2 History of Geography
(the study of location, place and interrelationships)

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Hunter College Geography

Flow Diagram
The Five Fundamental Themes of Geography
Source: Michigan Geographic Alliance

ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL
1. Access G101 course home page via the Geo Dept web site. It is NOT on BlackBoard.
2. Click on Course Syllabi & Web Pages
3. GEOG 10100
4. Scroll to our course/section number and click on the link.

ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL
5. Access the links to get the material you wish to view or copy, including Power Point lecture slides, handouts and atlas extra credit assignments.

Flow Diagram
The Five Fundamental Themes of Geography
Source: Michigan Geographic Alliance

This handout is available on the course homepage for viewing and printing. Keep it handy throughout the semester!

Five Fundamental Themes

1. LOCATION
Addresses the question: Where?
There are 2 types of location:
A. SITE: absolute location
This is exact placement on earth’s surface: latitude and longitude or another grid-based system.
B. SITUATION: relative location
This is location in relation to other sites: includes aspects of accessibility, connectivity, change through technology, and strategic positioning.

Geography
The Five Themes to Help Understand the World and its People

New York City, New York:
Latitude: 40º 43' N
Longitude: 74º W

SITE: Your seat in this classroom
SITUATION: Your seat in relation to all other seats at Hunter College.
Five Fundamental Themes

2. PLACE
Addresses the special features or characteristics of a location that make it unique.
Includes:
- Size (how large or small)
- Land surface (terrain, river systems, coastlines)
- Physical characteristics (climate, geology, soils, water, wildlife, ecosystems)
- Human characteristics (population, ethnicity, land use, architectural styles, transportation networks)

3. MOVEMENT
Addresses the idea of mobility to, from and within a location.
- Studies the flow and repositioning of people, wildlife, disease, goods and ideas on the earth’s surface.
- Analyzes diffusion (or spread) from a point of origin.

4. REGION
Addresses the unifying factors of location.
- Identifies similar characteristics.
- Studies formation.
- Tracks change over time.

5. HUMAN-ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION
Addresses the relationships within locations between people and the physical environment.
- Perception
- Technology
- Land use decisions
- Impact

Five Fundamental Themes Plus One
To the Five we add the Earth science tradition of geography.
Addresses the processes, cycles and systems that constantly modify the natural world and therefore influence people.
These include:
- Geologic and atmospheric processes.
- Seasonal and ecological cycles.
- Biomes and ecosystems (unique zones of life).
Origins of Geography

Roots
- Geography’s origin goes back as far as humans began interacting with their environment and making decisions.

Awareness
- Early humans developed an awareness of their surroundings:
  - An awareness of the component parts of the physical environment.
  - An awareness of the sequence of events.
  - An awareness of the natural cycles.

Survival
- People have always made decisions about habitat use.
  - Food, water and shelter (protection) were needed to survive.

Natural Curiosity

Why does it happen?
How does it happen?
When does it happen?
Why does it happen here?
Where else does it happen?

Origins of Geography

The Ancients divided knowledge into two categories: TIME and PLACE

TIME >>> When? >>> History
PLACE >>> Where? >>> Geography

From these all other fields of study evolved as people became specialists by narrowing their areas of study.

>>> The Why?

CLASSICAL GEOGRAPHY

This chart is available on the course home page for viewing and printing.

Clay Tablets, Babylonia

Oldest known maps are clay tablets from Mesopotamia dating back to the 3800s BC (5600 years ago).

Present-day Map of Europe

Map of city of Nippur, c.1400s BC
The writings of the Greek poet Homer reflected the geographical concepts of his time. Maps of coastal areas made by Ancient Greeks were fairly accurate. Sailors tended to avoid the open seas and vessels hugged coastlines.

**The World of Homer** 9th century BC (3100 yrs. ago)

**Herodotus** (a Greek living in Italy) gained much of his information about the earth from his extensive travels. He was one of the early group of people who believed the earth was round, not flat.

**World of Herodotus** 5th century BC (2500 yrs. ago)

Herodotus (a Greek living in Italy), gained much of his information about the earth from his extensive travels. He was one of the early group of people who believed the earth was round, not flat.

Eratosthenes, the chief librarian of Alexandria, is called the “Father of Geography.”

Over 2200 years ago, he estimated the earth’s circumference to be 25,000 mi by recording the angle of the sun’s shadow in deep wells at noon.

**Eratosthenes’s World Map** 3rd century BC

**The World of Strabo** 1st century AD

Strabo was born in present-day Turkey into a wealthy family. He was well-educated and had access to the great libraries of Rome and Egypt. Strabo’s “Geography” is a series of 17 books written 2000 years ago that recount the historical geography of Greece and Rome.

- It was used to educate statesmen and military leaders of the Roman Empire.
- He used Eratosthenes’s map of the world as a base.

**The World of Strabo** 1st century AD

**Ptolemy’s World Map** 2nd century AD

Last of the ancient classical geographers was Ptolemy, a librarian at Alexandria, who compiled the 8-vol “Guide of Geography” which became the standard reference work for centuries.

Ptolemy’s estimate of the size of the earth made it smaller than Eratosthenes’s earth. Columbus based his calculations on Ptolemy’s measurements. These numbers were used into the 1500s when explorers traveling the distances began to prove him in error.

Non-Western Contributions

- The “Tribute to Yu” was an inventory of the Chinese empire written c.2,600 years ago (5th century BC).
- The oldest Chinese maps date from 4th century BC.
- The libraries of the Arab world preserved the works of the ancient Greeks and Romans. Scholars continued earth-focused studies during the period in Europe called the “Middle Ages” or “Dark Age” (5th-10th centuries AD).
- Arab scholars, esp. al-Idrisi (d. 1154), Ibn-Battuta (d. 1378), and Ibn-Khaldun (d. 1406) were travelers who wrote detailed descriptions of places they visited (Mediterranean, North Africa, Southwest Asia and India).
- Asian scholars and merchants recorded info and mapped areas as they traveled overland across central Asia to Europe and by ship to SE Asia, India and East Africa.
- No record exists of exploration outside their region by empires in Africa and the Americas.
Compiled in the late 1300s, this map drew on the knowledge of traders from Korea, Japan, China, Arabia, and Islamic scholars. It shows India, Africa, and part of Europe. Note size and place distortions.

**Kangnido Map, Korea: 1402**

This is the first map in which the name AMERICA is used to designate the lands of the western hemisphere.

**Martin Waldseemuller’s Map of the World - 1507**

It is the first map focused on the western hemisphere. Ornate but very general.

**Munster Map of the New World: 1552**

Note location of Japan (called Zipangri) next to Mexico.

**Juan Bellero Map of the Americas 1554**

This is one of the first maps devoted just to the Western Hemisphere.

**Nova Orbis Tabula in Lucem Edita Frederick de Wit, c. 1665**

Maps like this were used as wall decoration in the grand rooms of palaces and estates.

**Regni Mexicani Sie Nova Hispania Ludoviciana, N. Angla**

1730 map with detailed information and accurate location.

The David Rumsey Collection (https://www.davidrumsey.com/) has a very extensive collection of scanned images.
**GENERAL TIME LINE**

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<tr>
<th>Milestones and highlights</th>
<th>Division of the discipline into branches</th>
<th>Creation of subunits within the branches.</th>
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<td>1700s to mid-1800s</td>
<td>Increase specialization, less description.</td>
<td>American geography grows.</td>
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<td>Early 20th century</td>
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**MODERN GEOGRAPHY**

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**ESSAY 1 Option**

- From Chapter 1, you will discuss the contribution to the field of geography or to our knowledge of the world of a noted modern-era geographer, earth/environmental scientist, cartographer, researcher or explorer born after 1750.
- Focus on the person's contribution, not the biography, and don't refer to the person by his/her first name as: "Christopher discovered America in 1492."