



# Introduction & Themes of Geography

- Syllabus
- What is Geography?

## Geography is....

- A spatial science that investigate patterns and processes
- Comprised of two divisions: Human & Physical
- Inter-disciplinary



Hopi Salt Mines in Grand Canyon



## Pattison's 4 Traditions

- Spatial
- Areal/Regional
- Human-Environment
- Earth Science

## NGS 5 Themes

- People, things, and phenomena:
  - Move across space (MOVEMENT)
  - May be associated with specific spaces for a variety of physical and social reasons (PLACE)
  - Can be physically located in space (LOCATION)
  - Can be used to classify space (REGION)
  - Interact with each other in specific ways in different places and combinations (HUMAN-EARTH RELATIONSHIPS)



## Themes of Geography

- Regional Concept
- Types of Regions
- Regions & Scales
- Landscapes v. Regions
- Major World Regions

## Regional Concept

- A key mechanism for understanding how various social & physical processes impact space
- Based on observed patterns & known processes, the regional concept assumes space can be classified or differentiated
  - Highly subjective
  - although 'objective' criteria can be used

## Types of Regions

- Formal/Uniform
- Functional/Nodal
- Vernacular/Perceptual



# HUMAN geography

An experiential Approach



Formal: Physical & Cultural



# HUMAN geography

An experiential Approach



Functional: Economic & Political



# HUMAN geography

An experiential Approach



Perceptual v. Vernacular  
(Hillbilly) (Mountaineer)

## Regions & Scale

- Regions are only one of many broad 'scales' at which geographers and scientists can examine the world around them
- Other broad or general scales include
  - nation
  - province
  - household
  - locality
  - individual

## Systematic versus Comparative

- **Systematic**=System Approach
  - A system is a distinct collection of inter-related things and phenomena which interact with each other
  - Two types of systems exist:
    - **Open**: these systems actively interact with the broader environment accepting and emitting energy & matter
    - **Closed**: these systems do not interact with outside energy & matter
  - Social Systems--ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, CULTURAL (SIGNS)
- **Comparative**=Regional/Landscape Approaches
  - Primarily descriptive, not explanatory

## Epistemological Perspectives

- **Johnston's 4 Approaches**

- **Idiographic/Empirical:** Description & Classification
  - regional versus national service centers
  - functional metropolitan regions
- **Positivism:** Spatial Science
  - distance decay
  - gravity modeling
- **Humanism:** Meaning
- **Structural:** Social Structures, such as class

## Modified/Emerging Approaches

- **Behavioralism:** Decision Making based on limited knowledge
  - Bounded rationality as a modifier of L-P
- **Political-Economy:** Macro social, economic, political, and cultural structures
  - Privileges global scale and the social structure of class
- **Postmodernity:** cultural phenomena promoting social change and new ways of knowing
- **Poststructuralism:** emergence of new socio-spatial relationship not based on class or economic determinants (akin to postmodernity)

## Modified/Emerging Approaches

- **New Regional-New Cultural**

- Combination of systematic & comparative rooted in scalar relationships
- Politics of Scale