CULTURAL (SPATIAL) DIFFUSION
(spread of ideas, innovations) - two models

Expansion - ideas spread to new places as different cultures adopt idea

Has “Contagious” & “Hierarchical” Subtypes

Relocation - ideas spread to new places as culture groups migrate there
Percentage of Population That Adopts the Idea or Innovation

S-Curve of Adoption of Innovations (non-spatial diffusion model)

- Innovators
- Majority Adopters (early and late)
- Laggards

Time
Classification of Religions

**Universalizing:** claim to the “universal truth” - seen as applicable to all humans

Seek to convert new members; open to all people

Spread mainly by *expansion diffusion* (any sub-type)

*Examples:* Christianity, Islam, Buddhism

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**Ethnic:** associated with a particular culture; membership by birth or identity with that ethnic group

Not evangelical (don’t actively seek to convert new members)

Spread mainly by *relocation diffusion* from origin area

*Examples:* Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, East Asian religions, folk and traditional (tribal/Animist) practices
Innovation and Diffusion of World Religions

Note hearth areas and diffusion paths of four largest religions (contrast Hinduism to 3 universalizing religions)
Diffusion

Paths of Christianity

Spread mainly by hierarchical process, then by contagious expansion in Europe ... then by relocation & expansion to European colonies.
Diffusion Paths of Islam

Spread mainly by expansion diffusion through 17th century through Asia, North Africa. Now world’s fastest growing religion; spread by both expansion and relocation diffusion.
MOSQUE STYLES IN INDONESIA

Grand Mosque, Banda Aceh, northern Sumatra

Melang, Java

Jepara, southern Sumatra
Origin in Northern India; different forms spread by expansion and hierarchical diffusion outward; blended in East Asia (syncretism). Hinduism later reclaimed dominance in India.
Examples of Religion on the Cultural Landscape

Places of worship
Shrines, pilgrimage sites
Cemeteries, mausolea
Sacred spaces

Stonehenge, southern England (Druid site)
Sacred Spaces
Sites of special religious significance (experiences, events)
Hallowed grounds that are preserved across generations
For believers, places endowed with divine meaning

Paha Sapa Kin Wiyopeya Unkiyapi kte sni yelo!!
We never sold the Black Hills!!

(Lakota expression)
Cathedral at Chartres, France

Shrine at Lourdes, southern France
Methodist-Congregationalist (Protestant) church, southwest Quebec, Canada

St. Basil’s (Russian Orthodox), Red Square, Moscow
Recoleto Cemetery
Buenos Aires

Mid-City Cemetery
New Orleans
Synagogue, Jewish quarter, Prague (13th century)

Western (Wailing) Wall, Jerusalem

Jewish cemetery, Chicago

Buddhist stupa, Thailand

(Hemispherical shape is typical, but different forms of Buddhism use differing types and levels of ornamentation.)
Hindu temple, Northern India

Taj Mahal (Agra, India) – Islamic mausoleum

Hindu cremation ceremony, India
Friday prayers, Grand Mosque, Mecca, Saudi Arabia: The Hajj
Memorial Spaces
How similar to, and how different from, “sacred space”?
Memorial Spaces

Monuments, memorials, shrines, museums, and preserved sites used to commemorate and sanctify the past

From D. Alderman (2000): “Public commemoration is a socially directed process: before historical events and figures can be regarded as memorable, people must judge them worthy of remembrance and have the influence to get others to agree.”

“Places of memory make history visible and tangible. ... Memorial sites shape how we interpret and value the past.”

“Memorial landscapes are in a constant state of redefinition as governments rise and fall, as the heritage and cultural tourism industry continues to expand, and as marginalized populations seek public recognition.”

From O. Dwyer (2000): “The narrative content of these memorials reflects the types of archival materials that survive, the intentions of their producers, and contemporary politics regarding [historical events]. In turn, through their symbolic power and the large number of visitors who travel to them, these landscapes play a role in contemporary America’s ... politics.”