1. WHAT IS CULTURE?

- **E.B. Tylor - 1871**: “That complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society”

- **Enculturation**

**CULTURE IS LEARNED**

- Experience
- Observation
- Symbols
CULTURE IS SYMBOLIC
- Verbal and nonverbal symbols
- arbitrary and conventional
- No animal has elaborated cultural abilities to extent of Homo sapiens

CULTURE IS SHARED
- located in and transmitted through groups
  - Shared beliefs, values, memories, and expectations
  - Enculturation unifies people by providing common experiences

CULTURE AND NATURE
- Culture takes natural biological urges and teaches us to express them in particular ways
  - But isn’t it “natural”? 
CULTURE AND NATURE

• Culture takes natural biological urges and teaches us to express them in particular ways
  • But isn’t it “natural”?

CULTURE AND NATURE

• When nature calls...

...culture answers

CULTURE IS ALL-ENCOMPASSING

• To understand North American culture, one must consider television, fast-food restaurants, sports, and games
CULTURE IS INTEGRATED

- Cultures are integrated, patterned systems
  - If one part changes, other parts change
  - Core values

CULTURE IS INSTRUMENTAL, ADAPTIVE, AND MALADAPTIVE

- Humans have biological and cultural ways of coping with environmental stress and other basic psychological and physical needs.

CULTURE IS INSTRUMENTAL, ADAPTIVE, AND MALADAPTIVE

- What's good for an individual isn't necessarily good for the group
Many modern cultural patterns may be maladaptive in the long run.

2. CULTURE’S EVOLUTIONARY BASIS

- Similarities between humans and apes evident in anatomy, brain structure, genetics, and biochemistry
  - Hominid vs. Hominins

WHAT WE SHARE WITH OTHER PRIMATES

- Many human traits reflect that our primate ancestors lived in trees
  - Grasping ability and manual dexterity
  - Depth and color vision
  - Learning ability based on a large brain
  - Substantial parental investment in offspring
  - Tendencies toward sociality and cooperation
- Substantial gap between primate society and fully developed human culture
- Still, primates share similarities with humans:
  - Ability to learn and change behavior (hunting)
  - Tools, Aim and throw objects
HOW WE DIFFER FROM OTHER PRIMATES

• Cooperation and sharing are much more developed among humans
  • lack of visible estrus cycle and concealed ovulation and recreational mating
  • Strong tendency towards pair bonds for mating
    • Male parental investment
  • Humans have exogamy and kinship systems

3. UNIVERSALITY, GENERALITY, AND PARTICULARITY

• **Universal**: every culture
• **Generality**: some but not all societies
• **Particularity**: distinctive culture trait

UNIVERSALS AND GENERALITIES

• **Universality**
  • Biological: a long period of infant dependency, year-round sexuality, and a complex brain
  • Psychological: common ways in which humans think, feel, and process information
UNIVERSALS AND GENERALITIES

- Generalities
  - Diffusion
  - Colonization
  - Invention
  - Nuclear family

PARTICULARITY: PATTERNS OF CULTURE

- Particularity: Increasingly rare:
  - Diffusion
  - Independent invention
  - Borrowed traits are modified to fit the adopting culture

4. CULTURE AND THE INDIVIDUAL: AGENCY AND PRACTICE

- The “system” vs the “individual”
  - Contested (often violated: “real” vs “ideal”)
  - Culture is public and individual
  - We make and remake culture through daily actions
  - Practice theory: individuals within society have diverse motives
    - Gender, age, class
LEVELS OF CULTURE

- National culture
- International culture
- Subcultures

ETHNOCENTRISM, CULTURAL RELATIVISM, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

- Ethnocentrism – judgement, superiority
- Cultural relativism - cultural context
- Moral (ethical) relativism

Human rights: based on justice and morality beyond particular cultures
Cultural rights: vested in minorities and indigenous societies
Intellectual property rights (IPR): collective knowledge (cultural property)
5. MECHANISMS OF CULTURAL CHANGE

- Diffusion
  - Direct
  - Forced
  - Indirect

- Acculturation
  - pidgin
  - assimilation
  - time frame
  - Independent invention

6. GLOBALIZATION

- Globalization
  - Economic and political forces
  - Long-distance communication
  - Local resistance
GLOBALIZATION: ITS MEANING AND ITS NATURE

• Smith and Doyle: distinction between meanings of globalization
  1. Globalization as fact
     • Spread and connectedness of production, communication, and technologies across the world
     • New aspects: speed, scale, volume
  2. Globalization as contested ideology and policy
     • IMF, WTO

• Truly global economy
  • Based on knowledge and information
  • Transnational networks
  • Core activities proceed as a unit in real time
• Multinationals- over 2/3 of world trade
  • Youth: identities based on consumption
  • Influence national policy
• Gap between rich and poor