

## **Accelerated World Geography**

Instructor: Mr. Jay Bennish

### **Course Description**

This is an exciting time to be studying global and regional geography! In this course you will take a penetrating look into the geographical - or spatial - relationships between human societies and cultures, the natural environment, and historical changes that have shaped the contemporary world. More than answering the question "what is where," this course adopts a conceptual approach to understanding and explaining the dynamic human and natural features of the earth's surface. Particular geographic themes will be emphasized and applied largely to the regions of South, East, and Southeast Asia, the Middle East (North Africa & South West Asia), Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Russia, and Australia. Important themes include: population, religion, human rights, notions of development and underdevelopment, impact of colonialism historically and currently, sustainability, impacts of modernization on developing countries, globalization of economy and culture, political and international conflict, cultural diversity, and global environmental concerns. To that end, a deeper understanding of current events from a historical and geographical perspective is imperative. Thus, timely issues and events in the news will be tied into the overall framework of the course.

Because of the emphasis on the relationships between social, cultural, political, and environmental components of human societies and regions, world geography combines various aspects of the social sciences. Further, it addresses four essential skills: critical and creative thinking, critical reading, spatial reasoning, and effective writing. Such skills will be derived from a combination of questions sets for reading assignments, mapping exercises, seminar (class discussion), films, lectures, group projects, and essays that synthesize your understanding of concepts and theories related to the themes presented in class.

### **Course Goals**

1. Critical and creative thinking
2. Critical reading
3. Spatial Reasoning
4. Effective writing

### **Course Objectives**

1. Students know how to use and construct maps, globes, and other geographic tools to locate and derive information about people, places, and environments
2. Students know the physical and human characteristics of places, and use this knowledge to define and study regions and their patterns of change
3. Students understand how physical processes shape Earth's surface patterns and systems
4. Students understand how economic, political, cultural, and social processes interact to shape patterns of human populations, interdependence, cooperation, and conflict
5. Students understand the effects of interactions between human and physical systems and the changes in meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources
6. Students apply knowledge of people, places, and environments to understand the past and present and to plan for the future

### **Course Structure**

The course is comprised of lecture, readings, films, seminars, map exercises, group projects, participation in the global fair, and writing assignments. Your grade will be calculated from five areas: tests/quizzes, writing assignments, seminar, group work/projects/maps, and homework. Sharing your knowledge, opinions, information, and experiences is a requirement. The format of the course is intended to reinforce learning on the course topics. It is critical that you attend each and every class, keep up with reading assignments, have questions or problems ready for discussion, and take concise notes from ALL sources of information.

The following materials are required for every class meeting

1. 3-ring binder / folder for handouts and readings
2. Lined paper for notes and class work
3. Pencil and pen
4. Textbook and/ or readings

### **Suggested Materials**

1. Colored pencils and black fine point pen
2. Goode's World Atlas (20<sup>th</sup> edition or later)
3. Ruler

## Grading Policy

Your grade each semester will be determined by total points accumulated from the five areas listed above.

### Grading Scale

- A =90-100%
- B = 80-89%
- C = 70-79%
- D = 60-69%

\*\*\* All written assignments except impromptu essays or tests are on a portfolio grading system, which means they may be re-written as many times as desired for additional points. This is done in the interest of improving writing skills, as well as, generosity.

### Make up / Late Work

- Notes should be acquired from a fellow student
- Any assignments given during an excused absence must be turned in within two school days following your return from the absence for full credit
- To get make up work just see me during my office period or pick it up in the classroom
- It is the students responsibility to stay up-to-date on assignments, late / make-up work, tests, activities, and notes
- Any assignments given prior to an absence are due the say the student returns
- Unexcused absences - assignments due on the date of an unexcused absence will not be accepted. I reserve the right to refuse collection of work related to an unexcused **absence**

### Extra Credit

Extra credit may be obtained from a variety of sources dealing with current, historical, or geographic events. Students must submit a written / typed paper that includes a brief summary, a connection to course material, and an opinion. Extra credit may not increase your standing more than **one** letter grade. Sources for extra credit include, but are not limited to:

- NPR (National Public Radio) 1340 AM
- The New York Times
- The Wall Street Journal
- The News Hour (PBS) channel 6
- The **BBC** News (PBS) channel 12
- [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)
- [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)
- [www.guemllanews.com](http://www.guemllanews.com)
- [www.tompain.org](http://www.tompain.org)
- [www.cato.org](http://www.cato.org)
- [www.hcritage.org](http://www.hcritage.org)
- [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org)
- [www.freespeech.org](http://www.freespeech.org)
- [www.newamericancentury.org](http://www.newamericancentury.org)
- [www.brook.edu](http://www.brook.edu)
- [www.zmag.org](http://www.zmag.org)

### Classroom Rules

- Respect must be shown to myself and fellow peers at all times
- Tolerance for differences, remain open minded
- Turn in all assignments at appropriate time
- Complete all readings and arrive to class attentive, prepared, and willing to participate
- Disregard for these rules will not be tolerated