Religion
Chapter 7

Key Question:
What is Religion and What Role does it Play in Culture?

Government Impact on Religion
The Soviet Union:
- Had an official policy of atheism
- Discouraged religious practice
- Drew boundaries for political control that separated ethnic groups in small areas
Religion

“a system of beliefs and practices that attempts to order life in terms of culturally perceived ultimate priorities.”
- Stoddard and Prorak

“perceived ultimate priorities” often translate into a list of things a follower “should” do and ways a follower “should” behave.

Disposition of the Deceased -
Each religion approaches the disposition of the deceased in different ways, and cultural landscapes reflect the religious traditions.

Hindu crematorium in Mombasa, Kenya
Religion’s impact in history and culture is evident in its centrality in many places.

Describe how religion and language affect and change each other to shape cultures. (Consider what happens to a society’s religion and language when a different religion or language diffuses into the place).

Key Question:
Where did the Major Religions of the World Originate, and How do Religions Diffuse?
Classifications of Religions

- Monotheistic religions – worship a single deity.
- Polytheistic religions – worship more than one deity, even thousands.
- Animistic religions – belief that inanimate objects possess spirits and should be revered.

Classifications of Religions

- Universalizing religions – religions that actively seek converts because members believe they offer belief systems of universal appropriateness and appeal.
- Ethnic religions – religions whose adherents are born into the faith and whose members do not actively seek converts.

Religions of the World

Where are universalizing religions located?
Where are ethnic religions located?
From the Hearth of South Asia

- Hinduism –
  - originated in Indus River Valley over 4000 years ago.
  - ritual bathing, karma, reincarnation
  - sacred text: Vedas
  - sacred sites: Ganges River
  - social manifestation: caste system
  - diffusion: through South Asia and into Southeast Asia

From the Hearth of South Asia

- From 500 BCE
  - Major Philosophical and Religious Revolutions
    - Indus Valley
    - Mohenjodaro
    - Nile Valley

Hearths of Religion and Philosophy by 500 BCE
Hindu Temple —
Angkor Wat, Cambodia. This temple suffers from neglect and destruction now, as Buddhism has supplanted Hinduism in most of Cambodia.

From the Hearth of South Asia

Buddhism —
splintered from Hinduism 2500 years ago. Originated in a region from Nepal south to the Ganges River area.
* anyone can achieve salvation, reach enlightenment
 founders: Siddartha (the Buddha)
 sacred sites: stupas
 diffusion: most strongly into Tibet in the north and into East Asia
Buddhist Stupas - 72 stupas, each containing a sculpture of the Buddha in meditation were built around 800 CE and still stand in Borobudur, Indonesia.

Shinto Shrine In Kyoto, Japan, this Shinto shrine is visible after walking through a torii – a gateway usually formed by two wooden posts and topped by two horizontal beams.

Buddhism is mixed with local religions in some places. In Japan, Buddhism is mixed with the local religion, Shintoism.
• Taoism –
  originated in China more than 2500 years ago
  * oneness of humanity and nature
  founder: Lao-Tsu
  sacred text: “Book of the Way”
  social manifestation: Feng Shui
  diffusion: East Asia

• Confucianism –
  originated in China about 2500 years ago
  * real meaning of life lay in the present
  founder: Confucius
  sacred text: “Confucian Classics”
  diffusion: East Asia, Southeast Asia
From the Hearth of the Eastern Mediterranean

Judaism –
- first major monotheistic religion, covenant between God (one God) and Abraham (the chosen people)
- sacred text: Torah
- founder: Abraham
- sacred sites: Jerusalem (Western Wall), land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River
- social manifestation: Zionism
- diffusion: into European cities during the diaspora, into N. America during WWII, into Israel over Western Wall, Jerusalem
Jewish neighborhoods in European Cities
the Old Jewish Cemetery in Prague, the Czech Republic

From the Hearth of the Eastern Mediterranean

• Christianity –
  originated in Southwest Asia about 2000 years ago.
  * monotheistic religion, follow teachings of Jesus to achieve eternal life
  sacred text: Bible
  founder: Jesus (son of God)
  sacred sites: Bethlehem, Jerusalem
  split in the church:
    * split into Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches in 1054
    * Protestant sect split off in 1400s and 1500s
  diffusion: into Western Europe, and then world wide during colonialism and after.
First Split in Christianity, 1054
CE Western Roman empire = Roman Catholicism
Eastern Roman empire = Eastern Orthodox

Switzerland
concentrations of Catholics and Protestants
by canton and commune

From the Hearth of the Eastern Mediterranean

- Islam –
  originated on Arabian peninsula about 1500 years ago.
  * monotheistic religion, revelations Muhammad received from Allah, Five Pillars.
  sacred text: Qu’ran
  founder: Muhammad
  sacred sites: Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem
  split in the church:
    * shortly after Muhammad’s death, split into Sunni Muslims (great majority)
      Shi’ite Muslims (concentrated in Iran)
  diffusion: across Arabian peninsula, across North Africa, into Spain and also east into Southeast Asia
The Diffusion of Islam

Minaret (for call to prayer) stands on the Sabah State Mosque in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.
Diffusion of Islam into Europe
large mosque in Paris, France

The Rest of the Map

Religions of the World

- Shamanism – a community faith tradition in which people follow their shaman, a religious leader, teacher, healer, and visionary.
Rise of Secularism

- Secularism – indifference to or rejection of organized religious affiliations and ideas.

- Where is secularism on the rise and why?

**Thinking Geographically**

Migration plays a large role in the diffusion of religions, both universalizing and ethnic. As Europe becomes more secular, migrants from outside of Europe continue to settle in the region. Imagine Europe 30 years from now. Predict where in Europe secularism will be the most prominent and where religious adherence will strengthen.
Key Question:
How is Religion seen in the Cultural Landscape?

Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage

- 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 at the site.

Vatican City
Pope John Paul II greeted pilgrims in St. Peter's Square
Sacred Sites and Rituals
At Saint Declan's Holy Well in Ardmore, Ireland
Pilgrims hang scraps of clothing as offerings

This practice is common at sacred sites in Far Eastern Russia

Sacred Sites of Jerusalem
Jerusalem is sacred to three major religions:
Judaism (Western Wall)
Christianity (Church of the Holy Sepulchre)
Islam (Dome of the Rock)

Sacred Landscapes of Hinduism
Hinduism — pilgrimages follow prescribed routes, and rituals are followed by millions.

Varanasi, India on the Ganges River where Hindus perform morning rituals.
Sacred Landscapes of Buddhism

Swedogon Pagoda in Yangon, Myanmar
Eight hairs of the Buddha are preserved under the dome (chedi)

Sacred Landscapes of Christianity

Catholic Churches
Are often located in the center of European cities, with spires reaching far above the other buildings.

Sacred Landscapes of Christianity

Protestant Churches
This church in Singapore is a Church of England church in city surrounded by Buddhists, Hindus, and Muslims
Religious Landscapes in the United States

Protestant and Catholic Landscapes in the United States

Scandinavian Lutheran Church (on left)
St. Mary’s Catholic Church (on right)

Sacred Landscapes of Islam

Muslim Mosques
Dome of this mosque in Isfahan, Iran demonstrates the importance of geometric art evident in Muslim architecture.
The Hajj
Pilgrims circle the holy Kaaba in the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia during the Hajj.

Choose a pilgrimage site, such as Mecca, Vatican City, or the Western Wall, and describe how the act of pilgrimage (in some cases by millions) alters this place’s cultural landscape and environment.

Key Question:
What Role does Religion play in Political Conflicts?
Conflicts along Religious Borders

- Interfaith Boundaries
  - Boundaries between the world’s major faiths.

- Intrafaith Boundaries
  - Boundaries within a single major faith.

Interfaith Boundary in Africa

Israel and Palestine
Landscapes of Settlements
Israelis have had a policy of building settlements for Jews in the Occupied Territories.

Landscape of the Gaza Strip, 2005
In 2005, the Israeli government pulled out of the Gaza Strip, burning down Jewish settlements and handing control over to Palestinians.

The West Bank
with a the proposed security wall, parts of which the Israeli government has already built.
The Horn of Africa

Amharic (Coptic)
Christianity is in central Ethiopia

Islam diffused into the Horn of Africa

Indigenous religions remain in pockets

The Former Yugoslavia

Genocide
Ethnic Cleansing

Northern Ireland

Identities are tied to Religion, but are deepened by:

- Economics
- colonial experiences
- activity spaces (segregation)
Religious Fundamentalism and Extremism

• Religious fundamentalism – a return to the basics of their faith. found in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

• Religious extremism – fundamentalism carried to the point of violence. found in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam

Islamic Extremists and Jihad
an Islamic holy war against the West

Boal’s studies in Northern Ireland demonstrate that solving a religious conflict is typically not about theology; it is about identity. You are assigned the potentially Nobel Prize-winning task of “solving” the conflict either in Northern Ireland or in Israel and Palestine. Using Boal’s example, determine how you can alter activity spaces and change identities to create the conditions for long-lasting peace in one of these major conflict zones.