sources, and discerning different social science methodologies
- Be able to conduct close readings/playings of video games
 - Consider how game form and player experience can shape the functionality and import of a game's storytelling and experiential components
- Familiarity with the grant writing genre
 - Knowing what a grant is for, how to succinctly convey the importance of a research idea to a wide audience
 - Being able to state the importance of research in a larger context

Unit Games

Borders (Windows/Google Game -- does not work on Mac [Catalina])

- Will play in class
- You may download onto through itch or Google Play onto your personal computer, but it is not required

Border Between Life and Death (available online, for Mac and Windows)

- Will play in class
- May play online or on "[itch](#)" (free gaming platform)

Rhetorical Situation

| Genre | Purpose | Audience | Role | Rhetorical Situation |
|----------------|--|---|--|--|
| Grant Proposal | Explain the importance of your update to a video game in best portraying Latinx experiences with border crossing | Non-expert funding organization who is very stingy with money | Video game developer working with Latinx in Gaming | You and your team need to convince a funding organization that your video game update is important and worthy of funding |

Feeder 2.1 — Annotated Bibliography — Due Wednesday, February 22

In order to prepare for your grant proposal, your team will complete a 15-source annotated bibliography with at least 10 scholarly sources. Your other five sources may be primary sources (we will discuss this further in class), as well as films, novels, poetry, news articles, or other media. Your scholarly sources should all be in the field of social sciences (we will discuss the breadth and diversity of this field as a class), and consider issues of border crossing, im(migration), and Latinx studies and experience at the US-Mexico border.

A strong Feeder 1.1 will include

- At least 10 scholarly sources (peer-reviewed, from a journal or academic press — encyclopedia entries are not scholarly)(15 total)
- Full APA (or whatever citation style you prefer) citations for each source
- For each source, an annotation that includes:
 - a brief summary of the source
 - its main argument or conclusion
 - a brief note of the sources' context (who wrote this, and why? What methodological approach was used?)
 - how you *might* plan to use this source in your grant proposal
 - how this source does or does not relate to either of the two games we played as class
- Annotations will be a short paragraph. No jargon should be included in your annotations.

Feeder 2.2 — Grant Proposal Outline — Due Monday, March 6 (11:59pm on Canvas)

In order to prepare for writing the full grant proposal, your team will first construct an outline of your grant sections, including where you plan to use sources. We will look at sample grant proposals in class so you have a clear understanding of the genre.

For the outline, you only need to include bullet point descriptions under each section heading of what you plan to include and discuss (3 to 4 bullet points per section, with 1-3 sentences each). This is your opportunity to get feedback from me. The word counts included are for the final grant proposal.

A strong Feeder 2.2 will include:

- Section headings, that include the following
 - Project Name
 - Brief project description / elevator pitch (about 100 words, geared toward a non-expert audience)
 - Project context and relevance to Latinx community (final must be 250-500 words)
 - What is this project? What game are you updating? How is the game related to Latinx issues? How does the game engage these issues? What are the pros and cons to this approach?

- Description of game and proposed updates to game (final must be 500-750 words)
 - Describe your game's approach to border crossing, and then what updates you will make to the game and why. These changes might be aesthetic, in relation to game play and form, or in relation to content. Describe how your proposed changes will make the game better representative of Latinx issues, or, if you plan to expand rather than update or change the game, what these changes will add in relation to issues around border crossing and (im)migration.
- Description of why these updates are important (final must be 250-500 words)
 - Consider the entire context of your project in relation to gaming, critical game studies, and the role of arts and technologies in relation to Latinx studies and political issues relating to border crossing, (im)migration, and Latinx lived experiences of struggles and violence at the border. How will this grant serve Latinx studies and critical game studies?
- Indication of where you plan to use at least 6 sources (more sources are fine)
 - 6 or more sources are required for the final grant proposal

Unit Project 2 — Final Grant Proposal Draft and Presentation — Due Monday, March 20

A strong Unit Project 2 will include

- Everything described in Feeder 2.2 in the completed grant proposal
 - Each section heading with accompanying writing, at the correct word count (you may not go over more than 100 words for each section — grant proposals have word limits)
 - At least 6 sources integrated in the proposal
 - A works cited
- An 7-10 minute oral presentation with a visual aid, where...
 - All group members help present
 - A professional visual aid
 - Design Scheme
 - No long paragraphs of text
 - Screenshots from the game being updated
 - A brief overview of each section of the grant proposal, with emphasis importance of the project and proposed updated
- A bulleted document describing how each member contributed to the project (each member submits their own, not completed as a team)