

**GEOG 3303/SOC 4310 Geography and Social Science**  
**Spring 2020: Food Geography and Sociology**  
**Online Course**

Instructor: Dr. Jen McCormack  
Instructor Email: jennifer.mccormack@sulross.edu  
Instructor Office Phone: (432) 837-8161  
Instructor Office Hours and Location: LH 302, by appointment



**Welcome to Geography and Social Science: Food Systems!**

This is an upper division course, specifically designed to study critical social theory and research methods in preparation for professional and graduate work. This course emphasizes senior level scholarship, research theory, methods, data collection and design by YOU. You will finish this course able to write and present on theory, methods and critical analysis of data. The final third of the course will be an independent research project where you will be collecting original data, using a selection of methods studied in this course. Our research focus is food systems, which connects geography and sociology in myriad ways: natural science food production and human health, political-cultural-social-economic power relationships in diet, food production/manufacturing/delivery/marketing/service/national policy and access (food deserts, guerilla gardens, alternative economic and cultural systems of food).



**Course Objectives and Skills**

This course is designed in three major components:

**Pt 1: Theory and Background Content:** How do we formulate our ideas about a topic? What are the issues and power relations around ideas? What are assumptions and realities? **How do begin to ask good questions?** Part of this will be an introduction to ideas about food and culture, as well as social constructions of food, people, society and power.

We will examine:

- Post-structural/post-modern theory
  - Power/Knowledge, Discourse, Narrative
  - Social Construction of Nature
- Spectacle and economic relations
- Political Ecology: labor, access, community and environmental justice
- Indigenous food systems and economies
- Food Systems and Service: social, political and corporate v. worker relations

**Pt 2: Qualitative Methods:** How do we collect data that is relevant to our thesis? How do our methods connect to what kind of data is generated? What are the power relations implicit in research methodologies?

1. Surveys
2. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews
4. Ethnography
5. Spatial analysis
6. Video and documentary



### Pt 3: Field Research, Project Presentation and Completion

An independent study, you will select 2-4 research methods we study in Part 2 to generate new data related to food systems and political ecology. Your final product will be a 15-page research document with text, data in visual forms (tables, interview excerpts, maps, photos, video) and works cited page.

#### Class Policy

Sociology and geography are a dynamic discipline and unafraid to study controversial topics—that is human society! We won't always agree and that is what makes a stimulating discussion. However, we owe each other respect to listen and articulate diverse viewpoints. Respecting the professor, course materials and all communication is key to passing this course.

#### 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. Any work that is stolen will result in an immediate zero and conversation with professor about withdrawal from course.



#### Late Policy

This is an upper division online course. You have a lot of freedom to organize the assignments around your other commitments. **HOWEVER**, the deadline is real. No late work. You have a week to get the work done, email the professor, etc. Deadlines are professional training of time management and respect. **At every job interview, a future employer will ask how to do you balance deadlines?** If you have an emergency, let me know. But other courses, sports, romance, jobs, Netflix binges, etc. are not emergencies. These are regular commitments you balance with this course. If you are traveling, for example, for SRSU sports, you already know when this work is due.

Thus, work ahead of deadlines if you are going to be away.

#### Textbook

This course will use major theory and peer-reviewed contributions to geographical and sociological thought. These readings will allow us to dig deeper in the theories, methods and/or relevant discussions in sociology. All readings are fair game for exams and quizzes, and the content should be utilized in student essays and group projects. **The readings are listed on the schedule and uploaded to the class site on Blackboard.**

#### Assignments and Assessments

1. **Lecture PPT-** Every week will have a lecture PPT in the folder on Blackboard which is designed to teach the main theoretical concepts, methods and content for that week's topic. There are audio, multimedia and interactive components to contribute to student understanding. Start here and everything will connect! 😊
2. **Reading Analysis (50 points each, 400 points total)** You will have 8 Reading Analysis essays (RA) for the readings in this course: a 1-3 page analysis of that week's reading due every Friday before midnight, uploaded to Blackboard. I want to see you engage the theory (the abstract ideas and thesis), the methods, the cases or data from the study. GO DEEP! This are upper division readings and your writing should reflect that level of engagement.

**Your RA should contain the following information (this information is in the RA template on Blackboard):**

1. Introduction with the week's topic, use the PPT and multimedia links to outline the main ideas.
  2. A paragraph on each reading summarizing the main idea
  3. A paragraph citing an idea, method or quote that most inspired you
  4. A concluding paragraph connecting this week's readings to the course topics.
  5. Works cited page in APA format:  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/general\\_format.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html)
3. **Original Research Question, Methods and Project Plan (100 points)**- As senior level scholars, you will have over three weeks of field space and time to develop your research question, project perimeters, methods and field time. The first week of field action, you will submit your initial research questions and a sketch of the methods deployed, your field site and goals for the project. These may change through your project before final paper and that is okay, but you need to go into the research collection with a solid plan.
4. **Original Research Paper- (300 points)** The final paper will incorporate all the data and theory discussed in class and generated by your field work. The paper should be approximately 15 pages with a visuals (maps, tables, photos, etc.) and a separate works cited page in APA format. The paper must include the following components (this will help you organize your work):
1. **Research question/hypothesis:** What are you studying? Why?
  2. **Theoretical background:** Use the theory discussed in Pt 1 of class and without a solid theoretical background using all the course ideas, your paper cannot receive full credit (no A). I will go through how this looks, and you can always ask me via email!
  3. **Methods:** Discuss which methods were deployed and why (to generate what kind of data).
  4. **Data Presentation and Analysis:** Share what data you collected (this would be the space for the visual components) and analyze the data and its implications on your research question/hypothesis
  5. **Recommendations/Summary or Conclusion-** How does your work contribute to the fields of study and/or debates on policy?
  6. **Works Cited in APA format** (online source: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>)
5. **Mid Term and Final Exams (100 each, 200 points total)** There will be a midterm and final exam assessing your knowledge acquisition, posted on Blackboard.

**Grade Scale**

900-1000 points= A

899-800 points= B

799-700 points= C

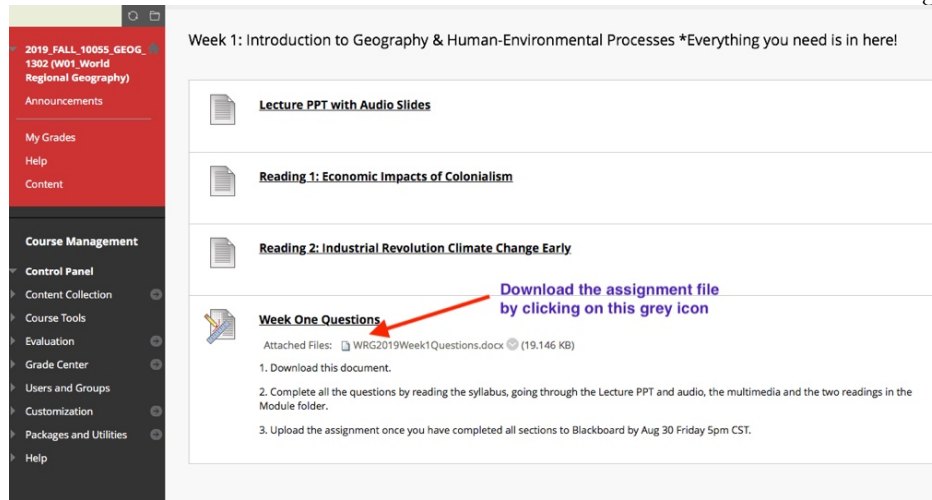
699-600 points= D

Under 599 points= F

*Points will be posted to Blackboard course "grade center."*

**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>

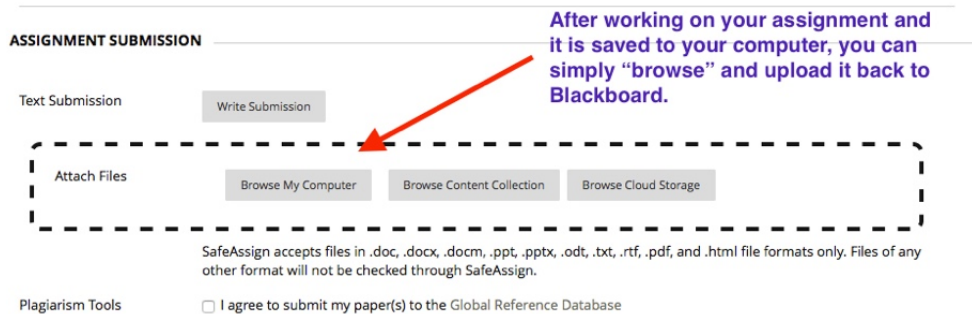
- A. Downloading Assignments:** In the Module folder for that week (on the “Content page) you will see the Assignments. You download the document, do the work and upload back on to Blackboard. Below is a screenshot from Module folder to see how and where to download the assignment file:



**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.



**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.

**Course Schedule** \*subject to change at instructor's discretion

**Jan 13/Week 1:** Introduction to Course and Food Geography and Sociology

Readings:

1. “Food, Self and Identity” (Fischler)
2. “Realizing justice in local food systems” (Allen)

**RA #1 Due by Friday Before Midnight, CST Uploaded to Blackboard**

**Jan 20/Week 2:** Omnivore’s Dilemma and Food Manifestos

Readings:

1. "An Eater's Manifesto" (Pollan)
2. Selections from 'Omnivore's Dilemma' Part 3 "Personal: The Forest" (Pollan)

**RA #2 Due**

**Jan 27/Week 3:** Social Construction of Nature

Readings:

1. "Social Construction of Nature" (Robbins et al.)
2. "Trouble with Wilderness" (Cronon)
3. "Land Ethic" (Leopold)

**RA #3**

**Feb 3/Week 4:** Power/Knowledge and Discourse

Readings:

1. "Food Ethics" (Zwart)
2. "Unities of Discourse" (Foucault)

**RA #4**

**Feb 10/Week 5:** Political Ecology: Labor and Production

Readings:

1. "What is Political Ecology?" (Robbins)
2. "Nobel Prize Lecture" (Maathai)

**RA #5**

**Feb 17/Week 6:** Situationist Spectacle and Economic Relations

Readings:

1. Chapters 1-2 from "The Society of Spectacle" (Debord)
2. Chapters 14 & 21 from "Revolution of Everyday Life" (Vaneigem)

**RA #6**

**Feb 24/Week 7:** Food Justice and Alternative Food Spaces/Ideologies

Reading:

1. 'Wild Rice Moon' (LaDuke)
2. 'Wild Rice Maps' (LaDuke)
3. 'Food Deserts and Sociology of Space' (Thomas)
4. 'Starved for Access' (Morton & Blanchard)

**RA #7**

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

*Mid Term will be posted on Blackboard.*

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

*Have a wonderful break and enjoy some beautiful food geographies!*

**Mar 16/Week 10:** Food Geography and Sociology-Research in Action

Reading:

1. "Eating While Young and Black: Food, Food ways and Gentrification in Austin, TX" (Jones, Dissertation)

**RA #8**

**Mar 23/Week 11:** Methods, A-Sharing Human Experiences as Data

Readings:



1. "Methodology of Focus Groups" (Kitzinger)
2. "Structured Methods: Interviews, Questionnaires and Observation" (Phellas, et al.)
3. "Ethnographic Method in Sociology" (Gold)

*\*You do not have RA for this week and next. Using the readings, you are developing your research question, methods and project plan. Feel free to email the professor for help in developing pre-deadline!*

**Mar 30/Week 12:** Methods, B-Visualizing Human Experiences as Data

Readings:

1. "How and Why Communities Use Maps and Geographic Information" (Craig and Elwood)
2. "Videographic geographies" (Garrett)

*\*Keep developing your plan and methods!*

**Apr 6/Week 13:** Designing your research project

**Research question, selection of methods and project plan due uploaded to Blackboard**

**Apr 13/Week 14:** Field work on your original research

*Do your research collection! I am available via email or meeting to help consult.*

**Apr: 20/Week 15:** Field work on your original research

*Continual work on your data collection.*

**Apr 27/Week 16:** Original Research Project Due

**Completed original research paper due on Friday by deadline.** *\*Be sure to include all components listed above in syllabus.*

**May 4/Finals Week**