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| religion | "a system of beliefs and practices that attempts to order life in terms of culturally perceived ultimate priorities." |
| secularism | the idea that ethical and moral standards should be formulated and adhered to for life on Earth, not to accommodate the prescriptions of a deity and promises of a comfortable afterlife, opposite of theocracy |
| monotheistic religion | worship a single deity, a God or Allah |
| polytheistic religion | worship more than one deity, even thousands |
| universalizing religion | actively seek converts because they view themselves as offering belief systems of universal appropriateness and appeal |
| ethnic religion | adherents are born into the faith and converts are not actively sought |
| Hinduism | one of the oldest religions in the modern world, dating back to over 4000 years, and originating in the Indus River Valley of what is today part of Pakistan. It is unique among the world's religions in that does not have a single founder, a single theology, or agreement on its origins |
| caste system | locks people into particular social classes and imposes many restrictions, especially in the lowest of the castes, the untouchables |
| Buddhism | religion founded in the sixth century BCE and characterized by the belief that enlightenment would some through knowledge, especially self-knowledge; elimination of greed, craving, and desire; it splintered from Hinduism as a reaction to the strict social hierarchy maintained by Hinduism |
| Shintoism | religion located in Japan and related to Buddhism; it focuses particularly on nature and ancestor worship  |
| Taoism | religion believed to have been founded by Lao-Tsu and based upon his book entitled "Tao-te-ching" or "Book of the Way" Lao-Tsu focused on the proper form of political rule and on the oneness of humanity and nature |
| Feng Shui | literally "wind-water" The chinese art and science of placement and orientation of tombs, dwellings, buildings, and cities; structures and objects are positioned in an effort to channel flows of shen-chi("life-breath") in favorable ways |
| Confucianism | a philosophy of ethics, education, and public service based on the writings of Confucius and traditionally thought of as one of the core elements of Chinese culture |
| Judaism | religion with its roots in the teachings of Abraham (from Ur), who is credited with uniting his people to worship only one god; according to its teaching, Abraham and God have a covenant in which the followers agree to worship only on God, and God agrees to protect his chosen people, the followers of this religion |
| diaspora | from the Greek "to disperse," a term describing forceful or coluntary dispersal of a people from their homeland to a new place; originally denoting the dispersal of Jews, it is increasingly applied to other population dispersals, such as the involuntary relocation of Black peoples during the slave trade or Chinese peoples outside of Mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong |
| Zionism | the movement to unite the Jewish people of the diaspora and to establish a national homeland for them in the promised land |
| Christianity | religion based on the teachings of Jesus; according to this teaching, Jesus in the son of God, placed on Earth to teach people how to live according to God's plan |
| Eastern Orthodox Church | one of three major branches of Christianity, it along with the Roman Catholic Church, a second of the three major branches of Christianity, arose out of the division of the Roman Empire by Emperor Diocletian into four governmental regions; two western regions centered in Rome, and two eastern regions centered in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) In 1054 CE, Christianity was divided along that same line when the church, centered in Constantinople; and the Roman Catholic Church, centered in Rome, split [yes the definition is very similar the Roman Catholic Church definition, but is not all the same] |
| Roman Catholic Church | one of three major branches of Christianity, it along with the Eastern Orthodox Church, a second of the three major branches of Christianity, arose out of the division of the Roman Empire by Emperor Diocletian into four governmental regions; two western regions centered in Rome, and two eastern regions centered in Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) In 1054 CE, Christianity was divided along that same line when the Eastern Orthodox Church, centered in Constantinople; and the Roman Catholic Church, centered in Rome split [yes the definition is very similar to the Eastern Orthodox Church definition, but is not all the same]  |
| Protestant | one of the three major branches of Christianity (together with the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church) following the widespread societal changes in Europe starting in the 1300s CE, may adherents to the Roman Catholic Church began to question the role of religion in their lives and opened the door to the Protestant Reformation wherein John Huss, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and others challenged many of the fundamental teachings of the Roman Catholic Church |
| Islam | the youngest of the major world religions, it is based on the teachings of Muhammad, corn in Mecca in 571 CE; according to this teaching, Muhammad received the truth directly from Allah in a series of revelations during which Muhammad spoke the verses of Qu'ran (Koran), the holy book |
| Sunni | adherents to the largest branch of Islam, called the orthodox or traditionalist; they believe in the effectiveness of family and community in the solution of life's problems, and they differ from the Shi'ites in accepting the traditions (sunna) of Muhammad as authoritative |
| Shi'ite | an adherent of one of the two main divisions of Islam; also known as Shiahs, they represent the Persian (Iranian) variation of Islam and believe in the infallibility and divine right to authority of Imams, descendants of Ali |
| Shamanism | community faith in traditional societies in which people follow their shaman-a religious leader, teacher, healer, and visionary; at times, an especially strong shaman might attract a regional following; however, most shamans remain local figures |
| pilgrimage | voluntary travel by an adherent to a sacred site to pay respects or participate in a ritual at the site |
| sacred sites | places or spaces people infuse with religious meaning |
| minarets | towers attached to a Muslim mosque, having one or more projecting balconies from which a crier calls Muslims to prayer |
| hajj | the muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, the birthplace of Muhammad |
| interfaith boundaries | boundaries between the world's major faiths  |
| intrafaith boundaries | boundaries within a single major faith |
| genocide | the systematic killing or extermination of an entire people of nation |
| activity spaces | the space within which daily activity occurs |
| religious fundamentalism | religious movement whose objectives are to return to the foundations of the faith and to influence state policy |
| religious extremism | religious fundamentalism carried to the point of violence |
| shari'a laws | the system of Islamic law, sometimes called Qu'ranic law; unlike most Western systems of law that are based on legal precedence; it is based on varying degrees of interpretation of the Qu'ran |
| jihad | a doctrine within Islam; commonly translated as "Holy War,"; it represents either a personal or collective struggle on the part of Muslims to live up to the religious standards set by the Qu'ran |
| animistic religions | centered on the belief that inanimate objects, such as mountains, boulders, rivers, and trees, possess spirits and should therefore be revered (worshiped) |