Introduction to Cultural Geography

Defining culture and examining the Cultural Landscape
Culture Defined

• A way of life underpinned by particular values and traditions
  – The expression of those values and traditions through writing, music, visual and performing arts, or through rituals, festivals and the like.
  – The intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development that distinguish humans from animals
Culture Criticism

• “There is no culture in the world, only differing arrays of power that organize society in this way and not that”
  – Don Mitchell, Syracuse University 2000
Culture as related to Geography

- Examines culture of particular groups
  - Cultural Politics
  - How culture is practiced
  - How culture is captured materially and symbolically
    - Artifacts
    - Landscapes
Main Factors of Culture

- Education
- Government
- Agriculture
- Economy
- Sport
- Grooming
- Values
- Work ethic
- Etiquette
- Courtship
- Recreation
- Gestures
- Religion
- Language
- Architecture
- Cuisine
- Technology
- Music
- Dance
- Sports
- Medicine
- Dress
- Gender roles
- Law
The Cultural Landscape

• The visible, material landscape that cultural groups create as they inhabit the earth.
  – Mankind’s mark on the landscape left behind through the process of construction, agriculture, landscaping and conservation
Importance of the Cultural Landscape

• Cultural landscapes are the accumulation of artifacts that help present information about the people(s) that have live there
  – Evidence about the spread and development of cultures
  – Alterations to the landscapes that reflect their identity
Material vs. Non-Material Culture

Material Culture
- clothing
- buildings
- farming patterns
- technology

Non-Material Culture
- Language
- Religion
- Political organization
- Customs or traditions
Reading a Cultural Landscape

• By looking at a culture’s environment it is possible to see what the culture values, divisions of society, connections to other cultures, etc...