Syllabus Abomnibus

In other words, abandon all hope ye who do not wish to learn; this course'll eat ya alive.

Course Syllabus, AP Human Geography

2008-2009
Mrs. Pamela Stephens
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2nd Period Conference
N213

Resources and Texts:

- Human Geography; People, Places and Culture. DeBlij, Murphy and Fouberg
  Eighth edition, JW Wiley Publishing. This one is provided by the school
- Human Geography; Places and Regions in Global Context. Knox and Marston
  Fourth edition, JW Wiley publishing. I pull stuff from this one.
- Human Geography in Action. Kuby, Harner and Gober. Third edition. JW Wiley publishing. This one just keeps getting older and older, so I really have only borrowed a couple of things from this, but, you know, gotta cite your sources and all.
*Various other texts will be assigned ahead of time for acquisition and use. There will be at least two other outside long-term readings for the year. Consider yourself forewarned.

Resources and Supplies:

- One three ring binder, standard size for your assignments. This can be your generic, catch-all, larger than life notebook for school.
- Pens, black or blue ink. No, you may not substitute for red, purple, cyan, cerulean, burnt sienna, or any other colored pen that you can imagine. Yes, I am aware that I am stifling your creativity, but you'll get over it.
- Loose leaf paper for your three ring binder. It comes in handy for pop quizzes, random classwork assignments, lighting fires, wrapping fish, making paper airplanes, et cetera.
- One notebook (a.k.a. spiral), standard or college-ruled, specifically for note taking.
- One Composition Notebook for the Journal of the week.
- In order for the class to run efficiently and due to salary constraints, I would like for each class to pitch in with school supplies this year.
  o 1st period, one box of Kleenex per student
  o 3rd period, one pack dry erase markers per student
4th period, one pack of index cards per student
5th period, two or three sheets of posterboard per student
6th period, one roll of Scotch tape per student
7th period, one pack of staples, thumbtacks or paperclips per student

For those of you who really want to get an early start on studying for the AP test, my recommendation for outside study guides is Barron’s. Most of the others are hit or miss, but Barron’s is pretty good.

Course Description and Objectives

AP Human Geography, as defined by Harm DeBlij (the guy who wrote your textbook) as how we make places, how we can organize society, how we interact with each other in places across space, and how we make sense of ourselves and others in our locality, region and world. Confused? Good, that means that this course is for you. Simply put, Human Geography is the study of people and places. Our study for the year will be divided up conceptually, starting with the first two:

1) Structures- How do we structure our world? We will be covering the topics of physical and political geography under this concept.
2) Influences- What causes us to do what we do, to think the way that we do and to react in the way that we do? We will be covering the topic of cultural traits and complexes in this unit.
3) Growth and Development- From the growth of cities to the growth of megalopolises to the emergence of megacities, how has where we live grown, and what do we make of that?
4) Wealth- How is it measured, what is it for, why do so few of us have so much of it?

One of the ultimate goals of taking an AP class is to take the AP test, which will be administered May 15th, 2009.

A note on Advanced Placement

Advanced placement courses are approved and administered by the College Board. Every AP class is not “like” a college course, it IS a college course. As such, the pacing of the class as well as the concepts discussed should be expected to be on another level than you may be used to due to the fact that earning a “good” score on the AP test may allow this course to be counted as college credit. This is my version of “Pirates, ye be warned” of rather “students, ye be warned”. This is an advanced course and as such the most common grade will be a mid-C to a low to mid B. Don’t be frightened, use this admonition to plan your attack for this class.

Course Assignments

- I used to be able to give summer assignments. I can’t do that anymore…I just thought that I would share that. Moment of silence please…. (Soft humming and crying).
- Other outside texts will be assigned, probably one per semester. This will be assigned reading outside of class. I also have a tendency to ask uncomfortable questions the day a reading assignment is due and then stare intently at you until something comes out of your mouth, so in
order to avoid awkward pauses it would always be suggested that you read. For those of you with the down low on this class already, yes, that will involve Guns, Germs and Steel. If you don’t know what that is… (chuckle, cough) you will.

- Projects and group work both inside and outside of class will be assigned pretty often with the expectation that you will be responsible enough to meet outside of class and complete your work together. Again, if you don’t, refer to the intent stare and uncomfortable silence from the point above this one.
- Quizzes will be given in many different formats and are primarily used to test prior reading assignments or vocabulary.
- Notes- A favorite quote of mine that I saw recently on a T-shirt worn by a college professor, “If my mouth is moving, you should be taking notes”. Hee hee ☺. But seriously, take notes.
- Daily homework will be assigned periodically, but the majority of your homework will be multiple day assignments.

Course Policies

- Attendance-You need to be here in order to learn. So, don’t skip class, but definitely don’t skip class and then talk to me later after school as though I don’t pay attention. I am a lot of things, but idiot is not one of them.
- Tardies- Don’t be late, because then I have to write a pass and send you to the dean’s office and then you have to wait with all the other irresponsible people who were late, and while you wait I give out a huge assignment, and then you miss it, and then you don’t turn it in, and then your grade goes down the toilet, and then your parents ground you, and then you can’t go to his friend’s party to meet what’s-his-name, and then you sit alone in the dark and watch High School Musical reruns on a Friday night, and……. you get the idea, be on time.
- Class Participation- I grade crazy stuff, like class discussions. I’m sneaky that way. Contribute in a meaningful way to the conversation, which usually means that you have done your homework, and everything will be hunky-dory. On the other hand, if you sit silently counting ceiling tiles or be a mina bird for other people’s previously spoken ideas…Hmmmm…
- Missed Exams- Can be made up during tutorial time, which would be during A lunch on Mondays and Thursdays, or another previously arranged time. Previously arranged is code for “set it up beforehand”.
- Missed Assignments- If you miss an assignment for a reason like death or a similar condition, you will have one day to make it up. In all seriousness, if you have an emergency, email me with the situation and we will deal with it. No information from you means that I assume your emergency was your boyfriend/girlfriend over at your house and you will not be able to turn it in. Simply put, if you don’t contact me BEFORE something is due, then you may not turn it in.
- Academic honesty- You cheat, you burn. Period. Cheating is an expellable (is that a word?) offense. One way ticket to Azkaban.
• Grading
  o Homework- Is on a five point scale with the ability to try again if your screw up.
  o Quizzes- Will be no more than 25 points.
  o Tests- Unit tests will be no more than 50 points. Concept tests will be no more than 100 points.
  o Projects- Will vary widely and will be no more than 150 points.
• Support- I run tutorials for those who want it Monday and Wednesday during A lunch. If you can’t make those times please email me and we will make it work. I’m here to help you…no, really. ☺
• Extra Credit- I don’t give it. Do your work the first time and do it well.

I am incredibly excited for this year and I am genuinely thrilled to be teaching my favorite subject. I am stoked (dude, she said stoked) to have you in my class and look forward to your contributions to my and your fellow colleagues knowledge. Remember, Geography is EVERYTHING, and this year you will find out why.

Pamela Stephens
Westside High School
AP Human Geography

P.S. Laughing at my lame jokes is a very good thing.
I have read and discussed syllabus with my parents/guardians, and understand all policies, procedures, and the grading system of Mrs. Stephens’ classroom.

Date _____________________

Student Name (printed) _____________________________________________

Student Signature _________________________________________________

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I have read and discussed syllabus with my student, and understand all policies, procedures, and the grading system of Mrs. Stephens’ classroom. I also agree to receive periodic updates via email &/or phone regarding the status of my child in class.

Date _____________________

Parent Name (printed) ______________________________________________

Parent Signature ___________________________________________________

Parent Email _______________________________________________________

Parent phone _______________________________________________________

Preferred communication: ( ) phone ( ) email ( ) other _______________

This form needs to be returned to Mrs. Stephens’ class no later than Friday, August 29, 2008. **This form is worth a daily grade for the first six weeks!**