

**GEOG 3301: Geography of Texas**  
**Spring 2019**  
**Online Course**

Instructor: Dr. Jen McCormack

Instructor Email: jennifer.mccormack@sulross.edu; mackormack@gmail.com (only if srsu email has issues)

Instructor Office Phone: (432) 837-8161

Instructor Office Hours and Location: LH 302 by appointment

Geography of Texas is a combination of a critical theory, content, and qualitative field methods course on the physical and human geography of Texas. Using the beautiful geography of Texas, we also focus on cinematic geographies as a base for discussing spatial narratives, identity, culture, politics, economy and policy.



**Course Objectives and Skills**

- Acquisition of a geographical perspective on Texas's diverse environments, peoples, cultures, law and economic systems

Assessment: analytical writing, spatial technology, field sites and original research, exams

- Development of a geographical imagination and critical analysis of data, theory and texts

Assessment: analytical writing, spatial technology, field sites and original research, exams

- Acquisition of research skills:
  - Primary research sources
  - Application of social theory
  - Presentation of original research

Assessment: analytical writing, spatial technology, field sites and original research, exams

- Acquisition of spatial technology and cartographic literacy
- Analyze meta queries: What are the human forces that create regions? How is identity derived from geography? What are the relationships between power and place?

Assessment: analytical writing, spatial technology, field sites and original research, exams

**The Americans with Disabilities Act**

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832, Telephone Number 432-837-8203.

**Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated at any level. Do not copy and paste from each other, the text or online sources in your writing or exams. I have seen this done and am quick to deal with it--and you are cheating yourself from the learning experience. These assignments are carefully constructed to help you in the professional world, where cheating can get you fired. Any cheating will result in automatic zero for that assignment and conversation with professor.

**Class Policy**

Geography is a dynamic discipline! We will look at human movement and systems across space and use critical social theory to dig deep. We won't always agree and that is what makes a stimulating course. However, we owe each other respect and openness to diverse viewpoints. Respect is key in all communication.

## Required Texts

Readings are in PDF form on the course website in each weekly module folders. All readings are mandatory and your understanding will be assessed through weekly assignments, exams and special projects. We also have multi-media films, audio and visual materials. All content is fair game for exams.

## Assignments

- I. **Lecture PPTs and Readings:** This is where you start every week. Download the PPT and Readings by Monday of the week, so you can organize your time for the deadlines. Waiting until Friday is asking for trouble. Every week has a folder on the course Blackboard site. You are responsible for using the lecture PPT as a guide and doing all the readings every week. Email the professor with any questions! All materials from the PPTs and readings are game for the exams.
  
- II. **Weekly Analysis Assignments (100 points each, 1200 points total):** Every week you have an analysis project of writing and interaction with the readings, multimedia, maps, and the lecture PPTs. The Weekly Analysis (WA) will have a Word Doc in that week's folder uploaded as an "assignment." **Download this assignment at the beginning of the week.** Some weeks this will be questions and/or a short essay on the readings and ideas; other weeks it will be viewing a documentary, looking at the night stars from your site, going on a hike, and/or interacting with different map sites. This means the time to complete the weekly analysis **can vary** and you do not want to wait until the last minute. **The WA is a major component of your grade. WA are due by Friday before midnight, CST of that week uploaded to the Blackboard assignment prompt (see instructions below).** Communicate with professor if you have questions/concerns BEFORE deadline. I will be grading the assignment ON Blackboard and posting your points there, so you know exactly where you are in the semester. Your Blackboard profile will give you a tally of where you are point wise to accumulate points towards the final grade (points tally below). *\*\*If you are confused by how Blackboard stores points, email the professor and I can talk you through it. You will see how each assignment as potential amount of points and how you do.*

**Downloading and Uploading Assignments to Blackboard.** If you have never uploaded assignments to Blackboard, here is a helpful site: <https://wiki.umbc.edu/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=23658615>

- A. **Downloading Assignments:** In the Module folder for that week (on the "Content page) you will see the Assignments. You download the document, do the work and upload back on to Blackboard. Below is a screenshot from Module folder to see how and where to download the assignment file:

Week 1: Introduction to Geography & Human-Environmental Processes \*Everything you need is in here!

- Lecture PPT with Audio Slides**
- Reading 1: Economic Impacts of Colonialism**
- Reading 2: Industrial Revolution Climate Change Early**
- Week One Questions**  
Attached Files: WRG2019Week1Questions.docx (19.146 KB)
  1. Download this document.
  2. Complete all the questions by reading the syllabus, going through the Lecture PPT and audio, the multimedia and the two readings in the Module folder.
  3. Upload the assignment once you have completed all sections to Blackboard by Aug 30 Friday 5pm CST.

**Uploading Assignments:** After you have worked on your assignment and saved it to your computer, simply click the Assignment title and “browse your computer” for the file. Upload.

1. Download this document.  
2. Complete all the questions by reading the syllabus, going through the Lecture PPT and audio, the multimedia and the two readings in the Module folder.  
3. Upload the assignment once you have completed all sections to Blackboard by Aug 30 Friday 5pm CST.  
WRG2019Week1Questions.docx

By submitting this paper, you agree: (1) that you are submitting your paper to be used and stored as part of the SafeAssign™ services in accordance with the Blackboard Privacy Policy; (2) that your institution may use your paper in accordance with your institution's policies; and (3) that your use of SafeAssign will be without recourse against Blackboard Inc. and its affiliates.

---

**ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION**

Text Submission Write Submission

Attach Files Browse My Computer Browse Content Collection Browse Cloud Storage

SafeAssign accepts files in .doc, .docx, .docm, .ppt, .pptx, .odt, .txt, .rtf, .pdf, and .html file formats only. Files of any other format will not be checked through SafeAssign.

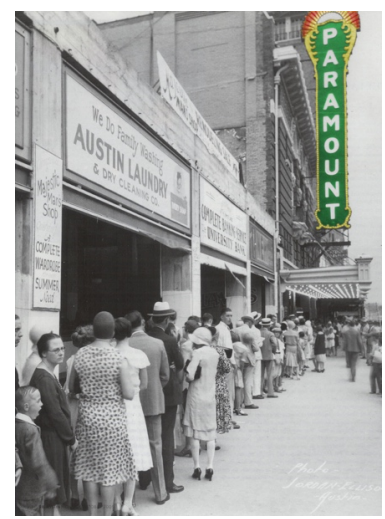
Plagiarism Tools  I agree to submit my paper(s) to the Global Reference Database

*After working on your assignment and it is saved to your computer, you can simply “browse” and upload it back to Blackboard.*

**Advice:** Use **Chrome** as your browser for download, uploading and taking exams. And do not wait until the last minute. Computers and technical issues exist, give yourself enough time to deal with problems.

**III. Exams (100 points each, 200 total):** There are two exams in this course: the mid-term and final. They will be posted on Blackboard and you will have a set time to complete the exam by the deadline.

**IV. Original Research Project: Cinema Texas (200 points):** Using the analytical ideas of Lukinbeal on ‘Cinematic Geography,’ Shohat and Stam on ‘Representation and Identity,’ and Tuan on ‘Making Place’—you will create a short visual presentation on a film made in/or about Texas. This visual will be a 5-8 slide storyboard using Powerpoint, Prezi, clips of the film, a short video of your own, a photo story, a map story of filming locations with Google Earth, etc. Be creative!



In your project, you can talk about the presentation of Texas culture and people, stereotyping within Texas or about Texans, etc. Simply invoke the geography and tell a coherent story, based on the texts listed above. In your storyboard explain how you used Lukinbeal, Shohat and Stam, and/or Tuan. **GO DEEP IN YOUR ANALYSIS!** You can tell any story you are inspired to tell—but use these three readings as the theoretical concepts to center your story of how Texas environments, culture, and people are portrayed in film.

**Research:** In the past students have done diverse and excellent projects including: 1) looking at civil rights and race in sports in El Paso with the film *Glory Road*; 2) culture and gentrification in Austin with the film *Slacker*; 3) the site of the football field as symbolizing small town politics with *Friday Night Lights*; and 4) mythologies and the idea of who is a “hero” in Texas history with *Alamo*.

In your research, use the IMDB website for the film you choose to compare the filming locations. Go under “Details” and it will list all the filming locations. For example, is a location really West Texas or is it New Mexico filmed to look like TX?

If so, what does that say about our expectations of place and cultural geography versus reality? How do our mythologies about space, people and stories create a space, even if it is an illusion? How do you think these expectations perpetuate the myths--especially, if we keep reasserting them? Do they help us form identities? Tell stories? Do we hear the same stories over and over? For example, who is usually cast as a cowboy? How does that compare to the history and contributions of *vaqueros*? Who is usually cast as the settlers of the West? How does that compare to contributions of Buffalo Soldiers?

Possible films and filmmakers-

Texas filmmakers making films in TX:

- Richard Linklater: *Boyhood, Dazed and Confused, Slacker, Bernie*
- Robert Rodriguez: *Machete, Spy Kids, Grindhouse*
- Mike Judge: *Office Space* (filmed in Dallas---this is a great one using TX to represent an everywhere U.S. space, this inverts spatial expectations by using generic offices, apartment complexes and chain restaurants---absence of specific identity to tell the story. This is the opposite approach most filmmakers use in or about TX).
- Tobe Hooper: *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (the 1974 original! The locations are amazing: Bastrop, Round Rock, Kingsland, San Marcos, etc.--this film is known for utilizing the geography to tell the story)

Filmed in and about TX:

- Wim Wenders: *Paris, TX* (Big Bend NP, Marathon, Brewster County and Houston)
- Joel and Ethan Cohen: *No Country For Old Men* (Big Bend NP, Marfa); *True Grit* (Austin, Granger, Blanco)
- Gregor Nava: *Selena* (Corpus Christi, San Antonio, Houston, Lake Jackson)
- Peter Bogdanovich: *The Last Picture Show* (novel by Larry McMurtry, filmed in Archer City, Olney, Holliday, Wichita Falls)
- Peter Berg: *Friday Night Lights* (film, not T.V.; set in Odessa, filming in Odessa, Abilene, Elgin, Taylor, Houston)

2016 was also the inaugural year of the **Women Texas Film Festival**. Links to new films by young TX women filmmakers: <http://www.dallasobserver.com/arts/texas-first-all-female-film-festival-announces-its-lineup-for-texas-theatre-8531903>

## **Grading**

The professor will post your grades on the Blackboard course “Grade Center”, after review. Courtesy reminder: professors are teaching several courses at once and we are not grading robots. ☺

## **Assignments are:**

12 WA: 100 points each, 1200 total  
2 Exams: 100 points each, 200 total  
1 Cinema Texas Project: 200 points

**Total possible points: 1600**

## **Grade scale**

1600-1500=A  
1499-1400=B  
1399-1300=C  
1299-1200=D  
under 1199=F

## **Late Policy**

By registering for this online course and reviewing the syllabus, you are agreeing to the deadlines on the schedule. I give you an entire week to get work done and you don’t have classroom time. This is an adult professional space to organize your work with all your other courses, sports, jobs, family life, romance, Netflix binges, parties. It is **your** responsibility to submit work by the Friday deadline, this is training for the professional world. And it is also **your** responsibility to reach out if you are confused or need help. I am happy to help you, but as college students you have communication and assignment responsibilities.



### **Feb 17/Week 6: Indigenous Texas and Sacred Geographies**

1. “ ‘Speaking with Names’: Language and Landscape among the Western Apache” (Basso)
2. “Relativity, Relatedness and Relativity” (Deloria, Jr.)
3. “The Biggest Tribe You Never Learned About in Your Texas History Books” (Mancias)
4. Documentary: *Reel Injun* (2009): <https://tubitv.com/search/reel%20injun>

### **WA #6 Due Friday**

### **Feb 24/Week 7: Imperial Texas**

Readings:

1. “ ‘Mexico in his head’: Slavery and the Texas-Mexico border” (Kelley)
2. “Introduction: Demythologizing Texas” from *The Conquest of Texas* (Anderson)
3. Documentary: *When Worlds Collide* (2010): <https://vimeo.com/14861182>

### **WA #7 Due Friday**

### **Mar 2/Week 8: Mid Term**

*Mid Term will be posted on Blackboard.*

### **Mar 9-13/Week 9: Spring Break**

*Enjoy the beauty of Texas geography!*

### **Mar 16/Week 10: U.S.-Mexico War**

Readings: Primary Sources on The War on Mexico (Zinn) *\*This looks like a lot but most of these are just one page and are all in the single document file on Blackboard*

1. Diary of Col. Hitchcock (1845-146)
2. Miguel Barragan (18350)
3. Juan Soto (1847)
4. Frederick Douglass (1849)
5. *North Star* Editorial (1848)
6. Henry David Thoreau (1849)

### **WA #8 Due Friday**

### **Mar 23/Week 11: Civil Rights**

Readings:

1. Selections from *Fighting Their Own Battles* (Behnken)
2. Documentary: *Austin Revealed: Civil Rights Stories*

### **WA #9 Due Friday**

### **Mar 30/Week 12: Environmental Justice and Gentrification**

Readings:

1. “Race and Environmental Justice in the United States” (Bullard)
2. “From Freedman’s Town to Uptown”: Community Transformation and Gentrification in Dallas, TX” (Prior and Kemper)
3. “Environmental Justice: One Texas Man’s Refinery Fight” (Turrentine)

### **WA #10 Due Friday**

### **Apr 6/Week 13: Immigration**

Readings:

1. “Galveston Ellis Island of Texas” (Hardwick)
2. “Bracero Agreement, 1942” (Governments of U.S. and Mexico)
3. “A Day Without Immigrants” (Pulido)

### **WA #11 Due Friday**

**Apr 13/Week 14: Borderlands, *La Frontera***

Readings:

1. Sections from “Borderlands, *La Frontera*” (Anzaldúa)
2. “Film at the Border: Memories of Cinemagoing, Laredo, TX” (Lozano)

**WA #12 Due Friday**

**Apr: 20/Week 15: Cinema and Texas Geography**

Readings:

1. “Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle Over Representation” (Shohat and Stam)
2. “Cinematic Landscapes” (Lukinbeal)
3. Documentary: *Children of Giant*, 2015

**Original Research Project: Cinema Texas BEGIN** \*Check in with prof on your plan via email.

**Apr 27/Week 16: Modern Human Geography in Texas: New Urbanism**

Readings

1. “The Texas Urban Model” (Kotkin and Cox)
2. “A Tale of Six Cities” (Salamon)
3. “An Urban-Rural Divide?” (Perryman Group)
4. “Mapping the Changing Face of the Lone Star State” (Goldsberry)

**Original Research Project: Cinema Texas DUE**

**May 4/Finals Week: Final TBA**