Religion
Interested in how religions spread/move across the world.
Are concerned with the regional distribution of different religions and the resulting potential for conflict.
Have observed that religions are derived in part from elements of the physical environment and in turn modify the landscape.
They start by asking the “where?” and “why?”
Why do geographers study religion?

* Where?
* Various religions are located in the world and offer explanations for why some religions have widespread distributions and others are highly clustered in particular places.
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

* Religion like language lie at the foundation of culture
* Both confer and reflect identity
* Both are constantly changing
  * Conversion
  * Migration
  * Missionary efforts
  * Conquest
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

- How is the cultural landscape marked by religion?
- Material Culture
  - Churches
  - Mosques
  - Cemeteries
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

* How is the cultural landscape marked by religion?
* Subtle markers
  * Presence or absence of liquor stores
* Modes of dress/personal habits
  * Veils
  * Turbans
  * Beards
  * Ritual scars
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

* **Definition of religion**

* A set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe, especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances, and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

- Role in Society
- "Shouldness"
- Set standards for how adherents should behave
- "Good" life has rewards and "bad" behavior risks punishment has enormous influence on cultures.
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

* Religion manifests itself in many ways:
  * Worship
  * Special abilities
  * Deity or deities
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

* Many religions have ritual and prayer
* Rituals
  * May mark important events in believers’ lives
    * Birth, death, adulthood, marriage
  * Regular intervals
* Common ritual = prayer
What Is Religion, and What Role Does It Play In Culture?

* **Secularism**
  * The idea that ethical and moral standards should be formulated and adhered to for life on Earth, not to accommodate the prescriptions of a deity and promises of a comfortable afterlife.
  * Opposite of theocracy

* Not pertaining to or connected with religion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect on Human Societies</th>
<th>Effect on Human Societies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Effect on human societies</td>
<td>* Blocked scientific study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Major force in combating social ills</td>
<td>* Encouraged oppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sustaining the poor</td>
<td>* Supported colonialism and exploitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Promoting the arts</td>
<td>* Condemned women to an inferior state</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Educating the deprived</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Advancing medical knowledge</td>
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</table>
Religions are classified into three categories

* Monotheistic
  * Single god/deity
* Polytheistic
  * More than one god/deity
* Animistic
  * Inanimate objects are revered
Where did the major religions of the world originate, and how do religions diffuse?

* Universalizing Religions
  * Actively seek converts
  * They view themselves as offering belief systems of universal appropriateness and appeal
  * Is a religion that attempts to operate on a global scale and to appeal to all people wherever they reside
  * Widespread distribution
  * Recent origin
Where did the major religions of the world originate, and how do religions diffuse?

* Universalizing Religions
* Divided into branches, denominations, and sects
* Branches
  * A large and fundamental division within a religion
* Denomination
  * A division of a branch that unites a number of local congregations in a single legal and administrative body
* Sect
  * A relatively small group that has broken away from an established denomination.
Ethnic Religion

Adherents are born into the faith
Converts are not actively sought
Spatially concentrated
Example = Native American Church

Except Judaism
Scattered as a result of forced/voluntary migrations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Number of Adherents</th>
<th>Percent of Total Global Adherents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>2.1 billion</td>
<td>41.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>1.34 billion</td>
<td>26.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>950 million</td>
<td>18.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>347 million</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional beliefs</td>
<td>250 million</td>
<td>4.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>24 million</td>
<td>.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>13 million</td>
<td>.26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where did the major religions of the world originate, and how do religions diffuse?
Where did the major religions of the world originate, and how do religions diffuse?

* **Judaism**
  - Originated in Southwest Asia about 4000 years ago
  - Beliefs
    - *First major monotheistic religion,*
    - *Covenant between God (one God) and Abraham (the chosen people)*
  - Sacred text: *Torah*
  - First patriarch, or leader: Abraham
Judaism (continued)

* Sacred sites
  – Jerusalem (Western Wall)
  – Land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River
* Social manifestation: Zionism
* Diffusion
  – European cities during the diaspora
    • Ashkenazim: Central Europe
    • Sephardim: North Africa and Iberian Peninsula
  – North America
  – Return to Israel over last 100 years
Where did the major religions of the world originate, and how do religions diffuse?

* **Christianity**
  - Originated in Southwest Asia about 2000 years ago
  - Beliefs
    - Monotheistic religion
    - Follow teachings of Jesus to achieve eternal life
  - Sacred text: *Bible*
  - Founder: Jesus Christ
Christianity (continued)

– Sacred sites
  • Bethlehem
  • Jerusalem

– Divisions
  • 1054: Split into
    o Eastern Orthodox
    o Roman Catholic
  • 1400s–1500s: Protestants

– Diffusion:
  • Western Europe
  • World wide during colonialism and after
From the Hearth of the Eastern Mediterranean

* Islam
  - Originated on Arabian Peninsula about 1500 years ago
  - Beliefs
    - Monotheistic religion
    - Revelations Muhammad received from Allah (God)
    - Five Pillars
      - Sacred text: *Qu’ran*
      - Founder: Muhammad
Sacred sites
• Mecca
• Medina
• Jerusalem

Divisions: Shortly after Muhammad’s death
• Sunni Muslims (great majority)
• Shi’ite Muslims (concentrated in Iran)

Diffusion
• Arabian peninsula
• Across North Africa, into Spain
• East to South and Southeast Asia
How Is Religion Seen in the Cultural Landscape?

* **Sacred sites**: Places or spaces people infuse with religious meaning

* **Pilgrimage**: Purposeful travel to a religious site to pay respects or participate in a ritual
Sacred Sites of Jerusalem

Sacred to three major religions

- Judaism (Western Wall)
- Christianity (Church of the Holy Sepulchre)
- Islam (Dome of the Rock)
Israel and Palestine

- British mandate of Palestine
- Partition of Palestine by United Nations
  - Israeli state
  - Palestinian state
- 1967: Israeli control over West Bank, Gaza
- 2005: Withdrawal from Gaza
- Control over movement
- Multitude of interfaith boundaries
The Horn of Africa

- Amharic (Coptic) Christianity in central Ethiopia
- Islam in the Horn of Africa by diffusion
- Indigenous religions in pockets
The Former Yugoslavia

- Genocide
- Ethnic Cleansing
The Former Yugoslavia

SERBIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

- Dayton Accords Partition Line
- Muslim-dominated areas
- Serb-dominated areas

National capitals are underlined
Northern Ireland

Identities tied to religion deepened by

• Economics

• Colonial experiences

• Activity spaces (segregation)
Religious Fundamentalism and Extremism

* **Religious fundamentalism**
  - A return to the basics of a faith
  - Found worldwide

* **Religious extremism**: Fundamentalism carried to the point of violence.

* **Impact of globalization**
  * Increased conservative reaction
  * Increased liberalism and accommodation
Fundamentalism in Christianity

* Catholicism
  * Birth control, abortion, and family planning
  * Role of women
  * Sects that continue to use Latin in services

* Protestantism
  * Literal interpretation of the Bible
  * Opposition to abortion
  * Opposition to gay marriage
  * Political influence
Fundamentalism in Judaism

* Orthodox Judaism
  * Most conservative
  * Includes several varieties
* Kach and Kahane Chai
  * Followers of Rabbi Meir Kahane
  * Anti-Arabism
Fundamentalism in Islam

* Shari’a law
* Rule by ayatollahs in Iran
* Rule by Taliban in Afghanistan
* Jihad
  * Wahhabi Islam (hearth in Saudi Arabia)
  * Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda