

# FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

## World Geography and Cultures

**DATE:** April 2013

**SUBJECT AREA:** Social Science

**PROPOSED GRADE LEVEL(S):** 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>

**COURSE LENGTH:** One Year

**GRADING:** A-F

**NUMBER OF CREDITS:** 5 per semester

**PREREQUISITES:** Writing Sample (Recommended)

### **BRIEF COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

World Geography and Cultures is a Social Studies course designed to teach students the different facets of our world, going beyond physical and cultural geography. Students will learn how to use maps, projections, charts, and diagrams. Students will learn about climate and ecosystems and how that interrelates to human culture. Most importantly, students seek to answer the following question: "What does it mean to be human?" This question is the driving focus of the course. Students will explore the human condition through the arts, literature, philosophy, culture, geography, history and health. Lessons are drawn from classical and modern texts of western and non-western cultures. The course provides students with an emotionally enriching experience. The curriculum incorporates a dynamic study of human achievement while imparting the essentials of cooperative learning, the techniques of research, and the experience of oral presentation.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

Students will describe the nature of geography and the differences between physical and cultural geography through the study of western and non-western regions. They will choose a region of focus to examine in depth in a research project. Through this study of geography, students will develop geographic literacy by understanding the six essential elements of geography including:

1. The World in Spatial Terms: Students will learn how to interpret maps and synthesize the content of maps in order to make conclusions about a region based on map study.
2. Places and Regions: Students will learn the concepts of geographic regions by discussing how humans interpret and understand their place in the world. They will discuss the difference between physical regions, perceived regions, formal regions, functional regions, and other forms of place.
3. Physical Systems: Students will develop a geographic literacy about major world landforms and will also study how those landforms contribute to history, culture, and regions.
4. Human Systems: Students will explore elements of cultural geography including comparative religions, arts, literature, philosophy and other forms of human expression that encompass cultural identity. Students will examine their own cultural identity as well as non-western cultural beliefs and practices.
5. The Environment and Society: Through the study of both physical and cultural geography and examining the history of a region, students will interpret how the presence of humans on the planet affects the physical geography. They will examine how the human footprint changes the physical world in which we live, but also how the physical world in which we live can dictate our cultural practices.
6. The Uses of Geography: Students will examine how geographers make use of geographic information to make predictions about the future and to interpret our world. In other words, student will learn why this information is important in understanding our world and what it means to be a human living in that world.

The course is arranged around these six essential elements, with students gaining an understanding of complex cultures (their history, geography, politics, literature, art, drama, music, dance, law, religion, philosophy, architecture, technology, science, education, sports, social structure, and economy) and the relationship between these various aspects of a nation's cultural life. They will study the myths, legends and beliefs of various

peoples as a means to interpret cultural values and will recognize how literature and art reflects peoples' inner lives, while developing a multicultural perspective that respects the dignity and worth of all people.

### **GENERAL GOALS/PURPOSES:**

Context of the Course- The theme of this course is "What does it mean to be human?" It explores the human condition across both Western and Non-Western cultures. The course is also designed to advance student understanding of historical and contemporary international issues. We find it critically important to encourage our youth to become knowledgeable global citizens. We strive to spark interest in students who may be interested in a collegiate/career path in International Relations.

World Geography and Cultures will focus on several areas:

- *Teaching the National Geographical Standards:* which was established in 1994 and includes, but not limited to, using maps and other geographical representations, analyzing the special organizations of people, places, and environments in a special context, physical processes that shape the patterns of the earth surface, and the physical and human characteristics of places.
- *Teaching the concepts of Geography:* which include climates, cooperation and conflict, cultures, economic activities and systems, government and citizenship, migration, patterns of settlement, physical characteristics and processes, and natural resources to name a few.
- *Teaching social science skills:* analyzing graphic data and images, identifying main ideas and summarizing, drawing inferences and conclusions, distinguishing fact and opinion, comparing and contrasting, analyzing primary sources, researching and presentation skills.
- *Teaching the Humanities:* the arts of literature, painting, music, sculpture, architecture, performing arts, and the discipline of philosophy. While the sciences explore the physical world, the social sciences make discoveries about the behavior and activities of people in various groups. The arts and humanities narrows that focus, probing the inner question: "What does it mean to be human?" This course will stretch student's imaginations, increase their understanding of non-western cultures, enrich their experience, expand their written and research skills, and increase their distinctively human potential. Study of the literature, arts, health, and social sciences will cover cultural diversity, ways of life, human interests, and values

### **STUDENT READING COMPONENT:**

Students will receive instruction on the effective use of their textbooks important reading techniques as well as analytical development skills to help them in the understanding of their textbooks and supplemental readings. World Geography and Cultures will include a plethora of support materials which students will utilize.

### **TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

#### **Primary Text:**

Textbook: Boehm, Richard G. *World Geography and Cultures*. Glencoe: 2008.

Textbook: Hart, Diane. *Geography Alive! Regions and People*, First Edition. Teachers' Curriculum Institute, 2011.

#### **Supplemental Instructional Materials:**

Textbook: Janero, Richard P., and Thelma C. Altshuler. *The Art of Being Human*, 9th Edition. Pearson Longman, 2001.

Literature: Pang-Mei. *Bound Feet and Western Dress: A Memoir*. New York: Anchor Books, 1996.

Readings: Comber, Geoffrey. *Touchstones Volume A: Touchstones Discussion Project*. MD: CZM Press, 1997.

## **STUDENT WRITING:**

Students will have several opportunities for exploratory research/reports as well as an interactive notebook, projects, and learning MLA format to show their writing skills.

### **Writing Assignments:**

The main assignment for the course is a semester long Anthology project. The entire project is a series of written assignments. Instructional units utilize the following strategies: essential questions; research; and thesis.

1. **Map Analysis:** Students will compose an essay discussing their conclusions about a region based on their interpretations of numerous maps. They will be required to think critically about the content of each map and how examining multiple maps together can create an important understanding of a region.
2. **Historical Analysis:** Students will complete an annotated timeline where they will choose what they feel are the ten most important events in shaping the history and development of their selected country. They must compose a one to two paragraph discussion of the event and its importance to include in the annotated timeline. Students will then choose the one event that they feel is of the most importance to their region to discuss and research in detail. They will then compose a detailed research paper where they must discuss the event and argue why it was so important in shaping the history and development of their region. Students must make educated choices and show an understanding of how certain historical developments can have long term and transformative effects on a country and its people.
3. **Current Event Analysis:** Students will write a research paper about a current issue regarding their country. Students will focus on an issue and discuss in depth the social, economic, and political impact of that event. Students will also formulate opinions about the event by developing theoretical problem-solving solutions regarding their event.
4. **Cultural Research Report:** Students will compose a research report exploring the most important cultural aspects of their chosen country such as religion, ethnicity, cultural festivals, holidays, or other events.
5. **Art Analysis:** Students will choose five different pieces of art (two flat pieces, two three-dimensional pieces, and one folk art piece). They must analyze these pieces for meaning and cultural reflection. They will use their own critical interpretation as well as the knowledge they gained from the previous research projects to interpret these art pieces. Each piece of art will have a separate analytical essay. Students will learn how art is reflective of cultural identity and historical era.
6. **"Food" Project:** This is a group research and written project. Students will choose a region and find a culturally appropriate recipe. They will compose a report that discusses how the ingredients and preparation of this recipe reflect the physical geography and culture of their region.
7. **Preface:** The Preface or "first section" of the final Anthology is actually the last piece of writing they complete. It is a personal reflective essay where the student discusses their process and learning and experience throughout the assignment.

### **Socratic Seminars:**

In addition to the Anthology Project, students will write reflective essays regarding Socratic seminars. The Socratic seminars take place once a week. Through dialogue, Socratic seminars strengthen collaborative and collective active learning, critical thinking, and reading comprehension skills. Students will explore and evaluate the ideas, issues, and values in a particular text. The text will be in regard to western and/or non-western culture. The seminar consists of four interdependent elements: (1) the text being considered, (2) the questions raised, (3) the seminar leader, and (4) the participants.

#### ***The Text***

The text will be a short reading in literature, history, philosophy, ethics, politics, health, philosophy, art or music. The *Touchstones Discussion Project* includes text pieces designed to develop rich discussions in the Humanities. *Bound Feet and Western Dress* is a focused piece of literature that will also be a source of Socratic seminar.

#### ***The Question***

The opening question will have no right answer. The question will lead participants back to the text as they speculate, evaluate, define, and clarify the issues involved. Responses to the opening question generate new questions from participants, leading to new responses. In this way, the line of inquiry evolves on the spot rather than being predetermined by the leader.

***The Leader*** The teacher will play the role of leader during the Socratic Seminar. The seminar leader consciously demonstrates habits of mind that lead to a thoughtful exploration of the ideas in the text. As a seminar participant, the leader actively engages in the group's exploration of the text.

***The Participants*** Students will study the text closely in advance, listen actively, share their ideas and questions in response to the ideas and questions of others, and search for evidence in the text to support their ideas.

### **ORAL COMPONENT:**

Students will learn how to verbalize their research through class presentations and communication within their individual groups.

### **Final Assessment:**

Student assessment will come in many forms including participation, projects, reports, and tests. The purpose of this course is to provide students with a basic understanding of our world as was developed in the standards established in the Geography for Life: National Geography Standards (1994). There will be a common final as established per the district.

### **DETAILED UNITS OF INSTRUCTION:**

#### **Key areas to address:**

- Week 1-2: Physical and Human Geography, which includes the basic study of geography, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 3-4: The United States and Canada, including the regional atlas of both countries, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 5-6: Latin America, including the regional atlas of Central and South America, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 7-8: Western Europe, including the regional atlas of British Isle and Nordic Nation, Central Western Europe, and Mediterranean Europe, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 9-10: Central Europe, Northern Eurasia, and Russia, including the regional atlas, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 11-12: Central and Southwest Asia, and the Caucasus, including the regional atlas, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 13-14: Africa divided by region (North, West and Central, East and Southern), which includes the regional atlas, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 15-16: Southern Asia, which includes the regional atlas, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.
- Week 17-18: East Asia and the Pacific World, which includes the regional atlas, historical overview, physical characteristics, climates and ecosystems, population and culture, resources and land use.

#### **Key Assignments:**

The following is a description of the Anthology assignment as a whole. Students must research a non-western focus region for deeper social science research and analysis. Through this assignment, students gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of non-western cultures and regions and a deeper understanding of the human condition. From a Social Science perspective, this assignment deepens the students understanding of the six essential elements of geography and how those elements function to create a region, a society, a culture, and a modern humanity. All course objectives are incorporated into this extended research project.

The Food Project is a key assignment for understanding the relationship between physical and human geography (two of the six essential elements stated in the course outline).

The Model UN Simulation: Students will participate in four Model UN simulations. The simulations are designed to teach students about the United Nations and its intended purpose in the world. Each student will represent a country and participate in conferences that address current world issues and conflicts. Students will discuss issues surrounding war, revolution, humanitarian aid, foreign aid, nuclear and chemical development, etc. Students will be required to research the social and political ideals of the country they represent. This research will impact the way they address the issue/conflict discussed. Students will be introduced and educated on topics and issues through the analysis of primary and secondary sources. After each simulation, students will be assigned to small groups of 4, in which they will collectively create a formal statement on behalf of their assigned countries. The statement will present a proposal on how to address the world issue/conflict. Each group will present the formal statement to the class before a final vote takes place regarding a solution or course of action.

Assessments: Assessments in this course include critical thinking based synthesis style writing assignments, projects, and exam questions that encourage students to make connections between the different elements of geography. Students make connections between diverse topics and connections to the modern world.

**THIS COURSE WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE CAHSEE AND/OR CST's:**

Social Science

**LAB FEE, IF REQUIRED:**

None

**SUBJECT AREA CONTENT STANDARDS TO BE ADDRESSED:**

**National Geographical Standards (Geography for Life: National Geography Standards (1994))**

1. How to use maps and other geographic representation, tools, technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
2. How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments.
3. How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.
4. The physical and human characteristics of places.
5. How culture and experience influence people's perception of places and regions.
6. The physical processes that shape the patterns of the Earth's surface.
7. The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on the Earth's surface.
8. The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on the Earth's surface.
9. The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on the Earth's surface.
10. The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.
11. How human actions modify the physical environment.
12. How physical systems affect human systems.
13. How to apply geography to interpret the past.
14. How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

**DISTRICT ESLR'S TO BE ADDRESSED:**

- **Self-Directed Learners:** who will be able to use their notes, software, and textbooks to assist them in their learning outside of the classroom.
- **Efficient Communicators:** who can utilize social science concepts through group activities and oral presentations.
- **Quality Producers:** who understand the relevance of organization, time management, and display this ability through their work.

- **Constructive Thinkers:** who are able to analyze cause and effect, distinguish fact and opinion, problem solve, synthesize information, and transfer information from one median to the next.
- **Collaborative Workers:** who can work in a variety of settings in culturally diverse groups. They will create their own teams and study groups to further their understanding of the content area.
- **Responsible Citizens:** who understand the concept of RAD (responsibility, accountability, and discipline) which will further develop them as model citizens.

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