

Montclair State University Department of Anthropology
ANTH 140: Nonwestern Contributions to the Western World
Dr. Richard W. Franke

West and Non West

Week 01 Lecture 01

West and Non West

The learning objectives for week 01 are:

- to understand the origins and meaning of the terms Western and Nonwestern
- to understand the nature of racism and ethnocentrism and the reasons why anthropologists reject both of these beliefs

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Terms you should know for week 01 are:

- Indo-European language family
- Thermopylae
- Judeo-Christian-European cultural tradition
- ethnocentrism
- racism
- barbarian

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Sources:

1. West and NonWest

Bradford, Ernle. 1980. *The Battle for the West: Thermopylae*. New York: McGraw-Hill. A non-academic account of the battle in tremendous detail.

Burn, Andrew R., *Persia and the Greeks. The Defence of the West, c.546–478 B.C.* (1962 London) pages 342–363, 378–381, 406–422

Hammond, N. G. L. The expedition of Xerxes, in: the *Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed., vol.4, pages 518-590

Hignett, C. *Xerxes' invasion of Greece* (1963, Oxford), pages 113–148 and 356–378 (especially 371–378)

2. Ethnocentrism—What It Is and Why Anthropologists Reject It.

Patterson, Thomas C. 1997. *Inventing Western Civilization*. New York: Monthly Review Press. An archaeologist summarizes the history of racism and ethnocentrism along with comments on Europeans who rejected both.

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Sources:

3. Racism—the Genetic Version of Ethnocentrism and Why Anthropologists Reject It

Benedict, Ruth. 1940. *Race, Science, and Politics*. New York: The Viking Press. The classic US anthropological refutation.

Feldstein, Stanley. 1972. *The Poisoned Tongue: A Documentary History of American Racism and Prejudice*. New York: William Morrow & Company.

Gossett, Thomas F. 1997. *Race: The History of an Idea in America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Montagu, Ashley. 1997. *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: the Fallacy of Race*. Walnut Creek, California: AltaMira Press. 6th edition. The definitive encyclopedia of theories of racial superiority/inferiority and the biological and genetic refutations of them.

Two Common Definitions

- West as cultures speaking Indo-European languages
- West as cultures directly in historical line with Judeo-Christian and Greek traditions

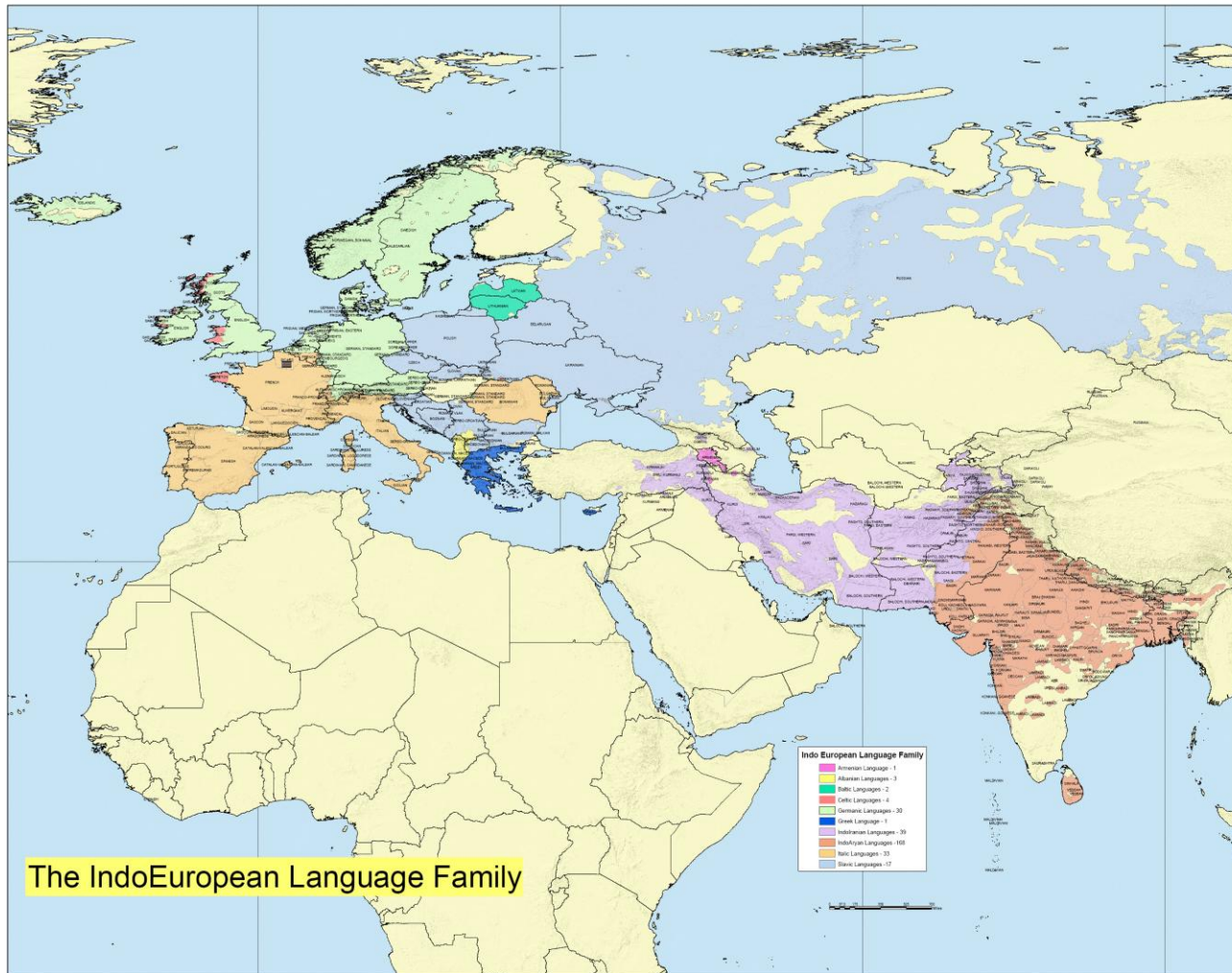
West as cultures speaking Indo-European languages

- Germanic: English, Dutch, Danish
- Latin or Romance (also called Italic): Spanish, French, Romanian
- Celtic: Gaelic, Welsh
- Slavic: Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian
- Persian
- Greek [Note: Greek is the only language in the Hellenic family]
- Sanskrit: Urdu, Hindi, Bengali

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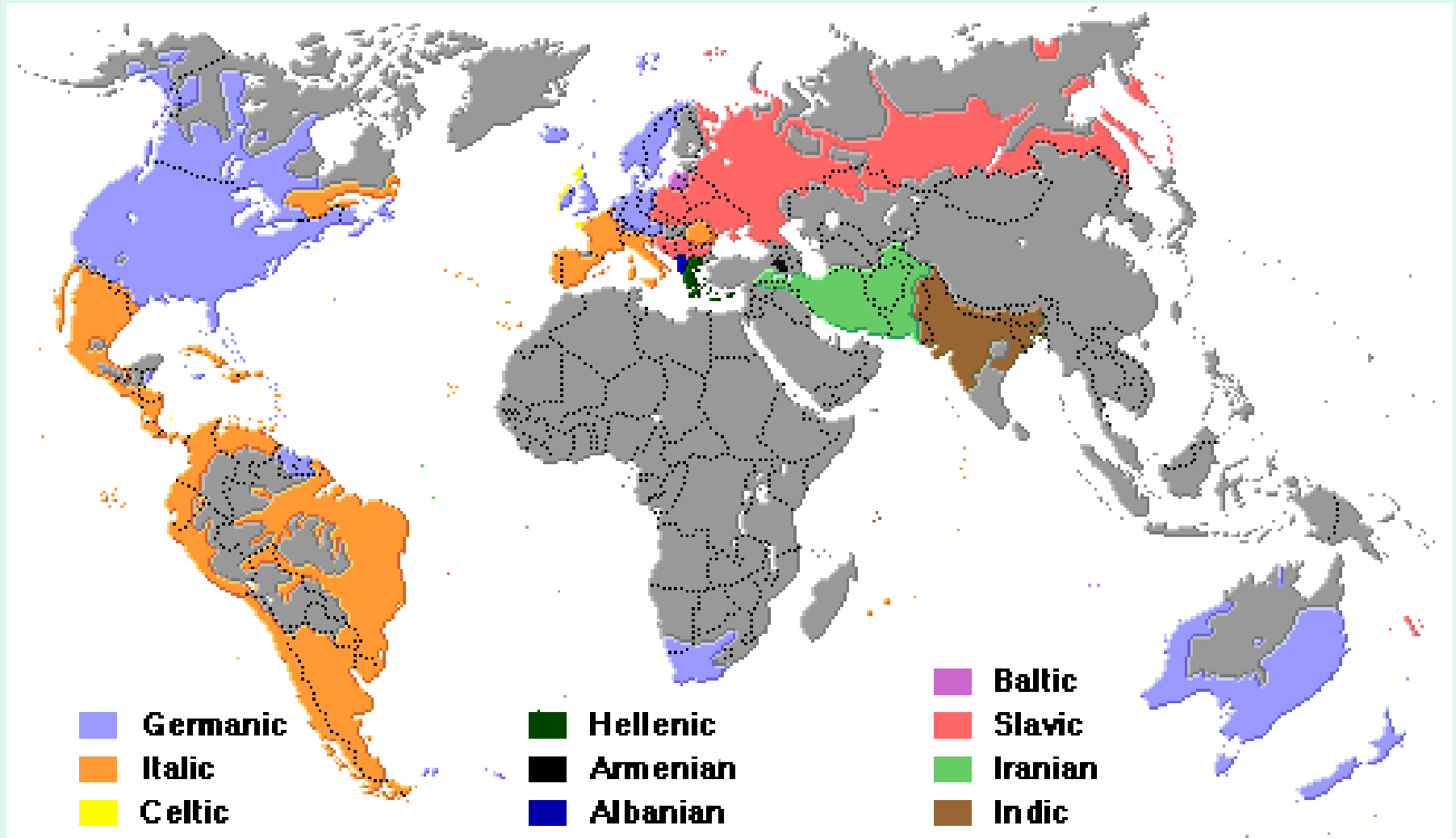
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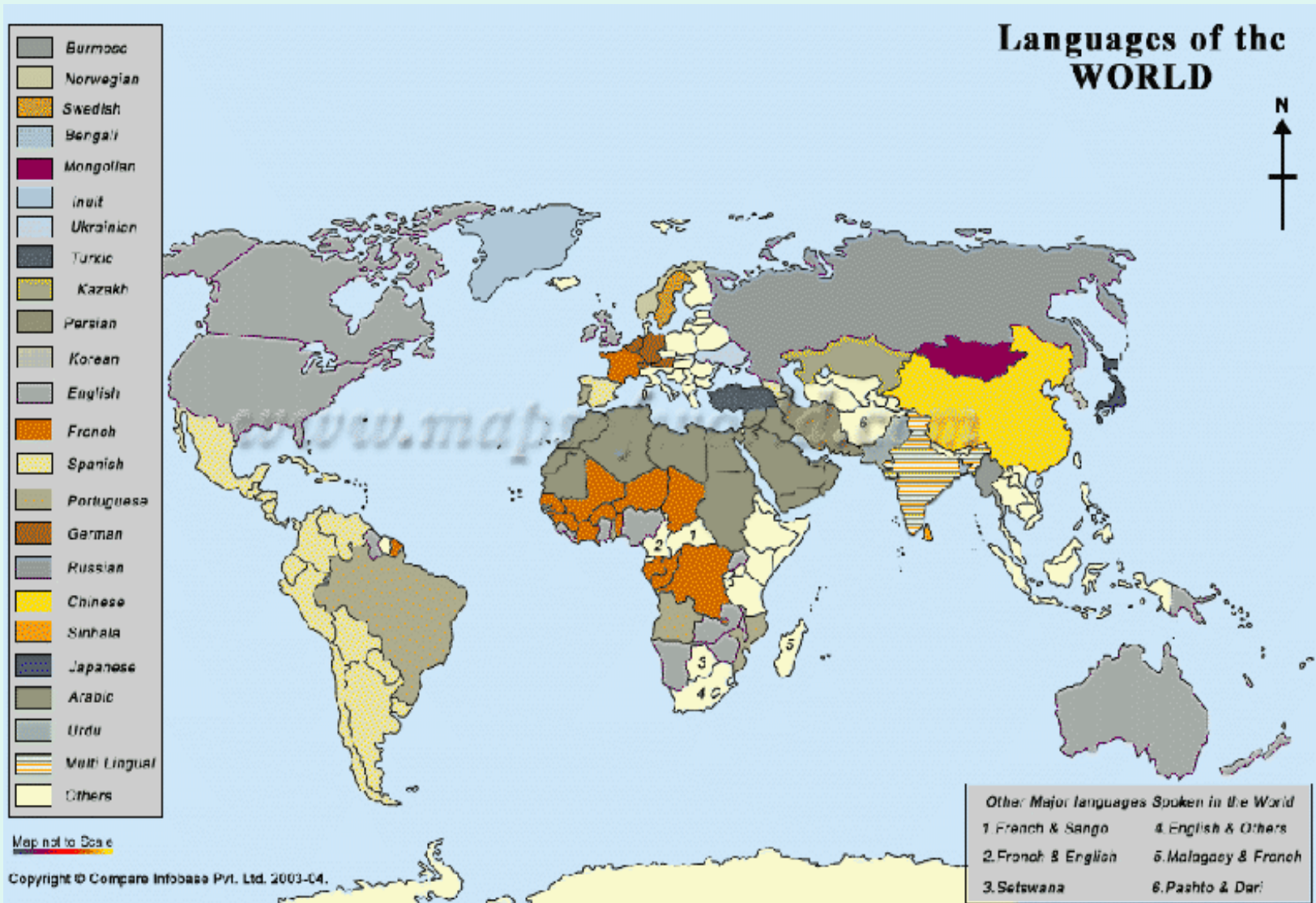
The IndoEuropean Language Family

Language classification and cartography by Dr. Stephen Huffman, www.gmi.org/wlms/users/huffman

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The Indo-European family of languages is fairly broadly distributed today -- embracing perhaps half of the world's inhabitable surface area. However, the Indo-European family is limited in origin to those tongues appearing first in Europe, the Middle East, and India. Elsewhere in the world, a number of language-families seem to be completely unrelated to proto-Indo-European. Here are some of **the general families for these *Non-Indo-European* languages:**

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- **ALTAIC**: A language family including Turkish, Tungusic, and Mongolian.
- **Uralic-Yukaghir (Central Asian)**: [Includes Hungarian, Finnish and Estonian]
- **AFROASIATIC**: A possible language family with two main branches-- Hamitic and Semitic. See Semitic on next slide.
- **KECHUMARAN**: A language family spoken in the Andes of South America.
- **KHOISAN**: A language family encompassing southwestern regions of Africa.
- **NIGER-KORDEFANIAN**: A group of languages spoken in the southern part of Africa
- **NILO-SAHARAN**: An African language family spoken in the central regions of the continent. [Includes the Bantu languages – see later in the course especially week 11]
- **SAMOYEDIC**: A group of Uralic languages spoken in northern Siberia. See Uralic on next slide.

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- **SEMITIC:** A language family including Akkadian, Amorite, Arabic, Ugaritic, Proto-Canaanite, Hebrew, Eblaite and Elamite.
- **SINO-TIBETAN:** A group of languages spoken in China, Tibet, and Burma, including Mandarin
- **SUMERIAN:** Sumerian is a difficult language to classify partly because it is the first known language to use a system of writing. Accordingly, it has no known roots. Adding to the difficulty, Akkadian languages supplanted it--so it leaves no known linguistic descendants. The language was agglutinative and limited to the areas around Kish and Uruk. It was largely monosyllabic and cannot be connected with any other known languages.
- **URALIC:** A language family including Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic.
- **UTO-AZTECAN:** A language family found in Central America and the western sections of North America.

[Thank you Dr. L. Kip Wheeler of Carson-Newman College in Tennessee]

- **In ancient times and historically, language families corresponded generally to cultural groupings.**
- **Important exceptions: Hebrew and Arabic are non Indo-European languages but their cultures have been intimately connected to Western cultures.**

- The Basque language of Europe is of unknown origin. It is non Indo-European
- Ancient Egyptian could also possibly be an Indo-European language. Or maybe not. See later in the course in week 08 on "Black Athena."

- Greek has up to 40% non Indo-European words – of unknown origin.
- Greek is the “least” Indo-European of the main Indo-European languages.
- This may have implications for our study of non Western contributions – see in week 08.

According to the [Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages](#) in October 2010, every two weeks one of the world's remaining 7,000 languages becomes extinct.

They state on their [website](#):

“Every two weeks the last fluent speaker of a language passes on and with him/her goes literally hundreds of generations of traditional knowledge encoded in these ancestral tongues.”

Nearly all the endangered
languages are among the non
Western groups.

In this course we will explore some of the knowledge and contributions of peoples who speak (or once spoke) such languages.

Definition 2: West as cultures directly in historical line with Judeo-Christian and Greek traditions

- This the main folk understanding of Western and non Western
- Western ethics and values from the Bible
- Western science, art, architecture and mathematics from the pre-Christian Greeks of the "Golden Age:" 600 to 300 BC

Why is the West called "the West?"

- Thermopylae means "hot springs"
- A place in the mountains of Greece north of Athens
- Many historians believe this term derives from the battle of Thermopylae

Why is the West called "the West?"

- In 480 BC Persians under King Xerxes attacked Greece; Greeks had won 10 years earlier at Marathon
- This just after the famous Peloponnesian wars
- Persian forces needed to get through a mountain pass at Thermopylae
- 30,000 Persians faced 600 Greeks, 300 of them Spartans under King Leonidas

Why is the West called “the West?”

- The Spartans fought to the last man, holding off the numerically superior Persian troops for several days
- The heroism and self-sacrifice of the Spartans is celebrated today even though they lost the battle
- Where were the Spartan positions? To the WEST of the Persians
- Greece also to the west of Persia (Iran)
- General view is that Greeks survived several attacks owing to their superior science and superior discipline

Definition 2: West as cultures directly in historical line with Judeo-Christian and Greek traditions

- Roman Empire based on Greek science
- In 312 AD Constantine made Christianity state religion of Rome
- But Roman empire collapsed in 476 AD

Definition 2: West as cultures directly in historical line with Judeo-Christian and Greek traditions

- Collapse of Rome led to European Middle Ages
- Medieval period lasted until about 1492 when...according to Weatherford (chapter 1) Indian gold and silver came on the scene – see the readings and lecture in week 02

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End of Week 01

Lecture 01

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