Greetings! My name is Deborah Hann, and I’m delighted to be joining the Social Sciences department as a visiting Assistant Professor in Geography. I earned my Ph.D. in Geography: Geographic Education from Texas State University (San Marcos) and have taught at Texas State and Kansas State. I teach World Regional Geography, other introductory geography courses, and upper division human geography courses. I love teaching geography because it allows me to link the topics we cover in class – patterns of religion, agriculture, politics, resources, language, and so much more – to current events, things happening around us, and events in the world daily.

My research focuses upon where our ideas about the world around us – our “mental maps” and perceptions – come from and how we can use that information to become more spatially or geographically aware. My dissertation, for instance, examined literature taught in schools in this country and just how much geography is “hiding” in them. I’m working on ways to help teachers explore these concepts by building bridges between geography and material they already teach in their classrooms. I’m also interested in how we use our ideas about the world to create the landscape we see around us. This research means I’m currently working on a project about how we memorialize floods, for example, and how food truck owners create their own special places and zones around their trucks.

I grew up on Southern California, not far from the beach, and often spent summers traveling around the U.S., camping with my family. In fact, I took my first geography class in college to beat my mother at a place name game we played in the car (I still can’t always beat her!). During college, I studied abroad in Cambridge, England and was an intern at the Natural History Museum in Los Angeles and at the National Geographic Society. I still work for National Geographic every year writing questions for their geography bee. My husband and I also like to cook, ride our bikes, and play board games – we have a large collection.

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