

Course Overview: Geography @ HSPVA

Welcome! My name is Mr. Bingham. I suspect *Geography* is not what you think it is, it certainly isn't "maps". Maps are just one tool a geographer uses to understand the physical and social environment in which he or she seeks to analyze and evaluate the human story on this planet. If we meet at the store 20 years from now, I guarantee you will admit, "Bingham! That class was not what I expected, you helped me change the way I looked at the world."

Three Simple Rules

- ◇ Listen when someone else is talking (most of the learning in takes place through discussion)
- ◇ Engage your brain (you know, like pay attention? Focus on what is happening in front of you?)
- ◇ Bring your stuff (School is your job, bring your tools dude!)

Supply List

Besides a reliable pencil or two and a pen, students will need the following:

- Throughout the year we will read and reference in class *Why Geography Matters More than Ever* by Harm de Blij. It is available at the school store and on line retailers. There is a soft cover edition and you can get it in Kindle or Nook formats, although that makes it tough to follow along in class discussions.
- Three highlighters in different colors.
- 8 - 10 two pocket folders. One for each unit (units often overlap).
- 4 Composition books. I would prefer you use this system for note taking. If you have another system, that's fine.
- Please bring the following for our general use: a box of facial tissue.

While in class

Speak in a normal tone of voice, always.

Nothing goes airborne, including other students!

Because paying attention is becoming a lost art, we employ a system to assist students in practicing this vital life skill. The acronym is SLANT. **S**it up, **L**ean forward, **A**sk & answer questions, **N**od your head, and **T**rack the speaker.

Immediately upon entering the class room, check in the wire basket(s) and pick up any handouts, proceed quietly to your assigned desk, and begin working on that day's "Prime Time" activity alone, quietly. Prime Time assignments are posted on the side white board, right in front of you as you walk in.

When I say "Listen up", students stop talking immediately (not at the end of a thought or sentence) and listen for instructions. Indicate non-verbally for others to "listen up."

Please do not interrupt the instructor (me) while I give directions. Ask questions to clarify, ask to go to the restroom or ask to sharpen your pencil - after instructions are completed.

Raise your hand for permission to speak. If you wish to go to the restroom, raise your hand with your fingers crossed. I will give you a non-verbal response indicating either "yes", "no", or "wait a few minutes".

Students will exhibit courtesy and respect toward all other students at all times. Hateful comments concerning race, gender, sexuality, political views, appearance, or any other characteristic will not be tolerated.

The clock does not dismiss the class, it simply reminds me that I have the option of allowing you to leave. That will not happen until I have finished my thought or given you an assignment. Do not begin packing or leave your seat until I instruct you to do so.

The room will be neat and orderly with the desks and chairs returned to their normal place when you leave. Really.

Other Considerations

If you miss class for any reason, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out what you missed – class moves on without you! Your best tools to accomplish this are access to the *GradeSpeed* online grade-book and the class web site, **BinghamsPlace.com**.

The Internet is an integral part of this course. Check the website often. Often means repeatedly, frequently, regularly....a lot! It will be your best friend, especially if you miss class. Students will check the calendar on the site daily. *BinghamsPlace.com* is available for downloadable copies of secondary and primary sources, links to publisher companion sites, images, charts & maps, blogs, practices quizzes, videos, video tutorials and links to specific web content. All of this is organized by unit for relevance and ease of use.

Pick a **study group** and make them your new appendage - exchange phone, email, Friend them on FaceBook.

You get one copy of a handout. If you lose it, it's down loadable on the website, if you're lucky. Use your pocket folder for this - one folder for each unit.

"I don't know" is not an option for your answer to my question(s). I understand that you may not always know a something, that's why you are taking this course. You will however, **make and effort**, it is my job to guide you toward better answers.

Tutoring is available during most lunches. Just grab your lunch and bring it to my room, we'll talk.

If you ask if it's for a grade, it is. I say everything once. I don't argue with students.

If you **cheat or plagiarize**, you will receive a zero and my soul will die a little every time I look at your face.

Between classes is not the time for questions or informational updates. Email me or see me after school, better yet, **check the web site!**

Grading

If you have an unexcused absence, the grade-book will show a zero for any assignment the class completed in your absence. The zero remains until your absence is excused and you complete the work.

My goal is for your grades to reflect your learning as closely as possible.

There are two kinds of grades in this class, formative and summative.

Formative grades are a check for understanding and lead toward periodic demonstrations of your learning. Performance on formative grades is highly predictive of performance on summative assessments. Formative grades take the form of quizzes, reading checks, exit tickets, in-class work, journal checks, map studies and the like.

Summative grades are tests, essays (usually timed writings) and performances.

Formative grades together count for 50% of the cycle (6 week) grade, Summative grades together count for 50% of the cycle grade. There will be a minimum of three summative grades in a cycle. The semester final exam will account for 25% of the semester grade - it pays to be organized!

You may **re-assess** (re-test) any summative assessment at my convenience. The second score and the original score will be averaged to determine your final score for that assessment. Formative grades may not be re-assessed.

Make up assessments and re-assessments are available **during lunch**. You must make an appointment with me at least one day in advance (so I can have a copy of what you need.) Grab your lunch and come to my room, #136. Make an appointment with me **via email (from BinghamsPlace.com)**.