Class 8b: Political geography II

• Boundaries and border disputes
• Domestic political geography
• Electoral geography: voting patterns
National boundaries

- Limits of sovereignty
- Three-dimensional
- 14 miles of ocean; 200 miles of fishing rights
- Frontier zones vs. boundaries
“Natural” or physical boundaries

• Mountains
  – Often a barrier anyway
  – Ridgeline or watershed?

• Rivers or lakes
  – Not always stable; which side?
  – Can unite as well as divide
“Artificial” or cultural boundaries

- Geometric
  - Parallels or meridians
  - Typically sparsely settled
- Religious or linguistic
  - Criteria for dividing states
Antecedent vs. subsequent

- Antecedent: drawn before dense settlement
- Subsequent: after cultural landscape is established
  - Consequent: take landscape into account
  - Superimposed: no regard for cultural landscape
Boundaries as sites of conflict

- Landlocked states
- Water as boundary
- Rivers across boundaries
- Nations not matching state boundaries
- Resource access or use
Internal state structure

• Core area: historical center
  – Densest population, largest cities
  – Most economically developed
• Ex.: Moscow, London, eastern U.S.
• Not found in all countries
Unitary vs. federal states

• Unitary: highly centralized, homogeneous
  – Strong national identity
  – Centralization in core area
  – European cores, newly independent states
Unitary vs. federal states

• Federal: decentralized government
  – Provinces or states have considerable responsibility
  – Capital often deliberately created in core, or periphery