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

This handout is available on the course homepage for viewing and printing.

Keep it handy throughout the semester!
**ACCESSING COURSE MATERIAL**

1. **Access G101 course home page via the Geography Dept web site.**
   - This course is **NOT on BlackBoard.**

2. **Click on Course Syllabi & Web Pages**

3. **GEOG 10100 list**

4. **Scroll to our course/section number and click on the link.**

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**Steps to Access Course Material:**

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**Direct Links:**

- [http://www.hunter.cuny.edu](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu) > Academic depts > Geography
- [http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/geog101_grande/index.html](http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/geog101_grande/index.html): direct link to course listings
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.

4. 

http://www.geo.hunter.cuny.edu/courses/geog101_grande/index.html: Direct link to home page (also printed on the syllabus)
Flow Diagram

The Five Fundamental Themes of Geography

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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.
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.
Five Fundamental Themes

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).
The Five Fundamental Themes of Geography

Source: Michigan Geographic Alliance

This handout is available on the course homepage for viewing and printing.

Keep a copy of the diagram handy throughout the semester, especially as you do the textbook readings.
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?**
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 (5800 years ago).

Map of the world, c.600s BC

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.

*After National Geographic*
Herodotus (a Greek living in Italy) gained much of his information about the earth from his extensive travels. He was one 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.
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.
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 from Islamic scholars. It shows India, Africa and part of Europe.

Note size and place distortions.
This is the first map in which the name AMERICA is used to designate the lands of the western hemisphere.

Note shape of North America and South America.
It is the first map focused on the western hemisphere.

Ornate but very general.

Note location of Japan (called Zipangri) next to Mexico.
This is one of the first maps devoted just to the Western Hemisphere.
Maps like this were used as wall decoration in the grand rooms of palaces and estates.
Regni Mexicani Sie Nova Hispania Ludoviciiana, N. Angla

1730 map with detailed information and accurate location.

The David Rumsey Collection (https://www.davidrumsey.com/) has a very extension collection of scanned images.
### Milestones and highlights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rebirth in Europe.</th>
<th>Division of the discipline into branches.</th>
<th>Creation of subunits within the branches.</th>
<th>Increased specialization. Less description. Fades as it loses its distinctive nature but 1980s “Back to Basics” movement results in a resurgence.</th>
<th>Humanistic, theoretic-al, and scientific points of view espoused. Local area studies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- **Humboldt**: generalist
- **Von Thunen**: specialist
- **Kant**: philosopher
- **Ritter**: academician

- Physical Geography
- Anthropo (human)
- Geography
- Schools of thought develop: Environmental Determinism vs Possibilism

- Regionalization
- Cultural landscape studies
- Geopolitics
- Accepted as a distinct university discipline

- Spatial analysis
- Data manipulation
- Quantification
- Computerization

- Hypothesis
- Geographic Educ testing
- New technologies
- Extreme specialization
- Modeling

**Heyday of the great geographic societies.**

- Late 1700s to mid-1800s
- Mid/late 1800s to early 1900s
- Mid/late 1900s
- Late 1900s-early 2000s

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<th>&lt; - 1800</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>present</th>
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**GENERAL TIME LINE**
Rebirth in Europe.
Basic Principles and General Laws of Nature recognized.

Humboldt: generalist
Von Thunen: specialist
Kant: philosopher
Ritter: academician

Late 1700s to mid-1800s

Division of the discipline into branches.

Physical Geography
Anthropo (human) Geography
Schools of thought
develop: Environmental Determinism vs Possibilism

Regionalization
Cultural landscape studies
Geopolitics

Accepted as a distinct university discipline

Heyday of the great geographic societies.

Creation of subunits within the branches. American geography grows.

Mid/late 1800s to early 1900s

Full chart is available on the course homepage.
Milestones and Highlights

Increased specialization. Less description. Fades as it loses its distinctive nature but 1980s “Back to Basics” movement results in a resurgence.

Spatial analysis Data manipulation Quantification Computerization Hypothesis Geog Info Systems New technologies Extreme specialization Modeling

Mid/late 1900s Late 1900s-early 2000s

Humanistic, theoretical, and scientific points of view espoused. Local area studies.

Qualitative methodologies; Microstudies; Social Theory; Radicalism; Structuralism; Gender Studies; Environmental studies, esp. climate related

The 1980s brought about the “Back to Basics” movement stressing K-12 geographic education.

Since 2000 many geographers have emphasized spatial analysis and qualitative (cultural) studies, including deconstruction (finding the hidden meaning).

Today geography and geographic applications are everywhere in the form of GPS which locates us and tracks and maps our every move.
Modern Geography in Relation to other Disciplines

From several sources
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.”

- Maximum length is 2 pages.
- Include a bibliography of at least 2 sources on a separate page and footnotes if appropriate.
- All required essays are due by Friday, April 17, 2020 but may be handed in at any time prior to the that date.
  - A lateness penalty as stated in the syllabus will be assessed starting Apr. 18th.
  - Any two topical essays from the 3 topics listed on the syllabus are to be submitted by the due date.
- If you do all three, the third will count as an extra credit assignment!
Studying Geography