Literature Review and Research Questions Assignment – 20%

This rubric is intended to support a holistic evaluation of the assignment. Each category will be assessed individually, but the final grade will reflect the overall quality of the work rather than a mathematical average of the categories.

The categories are ordered roughly according to their importance to the assignment. Particular emphasis will be placed on the synthesis of existing knowledge, critical engagement with sources and forms of knowledge, the rationale for further investigation, and the development of a clear and researchable research question.

A strong assignment should demonstrate consistent quality across the rubric. Strength in one category does not necessarily compensate for significant weaknesses in another.

Category	F – Fail	D – Below Average Work	C – Average Work	B – Excellent Work	A – Superior Work
Synthesis of Existing Knowledge	Sources are listed or summarized individually with little or no connection between them.	The review relies mainly on source-by-source summary. Few meaningful relationships between sources are identified.	The review makes some connections among sources and identifies relevant themes, similarities, differences, or patterns.	The literature is effectively synthesized around relevant themes, ideas, debates, patterns, or relationships. Sources are brought into conversation with one another rather than discussed separately.	The literature is synthesized into a coherent understanding of the topic. The review clearly identifies important relationships, patterns, agreements, disagreements, tensions, and/or developments across the literature.
Critical Engagement with Sources and Knowledge	Sources and claims are largely accepted or reproduced without critical consideration.	There is limited consideration of the credibility, context, evidence, perspectives, or limitations	The review demonstrates some critical consideration of the evidence, context, perspectives, contributions, and/or	The review critically engages with the sources and forms of knowledge used, considering their evidence, context,	The review demonstrates thoughtful and sustained critical engagement with how knowledge about the topic is produced

		of the sources used.	limitations of sources.	perspectives, contributions, and limitations where relevant.	and represented, including consideration of evidence, context, perspectives, limitations, tensions, and/or knowledge that may be absent or marginalized.
Rationale for Further Investigation	The review does not identify an area that warrants further investigation or does not connect it to the literature reviewed.	An area for further investigation is mentioned, but the rationale is unclear, weakly supported, or disconnected from the literature.	The review identifies a reasonable area for further investigation and provides some support for why it is worth studying.	The review clearly identifies and supports an area for further investigation that emerges from the existing literature.	The review develops a compelling and well-supported rationale for further investigation based on what is known, uncertain, contested, overlooked, or insufficiently understood in the existing knowledge.
Research Question	The research question is missing, unclear, unrelated to the literature review, or not reasonably researchable.	The research question is present but is overly broad, vague, difficult to investigate, or weakly connected to the literature review.	The research question is reasonably clear, focused, and researchable and has an identifiable connection to the literature review.	The research question is clear, focused, researchable, and well grounded in the literature review and rationale for further investigation.	The research question is precise, focused, feasible, and analytically meaningful. It emerges logically from the literature review and provides a strong foundation for

					the proposed study.
Quality and Relevance of Sources	Sources are largely irrelevant, unreliable, inappropriate, or poorly suited to the research topic.	Some appropriate sources are used, but the selection is limited, uneven, or only partially relevant to the research topic.	Sources are generally relevant, credible, and appropriate and provide an adequate foundation for understanding the topic.	Sources are well selected, relevant, credible, and appropriate to the topic. They provide a strong foundation for understanding the existing knowledge related to the proposed research.	Sources are selected purposefully and demonstrate strong research judgment. They are highly relevant, credible, and appropriate to the topic and, where relevant, draw thoughtfully from different forms or sources of knowledge.
Research Topic, Context, and Scope	The research topic is missing, unclear, or not meaningfully related to sustainable foodscapes. Little or no context or scope is established.	The research topic is identified but remains vague, overly broad, or insufficiently contextualized. The scope is unclear or inappropriate.	The research topic is clear and relevant to sustainable foodscapes. Adequate context and a generally appropriate scope are established.	The research topic is focused and well contextualized. The scope is appropriate and helps establish a clear direction for the proposed research.	The research topic is clearly focused and thoughtfully situated within relevant social, ecological, geographical, and/or food-system contexts. The scope provides a strong foundation for the proposed research.
Organization, Clarity, and Writing	The assignment is incomplete or very difficult to follow. Organization	Organization or writing frequently makes the argument difficult to	The assignment has a recognizable and generally logical structure.	The assignment is clearly written and well organized. Ideas and	The assignment is exceptionally clear, concise, and coherent. Organization

	and writing substantially interfere with understanding.	follow. Connections between sections and ideas are weak.	Writing is understandable, although organization, transitions, or clarity could be improved.	sections develop logically, and transitions help connect the literature review into a coherent narrative.	strengthens the argument, and ideas develop smoothly into a unified literature review and research question.
Citations, References, and Academic Conventions	Sources are not adequately cited or referenced, making it difficult to determine the origin of information or ideas.	Frequent citation, referencing, formatting, or writing errors interfere with the academic presentation of the assignment.	Sources are generally cited and referenced appropriately, with some errors or inconsistencies. Academic writing conventions are generally followed.	Sources are cited and referenced accurately and consistently. The assignment follows appropriate academic writing conventions with few errors.	Sources are integrated, cited, and referenced accurately and consistently throughout. The assignment demonstrates excellent attention to academic writing and presentation conventions.
Number of Sources	Uses 0–2 sources.	Uses 3–4 sources.	Uses 5–6 sources.	Uses 7 sources.	Uses 8 or more sources.