

Cultural Snapshot Assignment
CST 229: Intercultural Communication
Megan Tucker, George Mason University

I. LOC:

LOC 3: Engage in Communication Inquiry

LOC 8: Utilize Communication to Embrace Difference

LOC 9: Influence Civic Discourse

II. Length of Assignment:

This paper assignment takes about 1 month to complete, with weekly check-in drafts for each denoted section.

III. Materials Needed:

Most of the time this assignment is given in a virtual class, with a group or individual option (a majority choose to do the individual option). When given in-class the project is given as an individual assignment

IV. Instructions:

Cultural Snapshot Assignment
CST 229 Intercultural Communication

As we are learning through this class a culture can be defined as a system of knowledge and a way of looking at the world that is shared by a relatively large group of people. Cultural knowledge includes shared beliefs, values and attitudes that are developed over a period of time and communicated to other members of the culture through the significant symbols of the culture. As Hofstede suggests, we learn our culture as a type of mental programming that works much like the way the underlying code of a computer program works. The “code” of culture guides behavior and affects how we respond to people and situation.

The goal of this assignment is for you to research your culture and to develop a paper outlining what you have discovered. You are to contact members of your culture and seek out additional resources (our textbook, other books, web sites, and the like) as needed.

You will submit drafts of each section on the Sunday of the corresponding week at 11:59 p.m. On Week 5 the final copy will be due to Blackboard by Sunday at 11:59p.m.

Upon completion of this analysis you will present me with an individual paper which answers, in detail (providing examples to support your answers when appropriate), to the following questions below:

Defining Culture as a Part of Identity (Draft due Week 1)

1. How do you define your culture?

Please Note: in answering this question consider the following: Usually we think of defining our culture in terms of nationality or a country of origin. One may say, for instance, I am Polish, or Polish-American. Groups of people may also define themselves in light of ethnic or racial characteristics. A person's sense of identity may also be rooted in a religious heritage or any other demographic aspect such as gender, sexual orientation, social class or in light of membership in an age cohort. Sometimes, an organizational structure such as being affiliated with the military or a particular type of community such as a rural community or a vacation spot can also serve as a way of defining our culture.

2. Are there particular values that are especially meaningful to your culture?

Please note: Examine how Hofstede has contrasted two types of cultural orientations: Individualistic cultures emphasize the independence and autonomy of an individual. In individualistic cultures a person is self-directed and pursues individual goals or strives to please oneself. Collectivistic cultures emphasize the harmony of the group and the pursuit of group goals over individual endeavors. This may mandate greater conformity and concerns about the security of the group as a whole. Provide examples for your answer.

Family Structure and Traditions (Draft due Week 2)

3. What are some (list a couple) of the customs or family traditions that you have learned as a member of your culture? Provide some examples.

4. How do the rules and traditions of your culture affect the way that family members relate to one another? For instance, do people in the family have certain roles or particular levels of status based on cultural traditions? Provide some examples.

5. How do factors such as religion or a cultural philosophy of life affect family communication? Provide some examples.

6. How does your family culture affect the formation of gender roles? Provide some examples.

Culture & Speech Communities-Significant Symbols & Communication Norms (Draft due Week 3)

7. Is a language other than English used in your household? If so-what language(s) are spoken?

8. What are some examples of nonverbal communication that you can trace to your culture? For instance attitudes of what is required, expected or desirable nonverbal expressiveness, or rules that govern nonverbal behavior.

9. How does your family trace its roots? Is there, for instance, a story about how members of your family came to the U.S. or are there important historical events that led your family's decision to immigrate? Are there specific places such as an ancestral home or particular hometown that members of the family relate to in order to find a sense of rootedness?

10. How does your culture teach you to relate to people in other communities? For instance, are there rules or expectations about how to relate to people outside of your own community?
Work and Leisure

11. What are some of the values and attitudes related to work in your culture? What kind of work is meaningful? How important is work or professional standing in the ways that members of your community develop a self-concept?

12. How important is leisure? What are important games or leisure time activities that people in your culture enjoy? Do these activities teach attitudes and values?

Living in a Post-Modern World (Draft due Week 4)

13. How much does your cultural community embrace technology?

14. How adaptive is your cultural community to social and cultural changes, especially in light of issues confronted by living in a fast-paced, transient world on the move?

15. Are members of your culture able to preserve a sense of distinctive cultural identity in a pluralistic (multi-cultural) environment?

Summary

16. Overall, what do you think you like best about your culture? How is this a source of cultural pride?

17. What is the most important thing you learned about how your own culture affects your self-concept and how you communicate?

As stated above you are to answer these questions and present this to me as a paper. The format of this paper should follow the format above-with you writing out the questions and answering them (complete with your examples) below the question in paragraph format using APA style. Once completed this can be submitted to me by the due date (anytime before, but not after) and in accordance with the instructions posted in our blackboard course.

V. Rubric or Scoring Guide:

Class: CST 229-_____ Student Name:_____

A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This paper was excellent! The research and style more than exceeded expectations. Please pay attention to any areas noted that need slight adjustment.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This paper was good! Don't let your writing and research skills fall below your current level. There are some areas to work on which have been noted.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This paper was average. Clear effort was made, and there were some strengths. But more research and edits are needed to increase the quality of the document.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This paper was poor. A lot of improvement is needed. While one or two areas may have been well developed, there is a lot to learn in terms of how to do better next time.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failing. This paper was very poor or not submitted. Significant improvement is needed. Preparation and editing was either last minute or not done.

<u>Category</u>	<i>Very poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
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<u>Content</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear. - Appropriate - Accurate - Relevant - Exhaustive research on culture 					
<u>Structure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy to follow. - Organization - APA Style Used Effectively. 					
<u>Supporting Material</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Source quality. - Source citation. 					
<u>Grammar</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Punctuation - Avoiding Run-on Sentences - Proper English 					
COMMENTS: 					

VI. Notes:

The paper is graded on a 100 point scale using the evaluation form above. Specific comments or track changes are put directly on the document via Blackboard.

VII. References: *List all sources, using APA formatting.*

Hofstede, G. (2011). Dimensionalizing cultures: The Hofstede Model in context. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.9707/2307-0919.1014>