Class 11b: Urban geography

- Why cities? Where?
- Internal spatial dynamics
- Suburbanization
- Inner cities
What is a city?

• A central place (exports good and services to a larger region)
• A place of a certain size and density
  – 200 in Denmark
  – 2,000 in the U.S.
  – 20,000 in Japan
• A recent phenomenon (3% in 1800)
Why cities?

- Specialization of labor
- Agglomeration and efficiency
  - Economies of scale
  - Sharing suppliers, customers, services
- Administration and organization
- Defense
Where are cities?

• Site: characteristics of the place itself
• Situation: relative characteristics

Gateway to gold country       At a silver deposit
Head of navigation           On a railroad
Waterfall                     River delta
Ancient cities

• Crossroads, water sources
  – Jericho (9000 BC)
  – Catal Huyuk (6000 BC)
  – Memphis (3000 BC)

• Cooperation on irrigation, defense
  – Ur (5000 BC)

• Interdependence of city and country
Medieval cities

- Small by today’s standards
  - 1 square mile; 300,000 inhabitants
- Surrounded by wall, farm fields
- Military strategy, religion, crossroads
- Organic city plan
Industrial cities

• Rapid urban growth
• New cities: close to power sources, markets
  – Coalfields (Manchester, UK)
  – Water power (Lowell, MA)
• Health and social issues
  – London (Dickens)
  – Chicago (The Jungle)
World cities

• Based on services, not goods
• Face-to-face contact, communications
• Global orientation, internal inequalities
• NYC, London, Tokyo
Economics of cities

- Your responsibility!
- Basic vs. nonbasic industries
- Examples (Figure 12.11)
- Multiplier effect
Von Thünen’s land use model

• German landowner in 1800s
• Noticed pattern of agricultural land use
• Three assumptions:
  – Isolated city (no trade)
  – Surrounded by homogenous landscape
  – All that matters is transport costs
Urban land use models

• CBD: “highest and best use”
• What happens beyond?
• Three models of Chicago
  – “Featureless plain”
  – University of Chicago
• Not mutually exclusive
Concentric circles

- Sociologist in 1920s
- CBD, then “zone of transition”
- Working-class homes
- Middle-class homes
- Commuter suburbs
- Urban ecology: invasion and succession
Sector model

- Economist in 1930s
- Central activities expand out by sector
- High-end housing in attractive sector
- Industrial near transportation
- Middle-class housing next to high-end
- Lower-class housing gets the rest
Sector model

- Status displayed via housing
- Middle class always moves outward
- Vacancy chains start
- Fastest growing suburbs = poorest inner city
Multiple nuclei

- Geographers in 1940s
- CBD isn’t the only center
- Commercial, industrial, port, etc. “nodes”
- Expanding nodes intersect
Suburbs and inner cities

• Suburban residents and jobs came from somewhere
• Growth now limited to suburbs
• Segregation by class, race
• Falling tax income, rising service needs
• Spatial mismatch: jobs moved, poor didn’t
Suburbs and inner cities

• But agglomeration still matters
• And immigrants still arrive in cities
• Increasing redevelopment of downtowns
  – LoDo in Denver
  – Battery Park in NYC
  – Jack London Square in Oakland
  – Train station in Sacramento