

Sam Eberhart

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8th Grade World Geography: Course Syllabus

Overview: Your t-shirt is from China, your jeans are from Malaysia, your sneakers are from Ukraine and you are eating carrots from Mexico; yet you have never left the country. How can that be? The world has become increasingly interdependent and yet we may hardly know anything about those we rely upon in other countries. This course will take you on a tour of North and South America, Europe, Asia and Africa to study different cultures and how interactions amongst various peoples have changed demographics, prompted revolutions and wars, catalyzed mass migration, and altered the planet we all share. Through looking at themes related to culture and technology, migration, trade, and human interaction with the environment, students will begin to see themselves in a larger context-- beyond their neighborhood and city on the path to becoming a global citizen.

Inquiry and Project-Based Approach: This course and its units start from a place of student inquiry. That means students are empowered with the authority to use questions and curiosity to direct content and learning. While a structural outline and specific content are put forth by the teacher, students have the opportunity to pursue their own line of questioning, research and at various times expression of what they have learned through projects. This allows the student to become an expert and teacher amongst peers, rather than a receptacle for the teacher's knowledge. Students will reflect not just on content, but on the process of their learning to develop metacognition. Students can then make connections while daring to make mistakes.

We will begin with "What do you already know?" followed by "What do you want to learn?". When questions arise, the teacher does not always answer but rather helps students in the process of finding out through providing resources. The effect is that students become **self-directed**, a critical component to UMA's mission to engage lifelong learners.

Students will:

1. Develop questions that they are hungry to answer.
2. Research the topic using time in and out of class.
3. Present what they've learned.
4. Reflect on what worked about the process and what didn't.

Content: This course is divided into eight units spread out over the course of the year; two units per quarter. These units are not designed to be comprehensive in their coverage of the topics, but rather to incite curiosity and further questioning, grounded in the standards. We will not only look at people and conflicts, but also technology, art, thinking and beliefs, making connections and cooperating amongst the various academic disciplines when possible. Above content, students will be pushed to develop skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity. Finally, students will be encouraged to



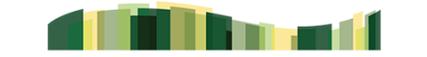
make connections to UMA’s four pathways: River to River, Essential Ingredients, Design and Engineering, and Edible Schoolyard. The activities and learning students engage in will help expand their base of knowledge and interests, as well as an understanding of how they learn that will propel them into their high school years and beyond.

Semester 1	Semester 2
Unit 1: United States/Canada 11 Day (Aug. 31- Oct. 3)	Unit 5: Sub-Saharan Africa 11 Days (Jan. 24- Feb. 23)
Unit 2: Latin America 9 Days (Oct. 5- Nov. 1) End of Quarter 1	Unit 6: South and Central Asia 11 Days (Feb. 27- March 29) End of Quarter 3
Unit 3: Europe and Russia 11 Days (Nov. 6- Dec. 7)	Unit 7: East and Southeast Asia 11 Days (Apr. 10- May 10)
Unit 4: Southwest Asia/N. Africa 10 Days (Dec. 12- Jan. 19) End of Quarter 2	Unit 8: Australia/Oceania 9 Days (May 14- June 7) End of Quarter 4

Grading: UMA uses a traditional grading scale. Grades are made up of formative and summative assessments (20%), projects and assignments (60%), attendance and participation (20%). Late work is docked 10%. Students are always encouraged to take feedback and improve their assignments/projects. If you are unsatisfied with the outcome or evaluation, you have one week to improve the assignment for full credit (tests exempt unless arranged with the teacher). Assessments will often be created to include student work presented to the class. If a student misses class, it is up to them to meet with Sam, another student to discuss what you missed, and review the assignment/activity due on Google Classroom or through the class website. Assignments due on the day of absence must be turned in upon return. Late work is due within one week and receives a 10% reduction. After one week work will not be accepted without a completion plan established with Sam.

Class Culture: Sam’s class puts healthy mental and social development above grades, content, and all else. Students will have a safe and nurturing environment to discuss ideas, take risks, make mistakes, and feel supported and respected for their individual talents and interests. To that end, students must do their part by participating in activities, working to develop a voice in class discussions, abstain from phone use unless sanctioned by Sam, and by practicing active listening and respectful communication.

Concerns: Students and families are encouraged to schedule meetings or phone calls with Sam for concerns or additional academic support. Office hours are made upon request from 8:30-9:10 am Monday, Thursday and Friday. Please email at least 24 hours in advance for a formal meeting time; immediate concerns will be addressed at Sam’s earliest availability outside of class hours.



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