Geography of Religion

Cultural Geography
C.J. Cox Instructor
Religion

• A set of beliefs
  – existence of a higher power, spirits or god
  – an explanation of the origins and purpose of humans and their role on earth
  – Which involves rituals, festivals, rites of passage and space (religious landscapes)
Key Terms

• **Universalizing Religion**: attempts to appeal to all people, not just those living in a particular location.

• **Proselytize**: to try to convert people to one’s belief or opinion.
Key Terms

- **Ethnic Religions**: concentrated spatial distribution whose principles are likely based on physical characteristics of a particular location.
Key Terms

- **Monotheism**: existence of only one god.
- **Polytheism**: existence of many gods.
- **Cosmogony**: A set of religious beliefs concerning the origin of the universe.
Religious Divisions

- **Branch**: A large and fundamental division within a religion.
- **Denomination**: A division within a branch of a religion.
- **Sect**: A relatively small denominational group that has broken away from an established church.
Religious Divisions

Secularization - a process that is leading to increasingly large groups of people who claim no allegiance to any church.

- Atheists
  - Do not practice a religion
  - Spiritual, but not religious

- Common in Europe and the cities of the U.S.
- Common in former Soviet Union and China.

Fundamentalism - a process that is leading to increasingly large groups of people who claim there is only ONE way to interpret worship.

- Envision a return to a more perfect religion and ethics they imagine existed in the past.

- Common in the U.S. and in some Islamic nations.

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**Key Terms**

**Syncretism** - the mixing of two or more religions that creates unique rituals, artwork, and beliefs.

Examples include syncretism of Christianity and indigenous beliefs in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

- Caribbean Voodoo (Haiti, Louisiana)
- Christianity in Indigenous Latin American

Shrine, Bangalore, India
Syncretism
Major World Religions

- Universalizing Religions
  - Christianity
  - Islam
  - Buddhism

- Traced to actions and teaching of a man

- Diffused from specific hearths by followers / missionaries
Major World Religions

• Ethnic Religions
  – Hinduism
  – Judaism
  – all Animistic Religions

• No specific founder

• limited diffusion / no missionaries
5 Major Religion Families of the World

- Christianity
- Islam
- Buddhism
- Hinduism
- Judaism
- Traditional/Animistic
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Date Founded</th>
<th>Sacred Texts</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>% of World</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christianity</td>
<td>30 CE</td>
<td>The Bible</td>
<td>2,015 million</td>
<td>33% (dropping)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>622 CE</td>
<td>Qur'an &amp; Hadith</td>
<td>1,215 million</td>
<td>20% (growing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No religion*</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>925 million</td>
<td>15% (dropping)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>1,500 BCE</td>
<td>The Veda</td>
<td>786 million</td>
<td>13% (stable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>523 BCE</td>
<td>The Tripitaka</td>
<td>362 million</td>
<td>6% (stable)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atheists</td>
<td>No date</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>211 million</td>
<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese folk rel.</td>
<td>270 BCE</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>188 million</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Asian rel.</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>106 million</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tribal Religions</td>
<td>Prehistory</td>
<td>Oral tradition</td>
<td>91 million</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>19 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>1500 CE</td>
<td>Guru Granth Sahib</td>
<td>16 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>No consensus</td>
<td>Torah, Talmud</td>
<td>18 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shamanists</td>
<td>Prehistory</td>
<td>Oral Tradition</td>
<td>12 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confucianism</td>
<td>520 BCE</td>
<td>Lun Yu</td>
<td>5 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baha'i Faith</td>
<td>1863 CE</td>
<td>Most Holy Book</td>
<td>4 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jainism</td>
<td>570 BCE</td>
<td>Siddhanta, Pakrit</td>
<td>3 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shinto</td>
<td>500 CE</td>
<td>Kojiki, Nohon Shoki</td>
<td>3 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoroastrianism</td>
<td>No consensus</td>
<td>Avesta</td>
<td>0.2 million</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Christianity

- Origin and Diffusion
  - Palestine (modern Israel)
  - Universalizing Religion
  - Messiah: Jesus
Christianity

• Basic Precepts
  ➢ Belief in One God
    ➢ Father, Son & Holy Spirit
  ➢ Covenant (contract) with God
    ➢ New Testament - *salvation* to those who believe in Jesus Christ and his teachings
    ➢ Salvation is by grace or belief not works
    ➢ Believers to heaven with everlasting life
  ➢ Conversion of others (proselytize)
Christianity

- Branches
  - Roman Catholic
  - Protestant
  - Eastern Orthodox
Christianity

- Catholicism - largest branch
  - Headed by the Pope
  - direct link to God
  - Ceremonial - 7 sacraments
    - baptism, marriage, Eucharist, etc.
  - Very traditional
Protestantism - (1517) Reformation era

- No Pope needed
  - individual has direct link to God
- Grace through faith rather than sacraments
  - forgiveness for sins through indiv. prayers
- Spread through N. Europe and England
  - arose same time as 1466 Gutenberg Bible and the printing press
Christianity

- Eastern Orthodoxy - 5th Century split
  - Rivalry between Pope and Patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul)
    - Rome remained center for Roman Catholicism
  - Rejected Roman Catholicism doctrine
    - by 1054 officially split
- National Churches
  - Russian, Greek, Serbian Orthodox, etc.
Ireland- Case Study
Islam

- Origin and Diffusion
  - Mecca, Muhammad
  - Universalizing Religion
- Branches
  - Sunni (majority)
  - Shiite
Islam

• Basic Precepts
  ➢ Submission to the will of God (Allah)
  ➢ Lineage - Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, & Mohammed (different lineage)
  ➢ Holy Book - Koran - built on Old Testament
  ➢ Worship in a Mosque (not considered ‘sanctified’)
  ➢ Five (5) pillars of faith
• 5 Pillars of Faith
  ➢ Creed “There is no God but Allah”
  ➢ Prayer 5 times a day facing Mecca
  ➢ Giving to the poor
  ➢ Month of Rammadan
  ➢ Pilgrimage to Mecca
Islamic States – Case Study
Buddhism

• Origin and Diffusion
  ➢ Founder: Siddhartha Gautama
  ➢ Universalizing Religion

• Branches
  ➢ Theravada
  ➢ Mahayana
  ➢ Zen
His Holiness the 14th Dali Lama
Buddhism

• Basic Precepts
  ➢ Buddha - the enlightened one
    ➢ Nirvana - highest degree of consciousness
  ➢ 4 noble truths
    ➢ Life involves suffering
    ➢ Cause of suffering is desire
    ➢ Extinguish desire
    ➢ Nirvana reached through 8 fold path
Buddhism

• The 8 Fold Path – The Middle Way

1. Right View  
   Wisdom
2. Right Intention
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action  
   Ethical Conduct
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness  
   Mental Development
8. Right Concentration
Buddhists believe:
- not in any God, blind faith, or savior
- what is created is impermanent

True Permanent Absolute Reality
- uncreated, unborn, permanent bliss of Nirvana
China & Tibet- Case Study

- Read about China and Tibet (221)
- Summarize each section
- Create a political cartoon about the issue
Ethnic Religions
Hinduism

- **Origin & Diffusion** - unknown
  - Collection of scriptures 1500BC - 500AD
  - Not widely diffused
  - Almost exclusive to India
Hinduism

- Ethnic religion almost exclusively in India
- Oldest religion in Asia (1500 B.C)
- No authority or holy book (ancient scriptures)
- Polytheistic (perceived)
  - Numerous Gods
  - Yet one reality - Brahman - one God
Hinduism

• **Basic Precepts**
  
  – **Caste**: The class or distinct hereditary order into which a Hindu is assigned according to religious law.

  – **Brahman (manifestations)**
    
    • Vishnu (preserver)
    • Shiva (destroyer)
    • Shakti (mother god)
Hinduism

Dancing Shiva/Nataraj

Ganesh

Lord Vishnu
Hinduism

• **Basic Precepts**
  – **Maya** - forms, categories, structures are an illusion from our perspective
  – **Reincarnation** - chain of rebirths of each soul
  – **Law of Karma** - “is the form of creation, where from all things have their life” (life’s baggage)
  – **Moksha** - break the bonds of karma; experience that everything, including ourselves, is Brahman
Caste System - Case Study

The Partition of India

• Read about India’s partition - summarize each section and answer the AIM
Judaism

• Origin and Diffusion

▬ Ethnic Religion (origins of Christianity)

▬ Diaspora: In 70 A.D., Romans forced Jews to disperse throughout the world.

▬ Ghetto: During the Middle Ages, a neighborhood in a city set up by law to be inhabited only by Jews.
Judaism

• Basic Precepts
  – Belief in One God
  – Torah - original 5 chapters of Bible
  – Prophecy of Moses
  – Coming of the Messiah still to come
  – Atonement accomplished by sacrifices, penitence & good deeds
Judaism

• Sacred Places

pg. 215 – read Global Forces, Local Impacts
(fill in for Judaism, Islam and Christianity)
Israel/Palestinian Conflict- Case Study
Ethnic Asian Religions

- Confucianism
  - moral code
- Daoism
  - philosophy of harmony & balance
- Shintoism
  - Japanese traditional religion
Geography of Religion

- What is Religion?
- Major Religions & Divisions
- Religious Landscapes
- Religious Conflict and Interaction