World Regional Geography

David Sallee
Lesson 1

GEOGRAPHY
- The study of place and space
- Studies the location and distribution of features on the Earth’s surface
- Studies human activity, the natural environment, and the relationship between the two
- Answers where and why

Where is Timbuktu, and why did the settlement evolve on this site?

GEOGRAPHIC REALMS
Realms are based on Spatial Criteria
- The largest geographic units into which the inhabited world can be divided
- Based on both physical (natural) and human (cultural) yardsticks

GEOGRAPHIC REALMS
The result of the interaction between human societies and natural environments
- A functional interaction
- Revealed by farms, mines, fishing ports, transport routes, dams, bridges, villages, and other features on the landscape

GEOGRAPHIC REALMS
Represent the most comprehensive and encompassing definition of the great clusters of humankind in the world today

GEOGRAPHIC REALMS

WORLD GEOGRAPHIC REALMS
- Geographic realms change over time.
- Where geographic realms meet, transition zones, not sharp boundaries, mark their contacts.

"I smell humankind," said the oni.

www.op97.k12.il.us/instruct/ftcyber/funnyw/h.html
TRANSITION ZONES
- An area of spatial change where peripheries of two adjacent realms or regions join
- Marked by a gradual shift (rather than a sharp break) in the characteristics that distinguish neighboring realms

REGIONS
- Areas of the earth’s surface marked by certain properties
- Scientific devices that enable us to make spatial generalizations
- Based on criteria we establish
- Criteria can be:
  - Human (cultural) properties
  - Physical (natural) characteristics
  - or Both

FORMAL REGION
- Marked by a certain degree of homogeneity in one or more phenomena
- Also called a uniform region or homogenous region

FUNCTIONAL REGION
- A region marked less by its sameness than its dynamic internal structure
  - A spatial system focused on a central core
  - A region formed by a set of places and their functional integration
  - Also called a “nodal” region

HINTERLAND
- Literally means “country behind”
- A term that applies to a surrounding area served by an urban center
- Urban center is the focus of goods and services produced in the hinterland, and is the latter’s dominant focal point as well

CULTURE
- Definition: Shared patterns of learned behavior
- Components:
  - Beliefs
  - Institutions
  - Technology
CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY
- A wide-ranging and comprehensive field that studies spatial aspects of human cultures
- Major components focus on:
  - Cultural Landscapes
  - Culture Hearths
  - Cultural Diffusion
  - Cultural Environments
  - Culture Regions

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
- The composite of human imprints on the earth’s surface.
- Carl Sauer’s definition: “the forms superimposed on the physical landscape by the activities of man”

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE
- Not mutually exclusive - constantly interacting with each other

CULTURE HEARTH
- The source areas from which radiated ideas, innovations, and ideologies that change the world beyond

SEQUENT OCCUPANCE
- A subfield within the human branch of geography
- The study of the interaction of geographical area and political process
- The spatial analysis of political phenomena and processes

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY: BETHLEHEM

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY
Must a nation be a place?

- Some examples of stateless nations: the Cherokee Nation, the Kurds, the Palestinians

STATE
- A politically organized territory
- Administered by a sovereign government
- Recognized by a significant portion of the international community.

A state must also contain:
- a permanent resident population
- an organized economy
- a functioning internal circulation system

NATION - STATE
- A country whose population possesses a substantial degree of cultural homogeneity and unity.

Classic Example of a Nation-State: Japan

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
- 4 major clusters
  1) East Asia
  2) South Asia
  3) Europe
  4) Northeastern US

- 90% of the population lives north of the equator.
- 2/3s live in mid-latitudes between 20° and 60° latitude.
• >50% of the population lives on 5% of the land.
• 2/3s live on 10% of the land.
• Almost 90% live on 20% of the Earth’s land surface.

• 60% of people live below 200 meters (650 feet) in elevation.
• 80% live below 500 meters (1,650 feet).

• 2/3 of population lives within 500 kilometers (300 miles) of an ocean.
• Most inhabit alluvial lowlands and river valleys.

We Should Never Forget The Natural Environment

Generalized Climate Regions

Köppen Classification Criteria
• Average monthly temperatures
• Average monthly precipitation

Classifications
• Tropical Climates (A)
• Dry Arid and Semiarid Climates (B)
• Mesothermal Climates (C)
• Microthermal Climates (D)
• Polar Climates (E)
What Were Some of the Early Ideas about Continental Drift?

- 1915: Alfred Wegener wrote of a single supercontinent named Pangaea, meaning “all land”.
- He portrayed the breakup of Pangaea and the movement of continents to their present position.
- Similarity of Rock Sequences and Mountain Ranges.
- Glacial Evidence.

---

Continents Adrift

What Were Some of the Early Ideas about Continental Drift?

- Fossil Evidence
- Paleomagnetism
- Continental Fit