

AP Human Geography Syllabus

Course Overview

AP Human Geography is a yearlong course that focuses on the distribution, processes, and effects of human populations on the planet. Units of study include population, migration, culture, language, religion, ethnicity, political geography, economic development, industry, agriculture, and urban geography. Emphasis is placed on geographic models and their applications. Case studies from around the globe are compared to the situation in both the United States and the state of Texas. CD-ROM, Documentaries and Internet activities are used to explore certain topics.

Course Objectives

To introduce students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of Earth's surface.

To learn about and employ the methods of geographers, especially including observation, mapmaking, data gathering and reporting, and technical writing.

To employ spatial concepts, geographic vocabulary, and landscape interpretation to a variety of locations and situations around the globe and in local areas.

To develop a geographic perspective with which to view the landscape and understand current events.

Texts and Study Materials

Rubenstein, James M. *The Cultural Landscape: An Introduction to Human Geography*. 9th ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Wood, Ethel, *AP Human Geography: A Study Guide*. Woodyard Publications Reading, PA 2007.

Hudson, John C. *Goode's World Atlas*. 20th ed. N.p.: Rand McNally, 1999.

Kuby, Michael, John Harner, and Patricia Gober. *Human Geography in Action*. 3rd ed. New York: John Wiley, 2004.

The Power of Place: Geography for the 21st Century series. Video. N.p.: Annenberg/CPB Project, 1996.

The programs in this series are used for the video case studies.

Annenberg/CPB renamed some of these programs in its updated 2003 version of the series. However, teachers who use the 2003 version should have no trouble converting the programs named in this syllabus to the

updated series.

Some of the best material for illustrating concepts and ideas can come from newspapers. I subscribe to our local (county) newspaper, one of the major papers in the neighboring city, and the *New York Times*. I try to use examples from the local, state, and national levels whenever I can. I have found that the *New York Times* is especially good at providing mapped and graphed information of interest to geographers. Additionally, most of our in-class readings are taken from the *Economist*, a magazine that is even organized by region! I value the articles because they are current, relevant, fairly easily understood by students, and brief. I use the following Web sites to find and make maps that illustrate concepts; the sites also give students a chance to explore and learn from the information available there.

Population Reference Bureau
www.prb.org

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov/

Digital Atlas of the United States
<http://130.166.124.2/USpage1.html>

1997 Agricultural Atlas of the United States
www.nass.usda.gov/census/census97/atlas97/

www.nationalatlas.gov/

Course Planner

Weeks 1–3: The Nature of Geography

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 1: “Thinking Geographically - Maps”
Wood, Unit One: “Geography: Its Nature and Perspectives”
Kuby, Chapter 1: “True Maps, False Impressions”
Rubenstein, Appendix, pp. 502–507

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Define geography, human geography; explain the meaning of the spatial perspective.
2. Explain how geographers classify each of the following and provide examples of each:
 - a) Distributions
 - b) Locations
 - c) Regions

3. Identify how each of the following plays a role in mapmaking:
 - a) Simplification
 - b) Categorization
 - c) Symbolization
 - d) Induction
4. Identify types of scale and projections used in mapmaking; identify advantages and disadvantages of different projections.

5. List different types (models) of diffusion and provide examples/illustrations of each in the real world.

6. Distinguish between different types of maps and mapped information (e.g., dot distribution, choropleth, etc.) and provide explanations of strengths and weaknesses of each.

Weeks 4–6: Population

Reading Assignment

Rubenstein, Chapter 2: “Population”

Wood, Unit Two: “Population”

Kuby, Chapter 7: “The Hidden Momentum of Population Growth”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Map major and emerging population concentrations and describe demographic characteristics of each.

2. Consider the concepts of ecumene (application) and nonecumene of:
 - a) Why do most people live where they do?
 - b) For what reasons have humans historically avoided certain areas?
 - c) Where do non-examples of each exist? Why?

3. Calculate arithmetic, agricultural, and physiological densities and describe the strengths and weaknesses of each for demographic analysis.

4. Explain the elements of a population pyramid and distinguish between characteristic shapes.

5. Explain the demographic transition model:
 - a) What are its components?

- b) Which countries does it describe in each phase?
 - c) Why might it not predict the future for developing countries today?
6. Give examples of pro- and antinatalist policies and their effects in example countries.
 7. Define key demographic terms and identify regions in which high and low extreme examples of each can be found.
 8. Concerning natural hazards, do the following:
 - a) List various types of natural hazards and disasters
 - b) Map the areas most affected by them
 - c) Compare with the map of population distribution
 - d) Hypothesize the degree of danger in various regions
 - e) Discuss methods that are taken to adapt to these dangers

Video Case Study

Program 18-1, *Egypt: Population Overload*

Weeks 7–9: Movement

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 3: “Migration”

Kuby, Chapter 4: “Newton’s First Law of Migration”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Distinguish between and give characteristics of the following types of human movement:
 - a) Circulation and migration
 - b) Forced and voluntary migration
 - c) Push and pull factors
2. Discuss the contributions of Ravenstein to the study of human movement and migration.
3. Use the gravity model to predict migration and evaluate its efficiency and usefulness.
4. Map specific examples of historic and contemporary forced migrations, explaining push and pull factors associated with each.
5. Characterize a refugee and refugee populations.
6. Discuss the migration history of the United States through the following:
 - a) Immigration history

- b) Immigration policy
 - c) Historic and contemporary streams of migration
 - d) Internal migration patterns
7. Explain how distance decay, intervening obstacles, and migration selectivity factors affect migration and circulation patterns.
8. Correlate migration patterns to the demographic transition model.

Video Case Studies

Program 14-1, *Mexico: Motive to Migrate*

Program 19-1, *Ivory Coast: The Legacy of Colonialism*

Weeks 10–11: Culture

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 4: “Folk and Popular Culture”

Wood, Unit Three: “Cultural Patterns and Processes”

Kuby, Chapter 2: “Cactus, Cowboys, and Coyotes: The Southwest Culture Region”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Define culture and cultural geography.
2. Compare and contrast the following aspects of folk and popular culture:
 - a) Origins
 - b) Methods of diffusion
 - c) Culture regions
3. Examine specific examples of folk culture and regions.
4. Examine examples of specific popular cultural traits and discuss their diffusion.
5. Discuss ways in which cultural traits are affected by and affect the natural environment.

6. Discuss the role of racism and ethnocentrism in the understanding of the cultural landscape.

Video Case Study

Program 26-1, *Indonesia: Tourist Invasion*

Weeks 12–13: Geography of Language

Reading Assignment

Rubenstein, Chapter 5: “Language”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Discuss the importance and role of language as an element of culture.
2. Explain how languages are classified and related.
3. Map the distribution of major language families worldwide.
4. Show the division of Europe into the following language groups and give specific examples from major groups:
 - a) Germanic
 - b) Slavic
 - c) Romance
5. Describe the following characteristics of English:
 - a) Origin and historical development
 - b) Worldwide diffusion
 - c) Spatial variation
 - d) Role in cultural convergence
6. Explain the how, why, and where of language change.
7. Discuss the regional and local variety in language using the following terms:
 - a) Slang
 - b) Isogloss (geographic language boundary)
 - c) Accent
8. Explain how toponyms are derived and classified and give various examples.

Video Case Study

Program 10-1, *Quebec: An Island of French*

Weeks 14–16: Geography of Religion

Reading Assignment

Rubenstein, Chapter 6: “Religion”

Wood, Unit Three: “Cultural Patterns and Processes”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Identify the following characteristics of all major religions:
 - a) Point of origin
 - b) Method of diffusion
 - c) Current distribution
 - d) Landscape expression
2. Map the religious regions of the United States.
3. Discuss the major branches, their origins, and their current distributions for the following religions:
 - a) Christianity
 - b) Islam
 - c) Buddhism
4. Distinguish between ethnic and universalizing religions:
 - a) Holy sites
 - b) Holy days
 - c) Methods of diffusion
5. Describe ways in which the environment influences religion and ways in which religions affect the natural environment.
6. Discuss various specific religious conflicts around the world in terms of the following:
 - a) Religion versus Politics
 - b) Religion versus Religion—interfaith conflicts
 - c) Religion versus Religion—intrafaith conflicts

Video Case Study

Program 17-1, *Jerusalem, Sacred Space Under Siege*

National Geographic: Secrets of Jerusalem’s Holiest Sites

Weeks 17–19: Ethnicity, Gender, and Geography

Reading Assignment

Rubenstein, Chapter 7: “Ethnicity”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Describe the distribution of major ethnicities within the United States:
 - a) Identify states/regions in which they are clustered
 - b) Identify regions in which they are mostly absent
 - c) Provide reasons for the present distribution
2. Examine case studies of ethnic conflicts from different regions.
3. Consider ways in which gender-related issues are expressed spatially, particularly:
 - a) Economic roles and activity
 - b) Health and reproduction
 - c) Level of education
4. Discuss various nation-state configurations and illustrate them with examples:
 - a) Nation-state
 - b) Part-nation state
 - c) Multinational state
 - d) Stateless nation

Video Case Studies

Program 9-1, *Boston: Ethnic Mosaic*

Program 7-1, *Dagestan: Russia's Southern Challenge*

Program 20-2, *South Africa: This Is My Land*

Weeks 20–22: Political Geography

Reading Assignment

Rubenstein, Chapter 8: “Political Geography”

Wood, Unit Four: “Political Organization of Space”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Explain the concept of state by:
 - a) Identifying necessary qualifications and characteristics
 - b) Listing examples of states in various regions
 - c) Describing quasi-states
2. Describe the problems of multinational states and stateless nations.
3. List advantages and disadvantages of different types of boundaries and provide real-world examples of:
 - a) Natural/Physical boundaries
 - b) Cultural boundaries
 - c) Geometric boundaries
4. List advantages and disadvantages of different shapes of states and provide examples.
5. Discuss the concepts of imperialism and colonialism and illustrate some of their consequences on the contemporary political map.
6. Define irredentism and devolution and illustrate with examples.
7. Summarize the history of the United Nations and identify issues of current importance regarding it.

Video Case Studies

Program 25-1, *Laos: Isolated Heart*

Program 3-2, *Slovakia: New Sovereignty*

Weeks 23–25: Economic Development

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 9: “Development”

Wood, Unit Six: “Industrialization and Economic Development”

Kuby, Chapter 8: “From Rags to Riches: The Dimensions of Development”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Use examples of human welfare indicators to distinguish between relatively developed and less developed countries.
2. Use examples of economic indicators to classify countries as less developed or relatively developed.
3. Draw the Brandt line on a world or regional map.
4. Compare and contrast different theories and models of economic development and the relationship between less developed and relatively developed countries.
5. Provide examples of the different sectors of a country’s economy and explain the economic relationship between them.

Video Case Study

Program 18-2, *Oman: Looking Beyond Oil*

Weeks 26–28: Geography of Agriculture— Primary Economic Activities

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 10: “Agriculture”

Wood, Unit Five: “Primary Economic Activities”

Rubenstein, Chapter 14: “Key Issue 3”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Explain how agriculture originated and identify its various hearths.
2. Describe the evolution of agricultural practices from their first use until today.
 - a) Neolithic Revolution
 - b) Second Agricultural Revolution

c) Green Revolution and biotechnology

3. Consider how each of the following correlates with specific agricultural regions:
 - a) Climate
 - b) Terrain
 - c) Culture
 - d) Situation with regard to world markets
4. Describe and apply the Von Thünen model to both small- and large-scale situations.
5. Identify the predominant agricultural practices associated with various regions of the world.
6. Use agricultural practice to differentiate between less developed and relatively developed countries.
7. Compare and contrast different types of rural landscapes and settlements:
 - a) Linear villages
 - b) Cluster villages
 - c) Dispersed settlements

Video Case Studies

Program 25-2, *Vietnam: Fertile Dreams*

Program 16-2, *Chile: Pacific Rim Player*

Program 12-1, *Northern Japan: Protecting the Harvest*

Program 21-2, *Dikhatpura: Help through Irrigation*

Weeks 29–31: Geography of Industry— Secondary Economic Activities

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 11: “Industry”

Rubenstein, Chapter 14: “Key Issue 1”

Rubenstein, Chapter 14: “Key Issue 2”

Kuby, Chapter 6: “Help Wanted”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Explain the Industrial Revolution by:
 - a) Describing its origin
 - b) Describing its diffusion and current pattern of industrial regions
2. Map regional manufacturing zones in each continent and identify the following for each:
 - a) Origin and resources
 - b) Current strengths and/or problems
3. Compare and contrast pre-industrial, industrial, and postindustrial life and landscape.
4. Describe how site and situation factors influence the location of manufacturing and give examples.
5. Discuss the problems created by or associated with industrialization in:
 - a) Developed countries
 - b) Developing countries
6. Make graphic models that describe the inputs and connections of various industries.

Video Case Studies

Program 8-2, *Bratsk: The Legacy of Central Planning*

Program 11 -2, *U.S. Midwest: Spatial Innovations*

Program 23-1, *Shanghai: Awakening the Giant*

Weeks 32–34: Urban Geography— Tertiary Economic Activities

Reading Assignments

Rubenstein, Chapter 12: “Services”

Rubenstein, Chapter 13: “Urban Patterns”

Wood, Unit Seven: “Cities and Urban land Use”

Unit Objectives and Activities

1. Contrast European and North American cities:
 - a) Central business districts
 - b) Suburbs and suburban growth
2. Compare and contrast elements of the following urban models:
 - a) Concentric zone
 - b) Sector
 - c) Multiple-nuclei

- d) Galactic city/edge cities
- 3. Describe the move of retail and industry to the suburbs.
- 4. Explain the growth of suburbs in terms of social, transportation, and economic changes.
- 5. Differentiate between three models of North American cities.
- 6. Compare and contrast spatial characteristics of cities in the following regions:
 - a) Latin America
 - b) Africa
 - c) Southeast Asia
- 7. List and evaluate the problems of the inner city.
- 8. Explain and illustrate important models dealing with the urban hierarchy:
 - a) Central-place theory
 - b) Rank-size rule and primate cities

Video Case Studies

Program 16-1, *Sao Paulo: The Outer Rim*

Program 9-2, *Chicago: Farming on the Edge*

Program 12-2, *Tokyo: Anatomy of a Mega-City*

Weeks 35–36: Review

I review for the AP Exam by providing students with a copy of the Course Outline from the AP Human Geography Course Description and asking them to define, illustrate, or comment on each item. Additionally, sample test(s) in the form of multiple choice and free-response questions will be given to students, as well as explanations and rubrics for the test questions

Teaching Strategies

I have structured my class around four main activities: (1) discussion of key terms and concepts, (2) examination of case studies, (3) practice of key geographical skills, and (4) practice of written expression via free-response questions. A typical day includes at least three of these activities (examples are given below). For instance, a 90-minute period might consist of 30 minutes of classroom discussion focused on new concepts covered in the previous reading assignment, 30 minutes of presentation of illustrative case studies (video, teacher presentation, or readings from a newspaper or magazine), and 30 minutes of practice writing an answer to a free-response question and reviewing a scoring guideline that might be used to grade it. The fourth main activity is the one I use most commonly: practice of key geographical skills. Nearly every day I ask students to examine a map(s) or graphed or textual information and respond to it using such concepts as scale, region, location

and place, or association and interconnection.

Homework in the form of a reading assignment and study guide is assigned daily. Video case studies always include a previewing focus activity and a debriefing activity. Class discussions (lectures) are always accompanied by listening guides. For the reading of articles from newspapers or journals, I require students to fill in a generic reader-response form or annotate a map.

Student Evaluation

Students' grades are based on the completion of assignments and study guides (40 percent), organized notebooks (10 percent), and exams (50 percent). Half of the exam grade is for multiple-choice questions and the other half for free-response questions. Grades are assigned as indicated here:

B+ 87–89% C+ 74–79% D+ 57–59%

A 93–100% B 83–86% C 67–73% D 53–56%

A- 90–92% B- 80–82% C- 60–66% D- 50–52%