SOCI 101
INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY

PROFESSOR
KURT REYMERS, Ph.D.
(DR. K)

WWW.MORRISVILLE.EDU/SOCIOLOGY

Connectedness (Who Am I? A Part of the Main)

Theme: Connecting Self ↔ Society

No man, no man is an island
Way out on the water / all alone to stand

But I am / Tired of the dry land
Ready for a new shore / Ready to expand

You seem / Happy with your daydreams
Happy to just stand there / Rooted to the sand

But all along I know I had selfish motives
Everybody knows
That you can live

And give your life for love
Your life for love

Artists: Enter the Haggis
Song: Life for Love
Album: Casualties of Retail

Sociology in Poetry

No Man is an Island

...No man is an island, entire of itself.
Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were,
as well as if a manor of thy friends or of thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind
and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls it tolls for thee.

--- John Donne
Meditation XVII
"Devotions upon Emergent Occasions"
1624
C. What is Culture?

1. **Culture** refers to the symbols, values, behavior and material objects (artifacts) that together form a people's way of life.

   1. Sociologists like to point out that “Culture is to people like water is to fish.” In other words, we take our cultural knowledge and behavior for granted; it remains hidden in plain sight, not a part of our conscious experience. It seems natural to us, but it is not.

      **Culture ≠ Nature**

      **Ethnocentrism:** centered on one's own ethnicity (or culture), to the point where you cannot judge another culture on their own terms.

      **Culture Shock:** the disorientation experienced when confronted with a new set of norms and values.

2. How can we better understand the idea of culture? Culture is BOTH:

   a. **Material culture** – tangible, physical cultural artifacts.
      Example: paper money

   b. **Non-material culture** – intangible, mental cultural meanings.
      Example: value of a “dollar”

   It is through CULTURE that thought and action come together.

3. **Elements of Culture**

   There are four main elements to culture:

   a. **Symbols**
   b. **Language**
   c. **Values, Beliefs and Norms**
   d. **Artifacts**
C. What is Culture?

a. **Symbols**
A symbol is anything that carries a particular meaning recognized by people who share a culture.

Each of our social institutions is populated with a vast number of symbols which hold specific meaning to us.

Examples:
- economic institutions = $ € £ ¥
- religious institutions =    
- political institutions = 🇺🇸 🇦🇺 🇪🇺 🇵🇸
- language = W (Ω) ﻃ
- people = 

b. **Language and Communication**
A system of symbols that allows people to communicate with one another.

i. Origins: 3500 BC, Mesopotamia
Written language developed with civilization.

ii. Purpose: cultural transmission (through "memes")
Language passes on cultural ideas. How?
SELF ← culture/language/memes → SOCIETY

iii. Evolutionary linguistics is the scientific study of the psychosocial development and cultural evolution of languages

C. Components of Culture

c. **Values, Norms and Beliefs**

i. Values are culturally defined standards of desirability, goodness, and beauty, which serve as guidelines for social living. In an open society, values are always being debated. Variation exists in the meaning of values, these differences can lead to "Culture Wars," such as our current situation of having to choose between Freedom vs. Security - How is our culture of fear threatening our American value on freedom?

ii. Norms = ideals for social behavior
"Folkways": informal everyday conventions (saying "good afternoon")
"Mores": deeper ideals (virtue, justice – more strictly enforced)

iii. Beliefs are statements that people hold to be true.

Does Belief = Truth?
How do we KNOW what to BELIEVE?
See the "ways of knowing" from section B.
C. Components of Culture

d. Artifacts are: the wide range of material human creations that reflect underlying cultural values.

We place meaning into artifacts (all material artifacts are also symbolic and hold immaterial value).

Culture transmits meaning between selves through more or less successful memes.

Non-material cultural values are reflected in the material culture we value and possess.

4. Globalization of Culture

Is there a developing “global culture?”

A global culture may be developing in three ways:

a. The flow of goods
   - Material product trading has never been as important

b. The flow of information
   - There are few, if any, places left on earth where worldwide communication is not possible

c. The flow of people
   - Flow of information means people learn about places on earth where they feel life may be better