

Mrs. Fran Jiménez

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Earth Science

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## **COURSE GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **COURSE GOALS**

- To learn and implement the scientific method in order to gain a better understanding of our planet's phenomena.
- To question our previous notions about science and to become educated skeptics of scientific doctrine.
- To investigate old ideas and synthesize new hypotheses by working hands-on in the laboratory.

### **OVERALL COURSE SCOPE**

The emphasis in this course will be on the development of critical thinking skills and the application of those skills to learn about our planet Earth. The course will quickly review and then continually use the scientific method and tools for inquiry. There are then three large units – astronomy, climate and weather, and geology. This course will focus on the state curriculum so as to be well prepared for the NYS Regents exam in June for Earth Science – the Physical Setting.

### **CLASSROOM RULES**

- 1) Class starts immediately at the bell. This means that you are already in your seats and quiet.
- 2) You must be prepared for every class with the appropriate materials, homework, charged I pads, etc.
- 3) Use the bathroom before class or at lunch time. Requests to use the lavatory will be granted for emergencies only. Cell phone must be left on top of student desk clearly visible to the teacher, to ensure it doesn't leave the room with the student.
- 4) Disruptions to the class will not be tolerated and may result in a grade deduction, detentions, and/or the notification of your parents. This includes calling-out of comments or answers.
- 5) The SFP dress code will be enforced and you are expected to adhere to it at all times. Failure to comply may result in detention and/or a deduction in the student's class cooperation grade as penalty for having caused a delay in class.
- 6) Respect for each other is expected, especially when a student may be answering or asking a question.
- 7) Cutting class will result in a 20 point grade deduction in your quarterly average. This penalty is in addition to not being permitted to makeup work missed during the cut class.
- \*\*\*8) Cell phones may not be visible and must be out of sight and silenced. If a cell phone is seen out, even if not in use, an automatic 20 point deduction will be taken from a student's 50 point class grade. If a student is caught using his/her phone, they will receive the deduction and a referral for detention.
- 9) Please hold all garbage until the end of class; it is very distracting when someone gets out of his/her seat in the middle of class.
- 10) There can be NO food or drink visible in the classroom or in the hallway outside the classroom. This is true especially when returning back from lunch. If you have a WATER bottle, keep it in your bag.

## **IMPORTANT ACADEMIC POLICIES**

1-) Make-up tests/quizzes: As a default, quizzes and exams will be given in class on the day of your return. Please make sure you are ready! It can be distracting to take exams during class and it results in a missed lesson. Therefore, I am happy to give the makeup before or after school or on a free period, but only on the day of your return. You must email to schedule this in advance. I am often available as early as 7 a.m. to accommodate students who take H period.

2-) Extra –Credit: As per science department policy, there is NO individual extra credit allowed. It is extremely difficult to fail this class if all of the homework and lab reports are done well and effort is put into studying and taking notes.

3-) Absence and the Buddy System: Class attendance at St. Francis Prep is a major priority. All students are required to complete all required work even if they are absent. If a student is absent from class 6 or more times for any given quarter, this will be considered excessive absence. This will result in a mandatory 5 point deduction from the quarterly grade. Please be advised that classes missed due to lateness or early dismissal will be included in this group.

During the first cycle of school, students will pair up with two other students who will be his/her absence “buddies.” If absent, you **MUST** get missed notes, complete any assigned homework or classwork **ON TIME**, and find out important news and updates I may have announced in class. It is important to check google classroom and email every day but especially on days of absence. It is usually updated by dinner time, if not before. Checking with a homework buddy may allow you to get a jump on assigned homework even before it is posted to google classroom.

\*\*\* If you are absent and can't do a homework assignment for a good reason (i.e. the concept is too difficult to learn on your own, you feel too ill, you don't have the worksheet) then you will very likely be excused but **ONLY** if you email me the night before your return to explain the issue. If you are too ill, a parent may email. If you just show up without the work done, you will receive a zero, regardless of the reason.

\*\*\* It is not necessary to email the teacher about absence unless you have missed a quiz or exam and need to confirm when you will be taking it or you have a specific question about something missed. Please don't email to ask "what did I miss?" That is what your homework buddies and google classroom is for.

4-) Cheating Policy: SFP has an honor code that will be strictly upheld in this class. As fair warning, I consider cheating to be the worst offense that you can commit in my class. In the case that I suspect cheating or academic dishonesty, there will be severe consequences. These will include, but are not limited to: a grade of zero on the assignment in question, parental notification, and an official honor code violation. These consequences are in addition to those stipulated in the SFP calendar. To be clear, cheating *does* include, among other things, copying or sharing your homework, submitting someone else's HW to google classroom, attempting to get test questions from your friends who have already taken an exam, falsifying lab results, plagiarizing from the internet for lab reports or homework, lying, etc.

**Students (not even lab partners) are never to see ANY portion of each others' ungraded lab reports. This has been a problem in the past.**

5-) Struggling Students and Options: It would be wonderful if every student grasped the material the first time and scored in the 90s, but that is unfortunately not the reality especially in science courses that rely on application rather than memorization. Students should be regularly stopping by for questions and extra help, even if scoring in the 90s.

Options for help...

A) Extra Help From Me – I am available some mornings starting as early as 7 a.m. and at least one afternoon (often more) per week for help.

\*\*\*Each weekend, I will post an extra help schedule to our google classroom. It will change each week based on my schedule and on the needs of the class. Those will be the times that students can stop by without appointment. I am available other times by email request.

B) Books and How to Study – Students will have an ONLINE textbook. However, we RARELY use or even follow the textbook. Class worksheets, problem sets, notes, teacher-posted outlines, and practice questions are the important tools for study. If a student is studying for an exam from the textbook the night before an exam, he/she is NOT properly studying. Any class discussion is fair game for exam material and so it is very important that students are present for class, paying attention, and taking good notes. The teacher will also post an outline of topics for each exam so that students can have a checklist of items to review. It is NOT a study guide, just a checklist. Studying should be active in this course, meaning that a student should do very little reading and staring, but instead should be redoing practice questions, reorganizing ideas, etc.

C) Study Groups – Many of my successful students in the past have gotten together and helped each other to study for exams, by comparing notes and working on practice questions together. Go to the library. Go after school or go on mutual free periods. I guarantee that if you have a serious study group, that you will do better in this class.

D) Earth Science Extra Help Room – We also have a communal earth science extra help schedule. Once or twice a week, an Earth Science teacher (not necessarily Mrs. Jiménez) will be present in W017 and any student is welcome to stop by for help. This schedule will be posted to our class website as soon as it is finalized for this year.

6-) Ipads: We are excited to have this resource and we will work together to make best use of the Ipads to enrich our curriculum and lessons. Students are, of course, expected to adhere to the SFP acceptable use policy at all times. Students may not take photos or videos of any classmate or teacher without explicit consent given. **Students must have all apps unrelated to the lesson closed at the beginning of class, without being reminded.** A lot of homework can be done on the Ipad, but in many cases students may need to work on lab reports on an actual computer to avoid formatting issues and/or to view teacher feedback which sometimes does not properly display on the Ipads. Air Drop must be turned off or face severe consequences.

7-) Communication: If students wish to speak to me about anything, I am available. I just ask that these conversations don't occur in a hurried manner before or after class. If possible, email is great way to communicate or just schedule a time to meet in person. While I can't guarantee an email response, I typically respond back the same evening as long as I hear from you by 9 or 10 p.m. so try! Early mornings or quickly after school are probably best for the discussion of any issue.

Student grades are available continuously online through Parent Portal and parents are encouraged to contact at any time with questions or concerns. It is certainly easiest to reach me through email, but telephone is also acceptable. Additionally, many notices, due dates, extra help schedules, etc. are posted on our google classroom so please check it often. Google classroom is an incredibly useful tool for us, so very little will be posted to the SFP website. Parents will not have their own access to our google classroom as we encourage the students to take responsibility for their work and assignments. Parents can ask his/her child for access if they feel the need to check up on the site for themselves.

*Please continue on the next pages to learn more about grading and assessments in this class.*

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Earth Science

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## GRADING POLICIES

Students will be graded using a combination of weighted category averages and points. Most quarters, the category weights will be:

Exams/Quizzes	50 %
Lab Reports:	30 %
Graded homework/HW quizzes	5 %
Quick check homework	5 %
Labwork/Classwork	4 %
Class Participation	3 %
Class Cooperation	3 %
<hr/> Total	100 %

The final course average will be quarterly grades (22.5% each) and the Regents exam (10%). This scheme may change slightly for a quarter when a project is assigned.

Below is a description of each component of the grading scheme:

A) Exams: There will be between 3 and 4 unit exams per quarter. They will be difficult exams that cover material from class lessons, problem sets, and worksheets for the most part. They will be mostly a combination of multiple choice and short answer, similar to the format of the Regents exam. They will vary in point values appropriate to the amount of material covered since the last exam. An exam worth 112 points will count more in the exam category than an exam worth 88 points for example. There will be a mid-term exam to encourage students to be preparing and reviewing for the Regents exam.

B) Quizzes: These may be announced or unannounced. Announced quizzes may be given on vocabulary, reference table questions, diagrams, etc. Unannounced quizzes are rarely used, but may be given to check that students have done an assigned reading, taken good class notes, etc. The goal of quizzes is to help students to understand their weaknesses and to encourage gradual mastery as opposed to cramming the night before large exams.

C) Lab Reports: There will be between 3 and 5 official lab exercises per quarter. In some cases, a full laboratory report will be due. These reports must strictly follow the guidelines that will be distributed to the students when the first report is assigned. These reports are demanding, yet extremely useful to the students as they pursue further education. We will be following a format that is used in college and by professionals in the scientific field. Students who do not complete these reports with great effort **over the course of the given 7 school days**, typically fail the class, regardless of their performance on other assessments.

The lab reports will be graded using a rubric for content, format, appropriate citation, writing style, grammar, accuracy, creativity and correctness. It is not possible to adequately grade every student's report every cycle in this manner. There are many exercises that lend themselves to more abbreviated lab assignments. Labs may have varied point values but will generally be worth between 40 and 125 points. Larger, more official reports must be turned in electronically using TURNITIN.com by 6 p.m. of the day the lab report is due but they are ALSO due as hard copies at the beginning of class during the day. **Hard copy must match the digital copy.** The 6 p.m. deadline is given, just in case a student ran into a technical problem with the turnitin.com website. Late lab assignments of any kind will be penalized 10% of total if 1 minute to 1 day late. After one day late, the maximum value a student can receive on a lab assignment is 50%.

\*\*If absent for a lab activity, students must email the teacher immediately ON THE DAY of absence. He/she must schedule a time to meet with Mrs. Jimenez to determine how to complete the missed activity. Students are NOT exempt from the missed assignment. The "meeting" must happen within the first 3 days back to school.

Students may do poorly on reports, especially in the beginning, if they are not great writers or if they are not careful to follow the specific guidelines. Written teacher feedback will be given, but students are encouraged and expected to meet with Mrs. Jiménez during extra help or by appointment to go over lab report feedback as needed.

D) Graded Homework/HW Quizzes: Students may be asked to turn in assigned homework depending upon the topic or day's lesson. Some will be due digitally by 8:25 a.m. and some will be due as hard copies in class. Sometimes, the work will be graded for completeness only and in other cases, it will be graded also for content and accuracy. Google classroom assignments MUST have a "handwritten" name at the top of EVERY page or receive a 10% deduction. This is to try to combat any temptation to cheat by submitting a friend's file. Late HW is NOT accepted. A HW "quiz" may be given (open notes) to ascertain if HW has been completed.

\*\* Reminder about absence: If an assignment was collected or checked while the student was absent, it must be submitted on the same day of the student's return and presented with the student's absence pass. If a student forgets or doesn't "know" about the hw, he or she will still receive a zero. Digital HW is due ON TIME even if absent. If too ill, an email must be received in advance of the due time.

Exceptions to above: Students get 2 late HW passes per year, which allow them to submit HW up to 1 day late for *half credit*. Students must submit the late HW AND a hard copy of the late HW pass properly filled out.

Students may get 1 additional NO PENALTY late HW pass for the year to cover forgetting, family emergency, illness, technology issues, etc. Students must submit this pass to Mrs. Jimenez and it will need to be signed by a parent once returned. This is to be used ONLY for an emergency. Also, there are some HW assignments (project type) that may not be late HW pass eligible but this will be announced in advance when the HW is assigned.

E) Quick check homework: Students will be given 1 grade per quarter in this category, out of 50 points. Students begin with a 50/50 but any time they miss a “check homework,” or it is done poorly or incompletely, they will lose between 5 and 10 points from this grade.

F) Labwork/Classwork: Students are expected to complete many assignments during class and to do so in a reasonable amount of time by staying on task. This is also true when performing lab activities. On random days, students will be given grades for how well they stayed on task and completed their assignments or labwork. In lab, students are also evaluated for working well independently, taking initiative, following **written** procedures, and cleaning up properly.

G) Class Participation and Class Cooperation: Students will be given class participation and/or class cooperation grades throughout the quarter.

Class cooperation grades are affected by students’ adhering to class rules. Deductions will be taken for any violation of rules as posted on course guidelines, but especially for lateness to class, cell phones, being out of seat after bell has rung, disrespect to teacher or classmates, misuse of Ipads, food or drink in the classroom, and calling out. Students WILL NOT be told when deductions are taking place. This grade is up to the teacher’s discretion and at times will be based on memory rather than documentation. This grade is out of 50 points.

Class participation grades will also be given. Students will receive a base grade of 45/50 for participation. If students participate when asked, participate in groups, and are attentive, they will receive this score. In order to receive a higher score, students must also be a leader in groups, help fellow students, raise their hand in class often to participate, and volunteer to go to the “board” when asked. **\*\*Sleeping in class (even once) will significantly lower this score.**

## **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

*\*\*\* Reminder – this is a sophomore level course. Freshmen in this course are considered “advanced” and as such, must understand that some concepts and some procedures that are typically part of a freshman curriculum will not be taught again in our course. Students who feel they are behind, lost at all, or need a refresher on something, are more than welcome and encouraged to attend extra help or send extra emails.*

## **PARENT PORTAL**

Parent Portal will allow you to see the students’ grades in a timely fashion. I post fairly quickly to this site with the exception of lab reports that take an exceedingly long time to grade. Parent Portal sends out notices of failure regardless of the importance of an assignment. Please do not automatically panic if you receive one of these. A student may receive a 10/15 on homework, for example, which will cause this notice to be sent. In reality, the student got one question wrong out of three on a very small assignment and is doing fine. This is particularly true at the beginning of every quarter. Grades mean very little until students have a grade assigned in each of the above categories, often 2 or 3 weeks into each quarter at least.

\*\* Please look for comments that I leave for assignments in Parent Portal. They will appear in a different color either on the assignment name or on the grade itself. There may be information about the assignment in general or give you information about assignments that may have been incomplete, poorly done, or late.

I realize the length of these initial handouts and appreciate you taking the time to read them. The students will retain them in their Earth Science folder and they will also be posted on the SFP class homepage. We have just a short time to meet on Back to School Night but I certainly do hope to meet you then! Please email me at [fjimenez@sfponline.org](mailto:fjimenez@sfponline.org) with any questions.

Please go to google classroom with your child and digitally sign below. You may retain this hard copy so you can refer to it later in the year. It will also be posted on the SFP website and on our google classroom website.

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Student Name (please TYPE): \_\_\_\_\_

I have read all of the information (8 pages) regarding Earth Science class. I understand what is expected this year in Mrs. Jiménez's class. I agree to adhere to the policies as stated or to accept the consequences. I have also reviewed the grading policies and understand how I/my child will be assessed in Mrs. Jiménez's class.

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(student signature with finger/stylus)

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(parent or guardian signature with finger/stylus)