

World Cultures

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IMPORTANT NOTE: As the school year goes on, our classroom needs may change, and thus, this is a living document. We will update this digital document as the year progresses as needed, and will always notify parents of **major** changes via email. Thanks for your understanding.

Course Description

World Cultures and Geography is a thematic course that will enable students to develop an understanding of their world through an examination of a variety of cultures and their interaction with the physical geography of the world. This yearlong course will study six different regions of the world: North America, Central and South America, Europe, Asia, North Africa and Southwest Asia, and Africa South of the Sahara. By examining the culture and geography found in these six regions of the world, students will gain an appreciation of the vast diversity of the human experience and the richness of human culture. This understanding will be accomplished by examining general aspects of culture that are common to all peoples – language, history, geography, institutions, economy, art, beliefs, food, and recreation.

What will we learn about?

Intro Unit: Framework

Map Analysis Skills
TPAGES introduction
Types of Government
Types of Religions
Textual Analysis Skills (IREAD)
What is Culture?

Unit 1: North America

Is there a uniquely “American” culture?

Unit 3: Europe

Has the European Union been successful?

Unit 5: North Africa & Middle East

Is conflict inevitable?

Unit 2: Central & South America

Does government regulation of economic activity benefit citizens?

Unit 4: East Asia

Are human rights universal?

Unit 6: Africa (South of the Sahara)

Can Africa’s social issues be resolved?

Course Standards

Iowa Core—Essential Skills and Concepts/Literacy Standards for History/Social Studies (iowacore.gov)

DCSC Social Studies Standards Met:

Academic Standard 1: The student will evaluate the impact of culture and cultural diversity.

Academic Standard 2: The student will use historical perspective and habits of thinking to analyze how humans view themselves in and over time.

Academic Standard 3: The student will analyze geographical information about people, places, and environments.

Academic Standard 4: The student will analyze the interactions between groups, institutions, individual human development, and personal identity.

Academic Standard 5: The student will analyze the interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions and their impact on society.

Academic Standard 6: The student will explain how people create and change structures of power, authority, and government.

Academic Standard 7: The student will apply the economic principles of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.

Academic Standard 8: The student will analyze the relationship between science, technology, and society

Academic Standard 9: The student will evaluate the impact of globalization.

Academic Standard 10: The student will demonstrate citizenship in a democratic republic.

How will we be graded?

Your grade will be calculated in categories, explained below. Due to amount of work involved, tests, projects, and the final exam will hold greater weight than the day-to-day work. Plan accordingly.

The grading scale below will be used for all assignments. Grades will not be rounded. *As students have ample opportunity to earn points throughout the semester, extra credit is not offered on a regular basis. There may be surprise opportunities for students to earn a few extra points in class throughout the semester, but these are not guaranteed.*

Grading Scale

This course uses a five point grading scale. Grades will be assigned and interpreted as follows:

5 = A, Superior work, goes beyond expectations

4 = B, strong work, meets all expectations

3 = C, average work, meets most expectations

2 = D, below average work, meets minimum expectations

1 = F, not passing work, does not meet minimum expectations

Final Grade Category Weights

Practice Assignments = 15%

Fish Bowls/Discussions = 20%

Quizzes = 15%

Tests = 20%

Projects = 20%

Final Exam = 10%

Total = 100%

Category Explanations

Practice Assignments - These assignments help me in understanding what you have learned and what you still need to accomplish. Formative assessments may include “things of three,” exit tickets, class discussions, and class activities. Some of these will be included in your grade while others may not. *Lowest score drops.*

Fish Bowls/Discussions - At several points throughout the semester, students will be asked to read a set of documents that provide insight on a specific topic. Students will then use that reading, as well as any independent research, to participate in a scored discussion. Students will be graded on their level of preparedness, ability to offer and expand on new ideas, and ability to ask questions to deepen discussion. *Low score does not drop.*

Quizzes - These will be given at the end of chapters and count as part of your final grade. These will be taken online. If desired, students may retake a quiz **one time**. If they choose to retake a quiz, students will earn the **higher** recorded grade. Retakes must be arranged in advance and may require additional prep work for eligibility. *Lowest score drops.*

Tests - Unit tests are designed to allow students to demonstrate knowledge of the content as well as the ability to think critically as a sociologist would. Tests will contain a variety of question types, including but not limited to multiple choice, essay, and performance-based questions. Tests will always be included in your final grade. *Low score does not drop.*

Projects - Projects allow students to demonstrate knowledge of sociological content as well as the ability to think critically as a sociologist would. Topics will vary, but will center around the concept and content being covered in a given unit. Students will have a great deal of flexibility in how they complete projects and will be graded using rubrics provided to them in advance. Projects will always be included in your final grade. *Low score does not drop.*

Final Exam - This will be a comprehensive test of all material learned during the entire semester. Tests will contain a variety of question types, including but not limited to multiple choice, essay, and performance-based questions.

Can I turn in work late?

Late work will lose one letter grade each day until it is submitted and will not be accepted after the unit ends. For example, all Chapter 1 work must be submitted by the day of the Chapter 1 test/project or zeros will be given. No Chapter 1 work can be turned in after the date of the test/project. (This *may* not apply in the case of absences close to test day. See me with specific questions.) The lowest grade given for work submitted late will be equivalent to a D. Late work will also be noted in the grade book for record-keeping purposes.

How will we learn the material?

Each unit will be broken down into:

- 1) Concept: the universal "idea" we will study
- 2) Topic: the more sociology-specific idea/material we will focus on to better understand the concept
- 3) Learning Targets: the daily objective - what you should be able to do by the end of the lesson (an "I can" statement)

Lessons take anywhere between one to three days to complete, depending on the concept and topic. All lessons will include some or all of the following:

- 1) Focus: teacher-led portion that explains the concept, skills, or topic to be learned; 10-15 minutes in length
- 2) Guided Practice: segment of the lesson where students practice applying the concept, skills, or topic with intense teacher support
- 3) Productive Group Work: portion where students work with each other to demonstrate learning, growth, or mastery of the concept, skills, or topic
- 4) Independent Practice: an opportunity for students to demonstrate individual learning, growth, or mastery of the concept, skills, or topic

Some of the strategies we may employ are classroom discussion, daily warm-up activities/questions, Cornell Notes, graphic organizers, and the Frayer Model for vocabulary. This is not an exhaustive list.

Resources and Materials

Our primary text:

World Geography and Cultures, Student Edition (2007), ISBN-13: 978-0078745294

Examples of supplemental materials:

CultureGrams
CIA World Factbook
WTO.org (World Trade Organization)

Classroom Values and Expectations

My primary responsibility is to help you learn. There are other secondary hats that I wear, of course, but this is the big one. Your responsibility is to actively participate in the learning process - to complete the various tasks that I, as the teacher, feel will help you reach your educational goals.

In order to do that, there are roles that we each take on - I'll be the guide while you'll be the learner. If we're going to be effective in our respective roles, there are several values that we must adopt and practice each day. Here are the values and expectations I have for all of us, in no particular order:

1. Always tell the truth.
2. Listen carefully.
3. Set goals.
4. Be grateful.
5. Use your talents.
6. Say please and thank you.
7. Follow directions.
8. Don't complain.
9. Use kind words.
10. Accept responsibility.
11. Be respectful.
12. Do your best.

Not by accident, these values apply not just in the classroom, but outside of it as well. Good humans do these things daily, so it is logical that I would model this behavior and expect the same from you.

Since we have different roles, each value will take on a different meaning for us as individuals; however, each one acts like a social contract between teacher and student. For example, as the teacher, I will set goals for what we should accomplish each day. As the learner, you should set goals for what grade you want to earn. As the teacher, I will listen carefully to your concerns and feedback about the material. As the learner, you should listen carefully to my instructions and the ideas of your classmates. As the teacher, I accept responsibility for whether a class learns what I ask them to. As the learner, you must accept responsibility for whether you personally accomplish what I ask of you. Living by the classroom values will help all of us fulfill our respective roles.

In the event that you choose to not meet classroom expectations, consequences will be given on a case-by-case basis. Possible consequences include but are not limited to calls home, morning detentions,

One final note: I also believe very strongly in the power of routine so we will develop one that collectively works for all of us. I am always open to feedback that supports a more efficient learning environment, so if you can think of a way that improves upon what we do and allows me to meet your needs as your teacher, share it!

What if you're late or absent?

Your daily attendance should be a priority. Excessive absences and tardies will not be tolerated. The Student Code of Conduct will be followed closely and consequences include detentions, referrals, parent phone calls, and loss of points from the preparedness/participation grade. Arriving late with a pass from an adult will exempt you from detentions, unless the privilege is abused.

In the event of an absence, all of our daily class information will be posted on my website, with the most recent information at the top. This includes daily activities, learning goals, and homework. When you are gone, **YOU** should access the website (which can be viewed from mobile devices) and review what we did during your absence. Assignments done in class will be linked so you can print and complete at home. You may also obtain copies from the bin labeled "Make Up Work" in the classroom.

Unless there are extenuating circumstances that you discuss with me ahead of the due date, you will be given the number of days you are absent to complete the missing work. So if you miss Monday, you will be given Tuesday to complete Monday's work and it will be due on Wednesday.

If you are absent the day before a test, you will take the test on exam day as planned.

If you are absent on test day, you will take the exam during class on the day you return, unless you have spoken to me in advance about special circumstances (hospitalizations, death in the family, etc). These special circumstances are rare, so be prepared to take it upon your return.

How can you get help?

My office hours are 7:00-7:30am and again after school until around 2:45pm (or later, as needed and if planned with me in advance). You can find Ms. Sheehan in A124 and Mr. Forbes in A130 during those times.

You may also reach out to us via email. Please know that we cannot guarantee an immediate response, especially on weekends when we do not generally check our email, but these are usually the quickest ways to get in touch outside of school hours.

You are encouraged to sign up for text reminders to your phone. Information about this can be obtained in class or on the website.

Senior High also hosts FAST: Friday Academic Support Time. From 7:30-8:30am, you can get help on assignments from class. This time may also be used to make up tests and quizzes, with prior approval. See Mrs. Brokus in the AP office for information.