Geography 374: Frontiers in Geography  
Spring 2017: MW 2:30 – 3:45 pm  
Rm. CLA 0.108

Instructor: Dr. Jayme Walenta  
Office: CLA 3.422  
Office Hours: Wednesdays 9 – 11 am, and by appt.  
Email: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This upper-level undergraduate capstone level course requires students to successfully complete a research project that assembles and integrates knowledge and skills acquired across your university career. Students are expected to work independently, with minimal supervision by the professor. The topic for the 2017 spring term will be to investigate food access and food security in the Austin, TX area. Final projects are intended to contribute to a multi-dimensional investigation of food access in the area by mapping food deserts, food accessibility, and food security. By mapping, I mean both the literal visual documentation using geo-spatial technologies that you are accustomed to, as well as creating an archive of the area’s food security through interviews with key community members. You will have the option to work in groups or individually. Projects will be customized to account for group numbers.

COURSE FORMAT
This course is divided into two primary components: 1 – an introduction to the food economy, food security and food justice literature, and 2 – the design, execution and delivery of capstone-level projects. The first component will be conducted as a seminar, where students will arrive to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. The readings and discussions from this first section of the course will serve to inform your individual project investigations for the second section of the course.

The second section of the course will be devoted to designing and executing your individual projects. Specific project topics are left open-ended, so that you can delve deeply into an issue of particular interest. That said, tentative project topics include: GIS mapping of food deserts based on relevant variables; interviewing &/or surveys of Austin Food Bank Managers; interviewing government policy makers and food activists in the area; participant-observation/ethnography and interviewing of local food movement actors - including area farmers’ markets, CSA organizations and/or community gardens; or working with the UT Sustainability Office on campus food issues . During the second component of the class, we will meet regularly. These meetings serve to clarify any issues that arise with projects, and allow for the coordination of strategies and approaches within groups, as well as direct communication with the professor.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Students will be able to (1) speak knowledgeably and critically about the food system literature (2) understand the differing racial/gendered/social aspects of food security within the Austin area and more broadly within North America (3) design and execute a research project that requires you to generate a research question, employ qualitative or quantitative methods to answer that question, (4) engage in fieldwork, (5) synthesize results into a report that situates findings within academic and policy food security literature, (6) collaborate with peers to undertake a project, and (7) communicate findings clearly using oral and written means.

TEXTBOOK: all readings will be posted on Canvas.
COURSE SCHEDULE

*All readings should be complete before class on the day assigned
**The syllabus is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class and over email

Week 1:
January 18\textsuperscript{th} – Course Introduction

Week 2:
January 23\textsuperscript{rd} – Complex Food Issues

January 25\textsuperscript{th} – Defining Food Security

Week 3:
January 30\textsuperscript{th} – Understanding Food Access

February 1\textsuperscript{st} – Mapping Food Deserts

Week 4:
February 6\textsuperscript{th} – National Food Politics

February 8\textsuperscript{th} – Governing Insecurity

Week 5:
February 13\textsuperscript{th} – In class viewing of Food Stamped, a documentary

February 15\textsuperscript{th} – Food Banks & Charity

Draft Syllabus, Jan. 6
Week 6:
February 20th – Eating on Campus
   Guest speaker to discuss food on UT campus

February 22nd – Eating on Campus

Week 7:
February 27th – Food Activism

March 1st – Tentative: tour of UT Microfarm

Week 8:
March 6, 8 – Project Planning and Design

Week 9:
March 13, 15 – Spring Break

Week 10:
March 20, 22 – Project Planning and Design (Proposal due on 3/22)

Week 11:
March 27, 29 – Project Fieldwork

Week 12:
April 3, 5 – Project Fieldwork

Week 13:
April 10, 12 – Project Fieldwork (Fieldwork Summary due on 4/17)

Week 14:
April 17, 19 – Results & Analysis

Week 15:
April 24, 26 – Results & Analysis

Week 16:
May 1, 3 – Final Project Presentations

Final Reports Due on May 10th by 5 pm

Draft Syllabus, Jan. 6
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

30%  Pre Project Assignments
     15% Discussion Guide/Class Facilitation (due date varies)
     15% Seminar Participation

70% Final Project
     15% Proposal (March 22nd)
     5% Field Summary (April 17)
     10% Presentation (May 1, 3)
     30% Final Paper (May 10th)
     10% Participation/Attendance (instructor and peer rated)

Discussion Guide/Facilitation As the first part of the semester will be devoted to reading and discussing various aspects of the food system, food security and food justice literature, you will be expected to lead one of the seminar discussions and provide a guide to the class that summarizes the readings and points to key discussion topics. This guide will not exceed one page single-spaced. I will lead the discussion on January 23rd to provide a reference point.

Seminar Participation Attendance and participation during the seminar phase of the course is required.

Group Participation You will be expected to contribute in equal parts to your project. This mark is both instructor and peer rated. The instructor will evaluate you based on your class attendance during the project phase. Your peers will evaluate you based on your role in the project.

Proposal The proposal should provide you with a roadmap to completing your project. It will pose the research question you and your group member(s) will answer, identify the literature in which you will situate your project, identify the methods you will use to answer your research question, identify any challenges you can foresee and how you might overcome them, and speculate as to results and where/how your project might advance the food security literature.

Fieldwork Summary Following your fieldwork you will provide a summary of the tasks undertaken and preliminary results obtained. The document should be between one and two pages single-spaced.

Presentation You will synthesize the findings of your project in a 10-15 minute presentation to be delivered to the class at the end of the term. I will provide further guidance as the due date nears.

Final Report Your team will write a report that introduces your project, poses key questions, references appropriate literature, describes your methodological approach, and highlights key findings. I’d suggest identifying a paper you liked during the first phase of the course and using it as an example. First person writing and autobiography is acceptable. This report should be approximately 2500 words and should include graphs/charts/maps/pictures.

As this course is a writing intensive course, a high standard of writing (critical thinking, grammar/spelling, correct use of citations, etc.) is expected. Do not hand in reports that are not proofread, lack in proper citations, or do not follow the objectives listed in the assignment description. Ample guidance will be provided as to expectations on the final project. If you are unsure of something, ask.

Grading System: Final letter marks are determined through the following scheme:

A:  100 – 92%  B+:  89.99% - 88%  C+:  79.99% - 78%  D+:  69.99% - 68%
A - :  91.99 – 90%  B:  87.99% - 82%  C:  77.99% - 72%  D:  67.99% - 62%
B -:  81.99% - 80%  C -:  71.99% - 70%  D -:  61.99% - 60%  F – Below 60%

Draft Syllabus, Jan. 6
COURSE & UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

In addition to normal high standards of courtesy and respect expected in any university classroom, please take note of the following:

1. Scholastic Dishonesty. The UT-Austin Honor Code centers on the core values of learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each University member is expected to uphold these values through practicing integrity, honesty, trust, fairness and respect towards peers and community. In light of this, instances of scholastic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating, will be treated in accordance with UT Office of the Dean of Students' Student Conduct and Academic Integrity standards. Please inform yourself as to these standards at the website: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/standardsofconduct.php

2. Grade Disclosure. All personal information concerning your performance in this course is covered by federal privacy legislation, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). No grades or status questions will be provided by telephone or email. You are welcome to come to office hours to discuss your grade and performance.

3. Policy for Late Assignments. All assignments must be submitted in class on the day they are due. Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized by subtracting 10% off the mark per day. After three days, the assignment will no longer be accepted. You will receive a failing mark.

4. Policy for Contesting Grades. If you disagree with your mark on any assignment, you must explain in written form why you feel you deserved more credit. I'll review your response to decide if more points should be granted.

5. ADA Statement. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities (471-6259).

6. Copyright Policy Statement. All materials used in this class are copyrighted. These materials include but are not limited to syllabi, quizzes, exams, in class materials, power point slides, review sheets and any additional problem sets. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts unless permission is expressly granted.

7. University Rules Regarding Attendance. This class follows University policy regarding excused absences. For more information, please see http://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/academic-policies-and-procedures/attendance/

8. Email. Email communications must meet the same standards as the written assignments. I expect proper salutations and signatures. Please include GRG 374 in the title of the email. I will do my best to answer within 24 hours. If you email me after 5 pm, I will likely not return your note until the next day. If you email me on the weekend, I will reply on Monday. Please always consult the syllabus first, before emailing the instructor. Also, please come to office hours, this is time allotted for you to have your questions answered.