

World Geography
Belchertown High School
Social Studies Department
2008/2009 Academic Year

Instructor: Mrs. O'Neill

Textbook: *Geography: People and Places in a Changing World*
English, Paul Ward, West Publishing (2d ed.)

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce geography and investigate the varied environments of our planet. This study includes the physical characteristics of the globe, including oceans, mountains, rivers, climate and natural resources. Students will learn skills in map-reading and basic computer research using raw data to form an analysis about issues facing our world. We will examine world cultural regions which are developed, powerful and technologically advanced, as well as poorer regions with slower rates of industrialization and rapidly growing populations. This course is designed around the "Five Important Themes in Geography" which are: Place, Location, Human/Environmental Interaction, Movement and Region. We will explore human impacts on the planet such as the destruction of rainforests in Africa and the Amazon, global warming, and the depletion of natural resources. We will also explore world oil production and the world's economic future. The world's environmental, political, economic and cultural concerns will form the basis for our study.

As an in-depth study of global cultural regions this class will explore the rights, duties and responsibilities of citizens of the world community. Students will discuss the meaning of academic excellence and how they can become productive contributors to society.

Course Overview:

- Introduction: The Geography of Our Planet
 - Map Making Project
- Earth Environments: Landforms, Climates, Vegetation and Soils
- Project #1
 - Earth Environment Project on problems facing the planet including Deforestation, Acid Rain, Global Warming, Pollution, Rainforest Destruction etc.
- North America: The United States and Canada
- The Middle East and North Africa
- Japan
- The Two Koreas
- China and Taiwan
- Project #2
 - People-Environment Relations: Human modifications to the world, such as Three Gorges Dam, Great Wall of China, Panama Canal, etc
- Sub-Saharan Africa

➤ Latin America

Methods: Homework will include reading, writing essays and completing assigned handouts. In class we will conduct class discussions about the reading and take notes including new terms and vocabulary. We will take part in interactive classroom activities as well as analyze primary source documents, raw statistical data, and informative cultural presentations. We will work with maps and economic data, watch videos, read widely about world economic and environmental issues, develop our analytical writing skills and PowerPoint presentations.

Required Materials: Please bring your textbook with a cover, a pencil or pen daily (black and dark blue only, no colored pens), a spiral notebook and three ring binder with pockets for handouts. Your spiral notebook will be for taking class notes, interactive classroom activities, in-class assignments and for recording homework assignments. If you fill a notebook you will need another, so plan accordingly.

Grading: Quizzes and Exams*: 50%
Classwork: 20%
Homework: 20%
Class Participation: 10%

Total: 100% not including Extra Credit (5% toward a quarter grade)

*Exams may include papers, presentations and alternative assessments.

Extra Credit: Students may earn an additional five points (5%) to a quarter grade if you wish to bring up your grade (one project per semester). This is optional. Please seek advance approval from me for topic and grading rubric.

Class Rules: Students will respect the learning environment and follow all rules of behavior included in the student handbook and the goals stated in the BHS Mission Statement. All backpacks and purses will be stored under your chair while in class. Keep cell phones and electronic devices stored out of sight during class. Homework will not be accepted late unless an excused absence from class is presented. Homework assignments and class work will be graded as follows:

5 points = 100% All questions answered, thoroughly and accurately
4 points = 80% All questions answered, less detail
3 points = 60% Incomplete, most questions answered
2 points = 40% Incomplete, some questions answered
1 point = 20% Incomplete, a few questions answered

Extra Help: I am available daily to give extra help if needed. Please see me before school, during my free period (G), during my directed study hall (C), or after school by appointment.