

May 31, 2011

Dear Students,

Welcome to AP Human Geography. I am delighted that you have chosen to take this course, which touches on so many other fields of study in addition to geography.

Human geography examines the relationship of us as human beings to the physical biosphere we inhabit—the planet Earth. How do the Earth and where we live on the Earth impact significantly on who we are; and how do we as human beings, in turn, impact significantly on how the earth once looked looks now, and will look in the near term and the long term.

Human geography encompasses large elements of all the other social studies and relates them to the physical and life sciences. As a result, by broadening our vision, human geography gives us a clearer view of the “big picture”—why the world is the way it is, both the good and the bad.

Your summer 2011 assignment seeks to engage the breadth of your vision and imagination. You are to take a daytime summer trip or trips on the Metro Red Line, and to memorialize what you see and hear in a presentation of your choosing that you share with me and perhaps your fellow students. Your presentation can be a written report describing what you observed; a two-dimensional or three-dimensional physical display (artwork, photographs, video); an audiovisual rendition of what you saw or heard; a poem or song; a powerpoint on the people and places you observed; or a combination of these. You may do this presentation alone or with another student or students in the class who accompany you. Here are some specific rules or guidelines for you:

- You must inform your parents of your Red Line trip, its purpose, and its particular details. If your parents do not consent, you are not to take the trip and you should contact me for an alternative summer assignment. There is no penalty in choosing an alternative assignment.
- You must not travel alone. Preferably your co-travelers will include a parent or another adult.
- You should study a map of the Red Line before you begin and chart an itinerary in order to gain a sense of what you might be seeing and seeking. See <http://www.wmata.com>.
- Your trip must begin and end in daylight hours.
- Your trip may begin and end at the Metro Red Line stops of your choosing. The Red Line takes the shape of a parabola or arc, both beginning (Glenmont) and ending (Shady Grove) in Montgomery County but including a remarkably noteworthy swath of Washington, D.C.
- You must explore, by leaving the Metro station, four or more stops along the way (which may include the beginning and ending stops) to observe the similarities and differences that you observe at these different locations—differences in the demographics of the people you observe and hear, the languages you hear, the buildings you see, and the social and economic life going on around each particular stop; in other words, the geographical, biological, physical, cultural, religious, historical, sociological, architectural, psychological and economic images you see and hear, whether big or small.
- Your presentation must note the day, date and time of your trip (or trips).

Generally, there will be three gradations of your presentation—exemplary (100% credit); satisfactory (85% credit); and unsatisfactory (half or no credit).

Before you begin your trip or presentation, you are strongly encouraged to contact me with your questions. Please see me before school ends or e-mail me at either of two e-mail addresses I will open daily: steven_garfinkel@mcpsmd.org or govteacher@comcast.net.