

Welcome to **Geography!**

Why study the earth? Well, we have all been living on this planet for our whole lives and this year we are going to talk about it. This class is organized around three questions:

1. *What is our world like?*

This course is a **world tour**. Over the next year, we are going to learn about the place we inhabit together, the land, the conditions, the people who live here—the things that make them distinct, and the things we all have in common.

2. *How did it get to be that way?*

That's both an **ecological** and **cultural** question. The physical environment—weather, resources, challenges—affect the development of the human culture there. And, yes, humans have shaped their surroundings too, since the very beginning.

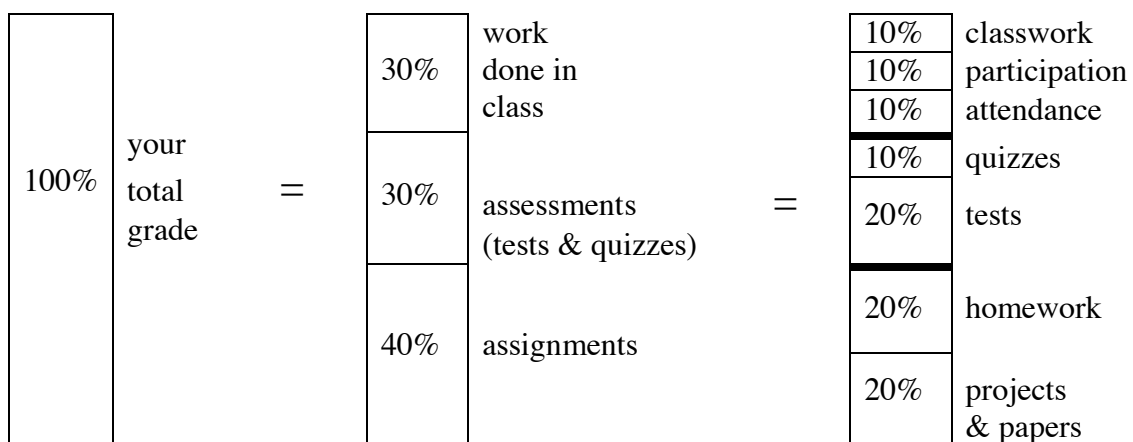
3. *What does it mean to be human?*

Our geography class is also a comparative study of the **human experience**. Increased understanding will make us better, and happier, global citizens.

Organization & Expectations

Respect: It's our class and we are going to be respectful with each other. Please listen and speak with civility; it is okay to disagree—in fact, as 'iron sharpens iron,' that's often what makes discussion interesting—and we will work together on the art of respectful dialogue. (Along with academic writing skills, it may be the most important thing we do!)

Grading: A big part of life is showing up. Please get here, on time, and ready to learn. Your attendance and participation, including classwork assignments, will be 30% of your grade. Tests and quizzes will also be 30% and your homework and longer papers or projects will be the last 40%.



Attendance: For the purposes of school records, you need only to be physically in the room to be marked 'present,' but to get credit toward your grade, you need to be here *physically and mentally*. Please be awake, alert, and attentive (i.e. not looking at your phone), and on time to get attendance, participation, and classwork credit. That's 30% of your grade—don't let it slip away!

Materials

Notebook: Please get a bound, full-sized notebook. You can carry it home with you or leave it in the classroom, but don't lose it. A lot of your 'classwork' grade will be done in this notebook.

Textbook: We will also be working with a textbook in class. You do not have to take it home with you—it is heavy—but, if you wish, you are welcome to check out a copy of the textbook to have at home. I will also make digital copies of sections of the text when useful that you can access.

The Age of Discovery

We will have regular 'voyager' assignments that will challenge you to think creatively. They are optional and will be recorded as **extra credit** in the classwork, homework, or papers/project categories.

Other Policies

Phones. Sometimes we will need to use cell-phones in class, e.g. to look up words, to look at images, etc., and students may use their phones at those times *when, and only when, directed by the teacher*. Also, you may use your phone to take a picture of the board after the bell has rung and you are in the process of leaving. Otherwise, looking at your phone during class will cost you your classwork grade (see 'Attendance,' above).

Food. Please do not eat food in our class or drink things that will be sticky if spilled—but water is just fine.

Late Work. Late work is welcomed, though you will lose 10% of the grade every day your work is late. The grade bottoms out at 60%. For example, if an A- paper, or 90/100, after one day late becomes an 81, after two days a 72, after three days a 63, and after four days a 54, which is not good, but still better than a zero.

Plagiarism. Any work that resembles too closely the work of another student, or of a published source *and does not cite that source*, is plagiarism. That's cheating and will receive a grade of zero. Please see plagiarism.org to read more about it.

Students and parents/guardians, if you have any questions, please email: kodyniec@jsusd.org
I am looking forward to an exciting year.

Very Sincerely,
Krzysztof (Chris) Odyniec

I have read the course syllabus,

student signature: _____ date: _____

Parent, guardian, or adult taking responsibility for the student's learning, please have a look at this syllabus above and talk it over with your student. Please sign that you have and write your contact information and best way to reach you:

signature: _____ & contact information:
(what is the best way to reach you?)