Welcome to Geography 107
Introduction to Human Geography

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Are you here today?

- Get out your “clickers” and we’ll test the system. This is how attendance will be recorded in this course.
- Are you here today:
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
  - C. I’m not sure
  - D. All of the above.
What is Geography

• Geography is a subject.
• Geography is a discipline.
  – Geographers use a set of methodologies.
  – Geographers have an *epistemology*.
  – Geographers ask, “Where?” when they want to know “Why?”
• Geography is what geographers do.
• Anything that takes place can be studied from a geographic perspective.
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Where? Where!

• “Where?”, is the most important question geographers ask.
• Where things are give us important clues about why they are as they are.
• Historians tend to ask “When?”…and focus on chronology.
• Geographers focus on chorology…or more commonly “distribution”
• Diffusion!
The Jedi Major

• Padawan Learners must learn to:
  • See as a Jedi
    – landscape interpretation
  • Think as a Jedi – epistemology
    – Use the force! Ask: “Where?”
  • Work as a Jedi
    – (GIS – light sabers)
  • Communicate as a Jedi
    – (cartography)
How this course works

• The most important thing for you to learn is how to think...to develop *epistemology* and *methodology*.

• You will be introduced to a series of subjects (politics, language, ethnicity, industry, etc.)

• You will be shown how geographers “see” and understand these topics and how spatial thinking is applied to solve problems.
How this book is organized

• Each chapter has a topic (politics, religion, ethnicity, etc.)
• Each chapter has the following sections:
  – Region (Where is it?)
  – Migration/Diffusion (How’d it get there?)
  – Cultural Ecology (What’s the interaction with nature?)
  – Cultural Integration (How does it affect other things?)
  – Landscape (What does it look like as you drive by?)
Functional Region: TV Markets
Formal Region: German Speakers

- Note the German heartland is both Protestant and German speaking, but the periphery is Catholic and more likely to include other languages.
Vernacular Regions

• “Dixie” is another word for the southern US, but exactly where is “The South”?
Properties of Distribution

• Density – measurement
  – Number of objects
  – Land area
• Concentration
  – Clustering
  – Dispersal
• Pattern
  – Irregular
  – Linear
  – Rectangular
  – Grid
• Cholera map…
Payday Lenders vs. Doughnut Shops

• Which industry do you think is more concentrated in the San Fernando Valley?

• If one industry is concentrated spatial and the other is not, what inferences can we draw about the competitive nature of each industry?
Diffusion

• Diffusion is how people, ideas, the flu, music styles, etc. move from a hearth at the core outward to the periphery.

• Different styles of diffusion:
  – Hierarchical & Reverse-hierarchical
  – Contagious diffusion
  – Relocation diffusion
  – Stimulus (partial diffusion)

• Barriers, including time and space intervene
Diffusion: Health and Medical Questions?
Humans and Environment

- Geographers are also very interested in how the natural environment affects our cultural behaviors (and vice versa).
- In the book, this relationship is called “Cultural Ecology”
Soils of Alabama

- Soils in the blue color are particularly productive, especially for cotton.
Cotton Production: 1860

- Note the relationship between cotton production and soil type in Alabama.
Voting for Obama/McCain 2008
Do you see the relationship between soils-agriculture-politics?
Landscape

- Consider the parking structure across from Sierra Hall. What does it suggest about the culture that built it?
- What symbolic values does it have?
- What is not said?
Consider these Landscapes
Environmental Determinism? NO!

- figure
Environmental Possibilism?
Earth Modification
Conclusion

- Example: the American log house