

Middle School World Cultures and Geography

Course Overview and Syllabus

Course Number: SS2041

Grade level: 6-8

Prerequisite Courses: None

Credits: 1.0

Course Description

Designed to introduce students to the study of geography, this course helps students master important concepts in physical and human geography. Comprehensive and organized by region, this two-semester middle school course helps students understand the Earth's physical and human diversity. Students analyze population and settlement patterns and evaluate the ways that human activities modify the physical environment. While studying humans around the world, students compare development, standards of living, systems of government, and economic factors across the globe. In addition, students gain a rich understanding of global cultures and the historical factors that have shaped the world around them. All units in the course are parallel and include studies in physical and human geography, ancient cultures, regional studies, and modern issues.

Course Objectives

Throughout the course, you will meet the following goals:

- Examine methods used by geographers to study and compare regions, including the use of demographic data, economic indicators, maps and photographs, cultural characteristics, characteristics of government, and physical features
- Identify and locate major landforms, bodies of water, countries, and population centers
- Identify, locate, and describe the Earth's major climate types and ecosystems
- Analyze how physical processes change and shape the Earth's surface
- Investigate the characteristics of the world's culture regions, analyze how cultural diffusion occurs, and describe the factors that can cause cultures to change
- Examine the causes and effects of human modifications on the environment, and discuss modern environmental issues
- Use social studies skills to access, interpret, and apply information from a variety of sources

Student Expectations

This course requires the same level of commitment from you as a traditional classroom course would. Throughout the course, you are expected to spend approximately 5–7 hours per week online on the following activities:

- Interactive lessons that include a mixture of instructional videos and tasks
- Assignments in which you apply and extend learning in each lesson

- Assessments, including quizzes, tests, and cumulative exams

Communication

Your teacher will communicate with you regularly through discussions, email, chat, and system announcements. You will also communicate with classmates, either via online tools or face to face, as you collaborate on project, ask and answer questions in your peer group, and develop speaking and listening skills.

Grading Policy

You will be graded on the work you do online and the work you submit electronically to your teacher. The weighting for each category of graded activity is listed below.

Grading Category	Weight
Assignments	10%
Lesson Quizzes	20%
Unit Tests	50%
Cumulative Exams	20%
Additional	0%

Scope and Sequence

When you log into the Virtual Classroom, you can view the entire course map, which provides a scope and sequence of all topics you will study. Clicking a lesson's link in the course map leads to a page listing instructional activities, assignments, and learning objectives specific to that lesson. The units of study are summarized below:

Unit 1: Introduction to History and Geography

Unit 2: Physical Systems

Unit 3: Human Systems

Unit 4: Africa

Unit 5: The Middle East

Unit 6: South and Southeast Asia

Unit 7: Central and East Asia

Unit 8: Australia and Oceania

Unit 9: Europe

Unit 10: Latin America and the Caribbean

Unit 11: The US and Canada