Human Geography

The purpose of the AP course in Human Geography is to introduce students to the **systematic** study of **patterns and processes** that have shaped **human understanding, use, and alteration** of Earth's surface. Students **employ spatial concepts** and **landscape analysis** to examine human social organization and its environmental consequences. They also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their science and practice.

The particular topics studied in an AP Human Geography course should be judged in light of the following five college-level goals that build on the National Geography Standards developed in 1994. On successful completion of the course, the student should be able to:

**1**.Use and think about maps and spatial data

**2**.Understand and interpret the implications of associations among phenomena in places

**3**.Recognize and interpret at different scales the relationships among patterns and processes

**4**.Define regions and evaluate the regionalization process

**5**.Characterize and analyze changing interconnections among places

**Use and Think About Maps and Spatial Data**

Geography is fundamentally concerned with the ways in which patterns on Earth's surface reflect and influence physical and human processes. As such, maps and spatial data are fundamental to the discipline, and learning to use and think about them is critical to geographical literacy. The goal is achieved when students learn to use maps and spatial data to pose and solve problems, and when they learn to think critically about what is revealed and what is hidden in different maps and spatial arrays.

**Understand and Interpret Implications of Associations Among Phenomena in Places**

Geography looks at the world from a spatial perspective -- seeking to understand the changing spatial organization and material character of Earth's surface. One of the critical advantages of a spatial perspective is the attention it focuses on how phenomena are related to one another in particular places. Students should thus learn not just to recognize and interpret patterns, but to assess the nature and significance of the relationships among phenomena that occur in the same place and to understand how tastes and values, political regulations, and economic constraints work together to create particular types of cultural landscapes.

**Recognize and Interpret at Different Scales Relationships Among Patterns and Processes**

Geographical analysis requires a sensitivity to scale -- not just as a spatial category but as a framework for understanding how events and processes at different scales influence one another. Thus, students should understand that the phenomena they are studying at one scale (e.g., local) may well be influenced by developments at other scales (e.g., regional, national, or global). They should then look at processes operating at multiple scales when seeking explanations of geographic patterns and arrangements.

**Define Regions and Evaluate the Regionalization Process**

Geography is concerned not simply with describing patterns, but with analyzing how they came about and what they mean. Students should see regions as objects of analysis and exploration and move beyond simply locating and describing regions to considering how and why they come into being -- and what they reveal about the changing character of the world in which we live.

**Characterize and Analyze Changing Interconnections Among Places**

At the heart of a geographical perspective is a concern with the ways in which events and processes operating in one place can influence those operating at other places. Thus, students should view places and patterns not in isolation, but in terms of their spatial and functional relationship with other places and patterns. Moreover, they should strive to be aware that those relationships are constantly changing, and they should understand how and why change occurs.