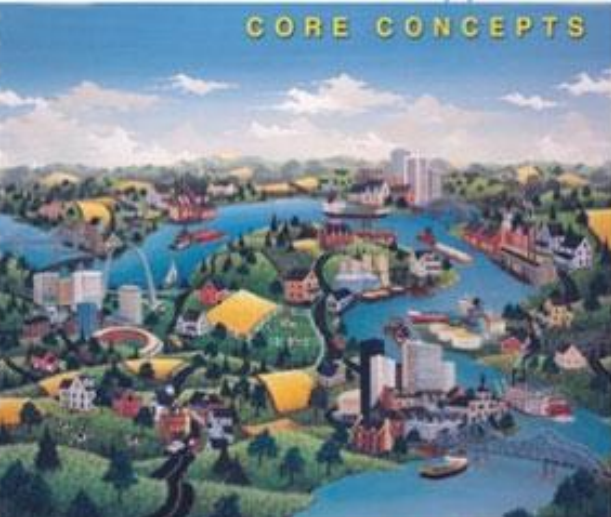


SOLUTIONS MANUAL



Third Edition
SOCIOLOGY
A Down-to-Earth Approach
CORE CONCEPTS



James M. Henslin

Instructor's Manual

for

Henslin

Sociology **A Down-to-Earth Approach** **Core Concepts**

Third Edition

prepared by

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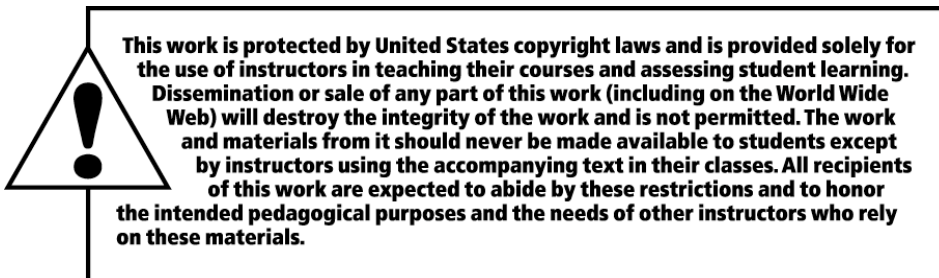
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THE BLOCKBUSTER APPROACH: A GUIDE TO TEACHING SOCIOLOGY WITH VIDEO

INTRODUCTION

The Great American Film: A Part of Americana

Everyone has a favorite. Some are timeless classics and others recent box office hits. Some attempt to duplicate reality while others are animated fantasies of some futuristic catastrophe. The variations in style and content have no boundaries. But they all have something in common. Movies have become a major part of the American culture. They represent the way people think, their value systems, beliefs, and aspirations. Movies can help us make sense out of the world. They contribute towards establishing a feeling of solidarity and can be instruments of social change or maintaining the status quo. They help us develop a concept of self and give us a sense of identity. And in addition to all of this, they permit us to escape our daily routines, relax, and be entertained.

The highly complex, technical marvel of film that we take for granted today traces its beginning to the genius and inspiration of Thomas Edison. On May 9, 1893, Edison previewed the Kinetoscope at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. In his patent application, Edison described the Kinetoscope as “a device that would do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear.” For nearly ten years, this new concept of motion pictures had a minimum impact on the lives of average Americans. Perhaps the greatest contribution made by motion pictures in the first ten years was the production of documentaries related to the Spanish American War of 1898. It wasn’t until 1903 that the commercially-released film *The Great Train Robbery* made an appreciable impact on the American public. In their silent format, films continued to grow in popularity. The first talking movie, *Don Juan*, was released by Warner Brothers in 1926 but it failed to win over the industry or the public as a superior form of entertainment over the well established silent films. It wasn’t until *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson, was released a year later that the “talkies” were accepted by the studios and movie goers alike as the wave of the future. Taking in \$3.5 million dollars, a tidy sum in the late 20s, *The Jazz Singer* demonstrated just how lucrative the film industry could be. In 1930, a *Fortune* magazine stated, “The advent of American talking movies is beyond comparison the fastest and most amazing revolution in the whole history of industrial revolutions.”

Since the effective union of sound and picture, the movie industry has experienced a number of other significant changes and innovations. Technicolor, Cinemascope, computer animation, and unbelievable advancements in special effects have added stark realism to even the most unbelievable scenes. But perhaps the greatest change in consumerism related to the film industry is the advent of the inexpensive video cassette recorder and video tape. Movies have become a staple of American home life. Even though nothing beats the “big silver screen” for effect, the video cassette allows families to view their favorite films over and over. They have also become an innovative tool in education, making it possible to use the entertaining value of a multi-million dollar production to illustrate a basic educational concept.

Today, the industry grosses over nine billion dollars a year, earning \$9.37 billion in 2002 and \$9.27 billion in 2003. One studio alone, Disney, accounted for over three billion dollars in box office receipts in 2003, making it the first studio to reach the three billion dollar mark in a single year. These numbers alone prove Americans love their movies, in all their forms. Although every film may not be a model for the classroom, many certainly are. Regardless of their genre... westerns, love stories, action/adventure, docu-dramas, science fiction, horror films, and even animated fairy tales...movies have the potential to be a major part of classroom pedagogy. This is especially true in the social sciences. The purpose of this guide is to introduce instructors to the use of videos in their courses, both for introductory courses and upper level courses. To do so will add a sense of entertainment, diversity, and challenge that add a special inspiration to the learning process.

Video as Pedagogy

The use of film as a teaching aid in the classroom has been quite common in both the K-12 curriculum and in college courses. Initially, the 16 mm reel to reel projector was the primary tool used to show films. The films shown were usually educationally based documentaries or lessons on specific topics. They were often expensive to rent and available for viewing only for a specified period of a few days. To purchase it, a well made 16 mm educational film often costs several hundred dollars.

The introduction of the inexpensive video cassette player approximately twenty years ago added an entirely new dimension to the use of film in the classroom. Although the cost of renting or purchasing documentaries has remained relatively unchanged, the ease in which a video cassette can be shown to the class is a considerable improvement over the 16 mm reel to reel effort. Rooms no longer need to be darkened, tapes seldom break, and the equipment is much more reliable. Specific segments of a film can be paused for discussion or rewound and watched again for emphasis. Tapes can be easily stored and transported from one classroom to another. In addition, the video cassette opens an almost limitless supply of inexpensive documentaries, docu-dramas, and commercially made movies that can be adapted to lessons in sociology, psychology, history, and many other disciplines.

To effectively use a commercially made movie in the classroom, however, requires greater preparation and screening on the part of the instructor. Traditional documentaries and other films dedicated to the education market are designed to convey specific information on a specific topic. The lesson is prepared by education professionals in a manner and style consistent with proper pedagogical technique, language, and purpose. They are usually restricted to a time frame consistent with the duration of an average class. Although the commercially released video cassette of a Hollywood film may be more interesting and entertaining, the emphasis of the producer is to “entertain” and not necessarily to “educate.” In view of this, Hollywood films that may convey excellent examples of concepts, perspectives, or historical events may also spend considerable time in developing a plot using fictitious characters. The language used in the film, as well as certain scenes, may be offensive. In addition, a Hollywood film cannot stand alone as a complete lesson in lieu of quality instruction or replace an academic effort on the part of the student. The commercial film is primarily used to illustrate and not to substitute. The Hollywood

film will also average two hours in length. To show a commercial movie in a typical college class would consume an entire week's class time. In view of these considerations, the instructor should either confine the showing of a commercial film to specific clips in class that have been previewed as appropriate and most pertinent to the purpose the film is being used, or assign the film as an out of class assignment.

When an appropriate movie is chosen to illustrate a concept or perspective, it stimulates the imagination of students and advances sociological thinking. With twists in plots and changing scenarios, students will ask questions and question answers. As Peter Berger exclaimed, "Things are not what they seem," especially in the plot of a good mystery or action/adventure film.

Film can be an excellent instrument to either advance or challenge social change. In 1915, *The Birth of a Nation* became a landmark film that set the stage for race relations for decades. Described as a controversial, explicitly racist, but landmark American masterpiece, the film blamed the newly freed African American slaves for the social ills of the time. Gaining widespread acceptance by the public, the film earned over \$18 million, making it the highest grossing film for over two decades following its release. Highly popular, it was featured at a private screening in the White House where President Woodrow Wilson commented, "It's like writing history with lightning. And my only regret is that it is all terribly true." Still considered as delivering a powerful message, the film was used for years as a recruitment tool by the Ku Klux Klan. Other, more contemporary films, addressing social change and race relations include *Men of Honor* (2000),⁹ *American History X* (1998), *Mississippi Burning* (1988), and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1962).

A common criticism of Hollywood has been that movies reinforce stereotypes of the sexes. Male characters usually outnumber female characters. Leading men are often significantly older than the leading lady to whom they are paired. Gender age is reinforced with older men usually being portrayed as wise, innovative, and courageous as they come to the rescue of the "damsel in distress". Even though many movies continue to express these views, there are others that break the mold of male dominance. In *A League of Their Own* (1992), women demonstrate their effectiveness as baseball players replacing the men who have gone off to fight in World War II. Michelle Yeoh and Halle Barry have redefined the role of the leading lady in the James Bond films and Lara Croft, an adventure seeking archeologist, is the essence of a new gender image. An organized effort to dispel sexism in the movies is led by the organization Women Make Movies. Its executive director, Debra Zimmerman, has said, "I believe that social change happens one person at a time." As a part of the feminist movement, Women Make Movies is the largest distributor of films and videos by and about women in North America.

Typical Assignments

An instructor may elect to show a clip from a movie that illustrates a specific concept or presents a specific scenario relative to the course content being studied. He or she may then solicit individual comments from the class based on their observations, conclusions, and concerns.

If appropriate, the instructor can divide the class into small groups and assign each group a different perspective on the video clip viewed. For example, does Lara Croft present the essence of a new gender image, or does she simply present a new stereotype of women that seeks to replace the present one? A spokesperson from each group can share their conclusions with the class to further advance the exercise.

Take home assignments in the form of short papers can be made that address a specific theme of the clips shown in class. In some cases, several movies that address the same theme can be offered as the source of the essay, permitting the student to choose the particular movie that appeals most to them for the assignment. Such assignments can sometimes be used for extra credit. A choice of assignments can be made part way through the semester after students have been exposed to sufficient theory and subject matter to grasp the assignment. Due dates can be set that permit sufficient time for students to make oral presentations on their papers or to use specific papers that are matched to the proper chapters under study.

A few examples of the general essay themes include the following:

- How is the concept of symbolic interactionism conveyed through the content of the movie *Shrek*?
- How does the movie *Antz* portray the concept of structural functionalism?
- Choose one of the three major sociological perspectives (Symbolic Interactionism, Structural Functionalism, or the Conflict Perspective) and apply it to the film *Apollo 13*.
- After viewing *Donnie Brasco*, *Pulp Fiction*, or *The Godfather*, present a single theory of deviance that would explain the behavior of the criminals featured in the movie. Apply the specific traits of the theory chosen to the characters, providing examples of their behavior that support this application in the movie's content.

In this guide, there are twenty topics that are comparable to the chapter headings in most introductory textbooks. Each topic includes at least two movies featured in detail with specific assignments and suggestions for class use. A number of other films are also included for the instructor's consideration, along with a brief description of the film and suggested exercises.

Using the Uncut Video and Not the Television Version

Although many of the films suggested in this guide may be shown by the major television networks, it is suggested the video cassette version be used by students rather than reliance on the version released to the major networks. Between the dubbing out of selected phrases and scenes, movies released to the networks are often cut in content. *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991), for example, was cut by 29 minutes when shown on network television. *The Fisher King* (1991) was cut by 25 minutes. Even the PG-13 rated *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993) that was described as "a crowd pleasing comedy" was cut by fifteen minutes. Movies shown on the premium movie channels such as HBO, Starz, Showtime, and Cinemax are usually uncut and would be

acceptable substitutes for the video cassette. The only drawback to relying on the televised versions of the films are if they are offered during the course of the semester. Since a student viewing a movie on a premium channel would be doing so for personal use, it would not be illegal for them to copy it on their own video cassette recorder if they have the capability to do so.

Being Sensitive to Situational Factors and Student Values

The subject of “gratuitous sex and violence” is often raised as an issue associated with television shows is especially true for movies. In order to avoid subjecting students to material they consider indecent or offensive, the instructor must be sensitive to individual student values when assigning movies and showing clips in class. The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) offers a rating system that may be used to guide the choice of movies, especially when a specific movie is suggested for an assignment. This does not prohibit using a clip from a movie rated “R” or “NC-17,” but it does suggest caution to see that the clip used is not inappropriate. In addition, when making take-home assignments based on movies, the student should have some flexibility or alternative in selecting a film consistent with their personal values. As a part of the synopsis provided on each movie, the MPAA rating is included, as well as applicable notes of caution for each film.

The Ratings System of the Motion Picture Association of America

To facilitate the selection of films for use, the ratings used by the MPAA will be a part of every movie featured in this guide. The abbreviations and their explanations are as follows:

G	General Audiences	All ages admitted.
PG	Parental Guidance Suggested	Some material may not be suitable for children.
PG-13	Parents Strongly Cautioned	Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
R	Restricted	Children under 17 require accompaniment parent or adult guardian.
NC-17	No Children Under 17 Admitted	Age may vary in certain areas.

It is noted the abbreviations GP, M, and X and no longer used to classify films.

Legalities

Educators should be familiar with the copyright laws of the jurisdiction or country where the video is being shown. In the United States, instructors utilizing video tape for educational purposes in a classroom setting are covered by the “face-to-face teaching exemption,” Section 110 (1) of the copyright law. To fall under this exemption, the video must be a legitimate copy (not copied from broadcast or another video), shown in a classroom of a non-profit educational institution for instructional purposes only (F.A.C.T., 1987). Viewing in other settings, or for which admission is charged, is not acceptable. Many video stores include clauses in their membership contracts which forbid rental of their videos for any use other than home viewing. If such a contractual agreement exists, it supercedes any rights offered under the “face to face exemption” (F.A.C.T. 1987).

The Blockbuster Approach

Video suggestions can be found concluding each of the Instructor’s Manual chapters. *Please note the videos suggested here are not always part of Allyn & Bacon’s video library.*

Videos and teaching suggestions can be found in the Teaching Tool section of the Instructor’s Manual and online in the Video Professor section of the Companion Website for *Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*, 7th edition (<http://www.ablongman.com/henslin>).

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Chapter One: The Sociological Perspective

Chapter Summary

Sociology offers a perspective—a view of the world—that stresses that people’s social experiences underlie their behavior. For C. Wright Mills, this is the interaction of biography and history.

Sociology emerged during the upheavals of the Industrial Revolution. Early sociologists such as Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Harriet Martineau focused on how the sweeping social changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution affected human behavior.

Weber believed that in order to understand others’ behavior, sociologists must try to see the world from their perspective (*Verstehen*). Durkheim stressed the importance of uncovering the objective social conditions that influence behavior (social facts).

In the early years of sociology, only a few wealthy women received an advanced education. Harriet Martineau was an Englishwoman who wrote about social life in Great Britain and the United States and published a book titled *Society in America*.

In North America, departments of sociology began to be established at the end of the nineteenth century. In the early years, the contributions of women and minorities were largely ignored.

Pure sociology is research whose only purpose is to make discoveries, while applied sociology is the use of sociology to solve social problems in settings ranging from the workplace to the family.

A theory is a general statement about how sets of facts are related to one another. Because no one theory encompasses all of reality, sociologists use three primary theoretical frameworks: (1) symbolic interactionism, concentrating on how people use symbols to develop and share their views of the world, usually focuses on the micro level; (2) functional analysis, stressing that society is made up of various interrelated parts which, when working properly, contribute to the stability of society, focuses on the macro level; and (3) conflict theory, emphasizing that social life is based on a competitive struggle to gain control over scarce resources, also focuses on the macro level.

Sociologists conduct research about almost every area of human behavior. The choice of research topics depends on the sociologist’s interests, the availability of subjects, the appropriateness of methods, and ethical considerations.

Sociological research is needed because common sense ideas are often incorrect and based on limited information.

Eight basic steps are included in scientific research: (1) selecting a topic, (2) defining the problem, (3) reviewing the literature, (4) formulating a hypothesis, (5) choosing a research method, (6) collecting the data, (7) analyzing the results, and (8) sharing the results.

Sociologists use six research methods (or research designs) for gathering data: (1) surveys, (2) participant observations, (3) secondary analysis, (4) documents, (5) unobtrusive measures, and (6) experiments. The choice of a research method depends on the research questions to be answered, the researcher's access to potential subjects, the resources available, the researcher's background and training, and ethical considerations.

In the past, sociologists used to ignore the world of women, although that is no longer the case. However, in some kinds of research, the gender of the researcher can affect the findings.

Ethics are of concern to sociologists, who are committed to openness, honesty, truth, and protecting subjects.

Sociologists agree that sociological research should be value free but disagree concerning the proper purposes and uses of social research. Some believe its purpose should be only to advance the understanding of human behavior; others feel that its goal should be to investigate harmful social arrangements and reform society.

Sociology today is coming closer to its roots of applying sociological knowledge to social change, and two major trends are applied sociology and globalization. This latter trend is likely to broaden the scope of sociological inquiry beyond its traditional concentration on U.S. society.

What's New in Henslin's Core Concepts 3rd Edition?

- *Down-to-Earth Sociology* box. Careers in Sociology: What Applied Sociologists Do.
Example of Daniel Knap
- *Cultural Diversity in the United States* box. Studying Job Discrimination: Another Surprising Example of Applied Sociology
- Billboards that display your name and a personal message by reading information from your car key as an example of unobtrusive measures
- Updated Research:
 - Wade, 2007
 - Statistical Abstract, 2007
 - Galliher et al., 2004

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading Chapter 1, you should be able to:

1. Explain the sociological perspective: what it is, what it offers, and why C. Wright Mills referred to it as “the intersection of biography (the individual) and history (the social factors that influence the individual).”
2. Know what is meant by social location and how it helps people define themselves and helps others define them.
3. Understand how sociology is applicable to the growing global world.
4. Discuss the social changes—and the changing social conditions—which fostered the development of sociology as a distinct academic discipline in the middle of the nineteenth century.
5. Identify and critique the sociological contributions of the following mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth century European sociologists: Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Harriet Martineau.
6. Understand how and why levels of social integration may affect rates of suicide and how Emile Durkheim’s nineteenth century study of suicide helped demonstrate how social forces affect people’s behaviors.
7. Explain the role of values in social research as prescribed by Max Weber, and the ensuing controversies over whether sociological research can be and/or should be value free.
8. Discuss why there were so few women sociologists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and how the contributions of women sociologists during this time period were received and evaluated by their male counterparts.
9. Trace the history of sociology in North America from the late 1800s to the present time, identifying the specific sociological contributions of the following American sociologists: Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Talcott Parsons, and C. Wright Mills.
10. Understand the historical tensions and ongoing debates in North American sociology between social reform and social analysis, and discuss how the sociological contributions of Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Talcott Parsons, and C. Wright Mills fit into the tensions and debates.
11. Explain what applied sociologists do, the careers that applied sociologists may have, and how some applications of sociology such as capturing Saddam Hussein or the study of job discrimination are examples of applied sociology.
12. Define what is meant by theory and explain why it is an important part of sociology.
13. Identify the three major theoretical perspectives in sociology—symbolic interactionism, functional analysis, and conflict theory—and describe the particular level of analysis, characteristics, viewpoints, and concerns that are associated within each.
14. Apply each of the three sociological perspectives to a contemporary issue such as the increasing rates of divorce in America.
15. Explain why there is a need for sociological research.
16. List and describe the eight basic steps for conducting scientific research.
17. Know and discuss the six research methods that sociologists use, the tools that they employ, and the strengths and limitations of each.

18. Define, describe, and discuss the significance of the following terms associated with the research process: hypothesis, variable, independent variable, dependent variable, correlation, spurious correlation, operational definitions, validity, reliability, causation, replication, and generalizability.
19. Define, describe, and discuss the significance of the following terms associated with the six research methods: survey, population, sample, random sample, stratified random sample, questionnaires, self-administered questionnaires, interview, interviewer bias, structured interviews, closed-ended questions, unstructured interviews, open-ended questions, rapport, participant observation, secondary analysis, documents, unobtrusive measures, experiment, experimental group, and control group.
20. Know the ethical guidelines that sociologists are expected to follow and discuss the ethical issues raised in Mario Brajuha's and Laud Humphrey's research.
21. Describe the current trends that are shaping the future of sociology in the United States, and how globalization, in particular, may expand American sociology's horizons in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. The Sociological Perspective

- A. This perspective is important because it provides a different way of looking at familiar worlds. It allows us to gain a new vision of social life.
- B. This perspective stresses the broader social context of behavior by looking at individuals' social location—employment, income, education, gender, age, and race—and by considering external influences—people's experiences—which are internalized and become part of a person's thinking and motivations. We are thus able to see the links between what people do and the social settings that shape their behavior.
- C. This perspective enables us to analyze and understand both the forces that contribute to the emergence and growth of the global village and our unique experiences in our own smaller corners of this village.

II. The Origins of Sociology

- A. Sociology developed in the middle of the nineteenth century when European social observers began to use scientific methods to test their ideas. The following four factors led to its development:
 1. The social upheaval in Europe as a result of the Industrial Revolution, which led to changes in the way people lived their lives;
 2. The political revolutions in America and France, which encouraged people to rethink their ideas about social life;
 3. The development of imperialism; as the Europeans conquered other nations, they came in contact with different cultures and began to ask why cultures varied;
 4. The success of the natural sciences created a desire to apply scientific methods to find answers for the questions being raised about the social world.

- B. Auguste Comte coined the term “sociology” and suggested the use of positivism—applying the scientific approach to the social world—but he did not utilize this approach himself. Comte believed that this new science should not only discover sociological principles, but apply them to social reform.
- C. Herbert Spencer viewed societies as evolutionary, coined the term “the survival of the fittest,” and became known for social Darwinism. Spencer was convinced that no one should intervene in the evolution of society and that attempts at social reform were wrong.
- D. Karl Marx, whose ideas about social classes and class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was the foundation of the conflict perspective, believed that class conflict was the key to human history. Marx believed that conflict and struggle would end only with a revolution by the working class.
- E. Emile Durkheim played an important role in the development of sociology.
 - 1. One of his primary goals was to get sociology recognized as a separate academic discipline.
 - 2. He was interested in understanding the social factors that influence individual behavior; he studied suicide rates among different groups and concluded that social integration—the degree to which people are tied to their social group—was a key social factor in suicide.
 - 3. Durkheim’s third concern was that social research be practical; sociologists should not only diagnose the causes of social problems but develop solutions for them.
- F. Max Weber was one of the most influential of all sociologists, raising issues that remain controversial today. Disagreeing with Karl Marx, Weber defined religion as a central force in social change (i.e., Protestantism encourages greater economic development and was the central factor in the rise of capitalism in some countries).
 - 1. The Protestant belief system encouraged its members to embrace change.
 - 2. Protestants sought “signs” that they were in God’s favor; financial success became a major sign. The more money they made, the more secure they were about their religious standing.
 - 3. Weber called this behavior the *Protestant ethic*; he called their readiness to invest capital in order to make more money the *spirit of capitalism*.

III. Sexism in Early Sociology

- A. In the early years of sociology, the field was dominated by men because rigidly defined social roles prevented most women from pursuing an education.
 - 1. Women were supposed to devote themselves to the four K’s: *Kirche, Küchen, Kinder, und Kleider* (church, cooking, children, and clothes).
 - 2. At the same time, a few women from wealthy families managed to get an education; some even studied sociology, though the sexism in the universities stopped them from earning advanced degrees, becoming professors, or having their research recognized.
- B. Harriet Martineau studied social life in both Great Britain and the United States, publishing *Society in America* decades before Durkheim and Weber were born. While her original research has been largely ignored by the discipline, she is known for her translations of Comte’s ideas into English.

IV. Sociology in North America

- A. The first departments of sociology in the United States were at the University of Kansas (1892), Atlanta University (1897), and the University of Chicago (1899); the first in Canada was at McGill University (1922).
 - 1. Albion Small, founder of the department of sociology at the University of Chicago, also established the *American Journal of Sociology*.
 - 2. The department of sociology at the University of Chicago dominated North American sociology; other early sociologists from the University of Chicago were Robert E. Park, Ernest Burgess, and George Herbert Mead.
- B. The situation of women in North America was similar to that of European women, and their contributions to sociology met a similar fate. Denied a role in universities, many turned to social activism, working with the poor and were regarded to be social workers.
- C. Jane Addams is an example of a sociologist who was able to combine the role of sociologist with that of social reformer.
 - 1. In 1889, she founded Hull House, a settlement house for the poor, and worked to bridge the gap between the powerful and powerless.
 - 2. Sociologists from nearby University of Chicago visited Hull House frequently.
 - 3. She is the only sociologist to have won the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to her in 1931.
- D. African American professionals also faced problems.
 - 1. W. E. B. Du Bois was the first African American to earn a Ph.D. from Harvard. He conducted extensive research on race relations in the United States, publishing one book a year on this subject between 1896 and 1914.
 - 2. Despite his accomplishments, he encountered prejudice and discrimination in both his professional and personal life. When he attended professional sociologists' meetings, he was not permitted to eat or stay in the same hotels as the white sociologists.
 - 3. Frustrated at the lack of improvements in race relations, he turned to social action, helping to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) along with Jane Addams, Florence Kelley, and others from Hull House.
 - 4. Until recently, his contributions to sociology were overlooked.
- E. Many early North American sociologists combined the role of sociologist with that of social reformer. University of Chicago sociologists Park and Burgess studied many urban problems and offered suggestions on how to alleviate them. By the 1940s, as sociologists became more concerned with establishing sociology as an academic discipline, the emphasis shifted from social reform to social theory.
 - 1. Talcott Parsons developed abstract models of society to show how the parts of society harmoniously work together.
 - 2. Countering this development was C. Wright Mills, who urged sociologists to get back to social reform. He saw the emergence of the *power elite* as an imminent threat to freedom.
- F. The debate over what should be the proper goals of sociological analysis—analyzing society vs. reforming society—continues today.
 - 1. Applied sociology exists between these two extremes. One of the first attempts at applied sociology was the founding of the NAACP.

2. Today, applied sociologists work in a variety of settings, from business and high-tech organizations to government and not-for-profit agencies.
3. Applied sociology is the application of sociological knowledge in some specific setting, rather than an attempt to rebuild society. Both sociologists who focus on social reform and those who emphasize basic sociology reject applied sociology.

V. Theoretical Perspectives in Sociology

- A. Theory is a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work; it is an explanation of how two or more facts are related to one another. Sociologists use three different theoretical perspectives to understand social behavior.
- B. Symbolic interactionism views symbols, things to which we attach meaning, as the basis of social life.
 1. Through the use of symbols, people are able to define relationships to others; to coordinate actions with others, thereby making social life possible; and to develop a sense of oneself.
 2. A symbolic interactionist studying divorce would focus on how the changing meanings of marriage, family, and divorce have all contributed to the increase in the rate of divorce in U.S. society.
- C. The central idea of functional analysis is that society is a whole unit, made up of interrelated parts that work together.
 1. To understand society, we must look at both structure (how the parts of society fit together to make up the whole) and function (how each part contributes to society).
 2. Robert Merton used the term function to refer to the beneficial consequences of people's actions to keep society stable and the term dysfunction to refer to consequences that undermine stability. Functions can be either manifest (actions that are intended) or latent (unintended consequences).
 3. In trying to explain divorce, a functionalist would look at how industrialization and urbanization both contributed to the changing function of marriage and the family.
- D. According to conflict theory, society is composed of groups competing for scarce resources.
- E. Karl Marx focused on struggles between the bourgeoisie, the small group of capitalists who own the means of production, and the proletariat, the masses of workers exploited by the capitalists.
 1. Contemporary conflict theorists have expanded this perspective to include conflict in all relations of power and authority.
 2. Just as Marx stressed conflict between capitalists and workers, many feminists stress a similar conflict between men and women.
 3. Divorce is seen as the outcome of the shifting balance of power within a family; as women have gained power and try to address inequalities in their relationships, men resist.
 4. The perspectives differ in their level of analysis. Functionalists and conflict theorists provide macro-level analysis because they examine the large-scale patterns of society. Symbolic interactionists carry out micro-level analysis because they focus on the small-scale patterns of social life.

- F. Each perspective provides a different and often sharply contrasting picture of the world. However, sociologists often use all three perspectives because no one theory or level of analysis encompasses all of reality.

VI. Levels of Analysis: Macro and Micro

- A. Different levels of analysis are used by the three theoretical perspectives.
 - 1. Functionalists and conflict theorists focus on the macro level examining large-scale patterns of society.
 - 2. Symbolic interactionists focus on the micro level of social interactions in society.
- B. Combining all three perspectives provides us with a more comprehensive picture of social life.

VII. Doing Sociological Research

- A. A Research Model
 - 1. Selecting a topic is guided by sociological curiosity, interest in a particular topic, research funding from governmental or private sources, and pressing social issues.
 - 2. Defining the problem involves specifying what the researcher wants to learn about the topic. Reviewing the literature uncovers existing knowledge about the problem, helps narrow down the problem by learning what areas need to be researched, and provides ideas about what questions to ask.
 - 3. Formulating a hypothesis involves stating the expected relationship between variables, based on predictions from a theory. Hypotheses need operational definitions, or precise ways to measure the variables.
 - 4. Choosing a research method is influenced by the research topic and the questions that need to be answered.
 - 5. Collecting the data involves concerns over validity, the extent to which operational definitions measure what was intended, and reliability, the extent to which data produce consistent results. Inadequate operational definitions and sampling hurt reliability.
 - 6. Analyzing the results involves the use of either qualitative or quantitative techniques to analyze data. Computers have become powerful tools in data analysis because they reduce large amounts of data to basic patterns, take the drudgery out of analyzing data, allow the use of a variety of statistical tests, and give the researcher more time to interpret the results.
 - 7. By writing up and publishing the results, the findings are available for replication. That is, others can repeat your study to see if they come up with similar findings.
- B. Research Methods
 - 1. Surveys involve collecting data by having people answer a series of questions.
 - 2. The first step is to determine a population (the target group to be studied) and select a sample (individuals from within the target population who are intended to represent the population to be studied). Random samples are those where everyone in the target population has the same chance of being included in the study. A stratified random sample is a sample of specific subgroups (e.g. freshmen, sophomores, juniors) of the target population (a college or university) in which everyone in the subgroup has an equal chance of being included in the study.

3. The respondents (people who respond to a survey) must be allowed to express their own ideas so that the findings will not be biased.
 4. The questionnaires can be administered either by asking respondents to complete the survey themselves (self-administered questionnaires) or by asking respondents the questions directly (interviews). The researcher must consider the effects that interviewers have on respondents that can lead to biased answers (interviewer bias) and whether to make the questions structured (closed-ended questions in which the answers are provided) or unstructured (open-ended questions which people answer in their own words).
 5. It is important to establish rapport, or a feeling of trust between researchers and subjects.
- C. In participant observation, the researcher participates in a research setting while observing what happens in that setting.
5. Generalizability, which is the extent to which the findings from one group (or sample) can be generalized or applied to other groups (or populations), is a problem in participant observation studies.
 6. Results of participant observation studies can stimulate hypotheses and theories that can be tested in other settings, using other research methods.
- D. Secondary analysis, which is the analysis of data already collected by other researchers, is used when resources are limited and/or existing data may provide excellent sources of information. However, because the researcher did not directly carry out the research, he or she cannot be sure that the data were systematically gathered, accurately recorded, and biases avoided.
- E. Documents, or written sources, may be obtained from many sources, including books, newspapers, police reports, and records kept by various organizations.
- F. Unobtrusive measures involve observing social behavior of people who do not know they are being studied.
- G. Gender in Sociological Research
1. Because gender can be a significant factor in social research, researchers take steps to prevent it from biasing their findings.
 2. Gender can also be an obstacle to doing research, particularly when the gender of the researcher is different from that of the research subjects and the topic under investigation is a sensitive one.
 3. There are also questions regarding the degree to which findings from a sample made up exclusively of one gender can be generalized to the other.

VIII. Ethics in Sociological Research

- A. Ethics are of fundamental concern to sociologists when it comes to doing research.
- B. Ethical considerations include being open, honest, and truthful; not harming the subject in the course of conducting the research; protecting the anonymity of the research subjects; and not misrepresenting themselves to the research subjects.
- C. The Brajuha research demonstrates the lengths sociologists will go to in order to protect the anonymity of research subjects, while the Humphreys research illustrates questionable research ethics.

IX. Trends Shaping the Future of Sociology

- A. To understand the tension between social reform and social analysis, sociologists have found it useful to divide sociology into three phases.
1. In the first phase the primary concern of sociologists was making the world a better place.
 2. During the second phase, from the 1920s until World War II, sociologists sought to establish sociology as a respected field of knowledge, emphasizing basic, or pure, sociology.
 3. In the third (current) phase, there has been an attempt to merge sociological knowledge and practical work with the development of applied sociology. This trend has gained momentum in recent years.
 4. The American Sociological Association (ASA) is promoting public sociology. The ASA wants the public, especially politicians and policy makers, to use sociological data to better understand how society works.
 5. Despite being able to identify three phases, each of which has been characterized by a different position on reform vs. analysis, there has never been complete consensus on which approach is better.
- B. Globalization is a second major trend destined to leave its mark on sociology.
1. Globalization is the breaking down of national boundaries due to advances in communications, trade, and travel.
 2. Globalization is likely to broaden the scope of sociological analysis as sociologists look beyond the boundaries of the United States in considering global issues.
 3. Globalization is one of the most significant events in world history. This book stresses the impact of globalization on our lives today.

KEY TERMS

After studying the chapter, review the definition for each of the following terms.

applied sociology: the use of sociology to solve problems—from the micro level of family relationships to the macro level of crime and pollution (11)

class conflict: Marx’s term for the struggle between the proletariat (workers) and the bourgeoisie (capitalist) (6)

closed-ended questions: questions followed by a list of possible answers to be selected by the respondent (25)

common sense: those things that “everyone knows” are true (4)

conflict theory: a theoretical framework in which society is viewed as composed of groups competing for scarce resources (17)

control group: the group of subjects not exposed to the independent variable in the study (27)

dependent variable: a factor that is changed by an independent variable (27)

experiment: the use of control and experimental groups and dependent and independent variables to test causation (26)

experimental group: the group of subjects exposed to the independent variable in a study (27)

- functional analysis:** a theoretical framework in which society is viewed as composed of various parts, each with a function that, when fulfilled, contributes to society's equilibrium; also known as functionalism and structural functionalism (15)
- globalization:** the extensive interconnections among nations due to the expansion of capitalism (33)
- globalization of capitalism:** capitalism (investing to make profits within a rational system) becoming the globe's dominant economic system (33)
- hypothesis:** a statement of the expected relationship between variables according to predictions from a theory (21)
- independent variable:** a factor that causes a change in another variable, called the dependent variable (27)
- macro-level analysis:** an examination of large-scale patterns of society (18)
- micro-level analysis:** an examination of small-scale patterns of society (18)
- nonverbal interaction:** communication without words, through gestures, space, silence, and so on (18)
- open-ended questions:** questions that respondents are able to answer in their own words (25)
- operational definition:** the way in which a variable in a hypothesis is measured (21)
- participant observation (or fieldwork):** research in which the researcher *participates* in a research setting while *observing* what is happening in that setting (26)
- population:** the target group to be studied (23)
- positivism:** the application of the scientific approach to the social world (5)
- random sample:** a sample in which everyone in the target population has the same chance of being included in the study (24)
- reliability:** the extent to which data produce consistent or dependable results (21)
- replication:** repeating a study in order to check its findings (31)
- research method (or research design):** one of six procedures sociologists used to collect data: surveys, participant observation, secondary analysis, documents, unobtrusive measures, and experiments (21)
- respondents:** the people who respond to a survey, either in interviews or self-administered questionnaires (25)
- sample:** the individuals intended to represent the population to be studied (23)
- science:** the application of systematic methods to obtain knowledge and the knowledge obtained by those methods (5)
- secondary analysis:** the analysis of data already collected by other researchers (26)
- social integration:** the degree to which people feel a part of social groups (7)
- social interaction:** what people do when they are in one another's presence (18)
- social location:** the group memberships that people have because of their location in history and society (4)
- society:** a term used by sociologists to refer to a group of people who share a culture and a territory (4)
- sociological perspective:** understanding human behavior by placing it within its broader social context (4)
- sociology:** the scientific study of society and human behavior (6)
- subjective meanings:** the meanings that people give to their own behavior (15)
- survey:** the collection of data by having people answer a series of questions (22)

symbolic interactionism: a theoretical perspective in which society is viewed as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, develop their views of the world, and communicate with one another (13)

theory: a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work; an explanation of how two or more facts are related to one another (13)

unobtrusive measures: the various ways of observing people who do not know they are being studied (28)

validity: the extent to which an operational definition measures what it was intended to measure (21)

value free: the view that a sociologist's personal values should not influence social research (30)

values: ideas about what is good or worthwhile in life; attitudes about the way the world ought to be (30)

variable: a factor thought to be significant for human behavior, which varies or changes from one case to another (21)

KEY PEOPLE

Review the major theoretical contributions or findings of these people.

Jane Addams: Addams was the founder of Hull House—a settlement house in the immigrant community of Chicago. She invited sociologists from the nearby University of Chicago to visit. In 1931 she was a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. (9)

Chloe Bird and Patricia Rieker: These sociologists caution against assuming that research findings that apply to one gender apply to the other. Because women's and men's lives differ significantly, doing research on only one half of humanity will lead to incomplete research. (29)

Mario Brajuha: During an investigation into a restaurant fire, officials subpoenaed notes taken by this sociologist in connection with his research on restaurant work. He was threatened with jail. (29-30)

Ernest Burgess and Harvey Locke: Research by these early sociologists documented a fundamental shift that was occurring in the symbolic meaning of U.S. marriages. They found that marriage was increasingly dependent on mutual affection, understanding, and compatibility. (18)

Auguste Comte: Comte is often credited with being the founder of sociology, because he was the first to suggest that the scientific method be applied to the study of the social world. (5,15)

Charles Horton Cooley: One of the founders of symbolic interactionism, a major theoretical perspective in sociology. (13)

Lewis Coser: Coser pointed out that conflict is likely to develop among people in close relationships because they are connected by a network of responsibilities, power and rewards. (17)

W. E. B. Du Bois: Du Bois was the first African American to earn a doctorate at Harvard University. For most of his career, he taught sociology at Atlanta University. He was concerned about social injustice, wrote about race relations, and was one of the founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). (9)

- Emile Durkheim:** Durkheim was responsible for getting sociology recognized as a separate discipline. He was interested in studying how individual behavior is shaped by social forces and in finding remedies for social ills. He stressed that sociologists should use social facts—patterns of behavior that reflect some underlying condition of society. (7, 15)
- Harriet Martineau:** An Englishwoman who studied British and U.S. social life, Martineau published *Society in America* decades before either Durkheim or Weber were born. She is known primarily for translating Auguste Comte’s ideas into English. (8)
- Karl Marx:** Marx believed that social development grew out of conflict between social classes; under capitalism, this conflict was between the bourgeoisie—those who own the means to produce wealth—and the proletariat—the mass of workers. His work is associated with the conflict perspective. (6,17)
- George Herbert Mead:** Mead was one of the founders of symbolic interactionism, a major theoretical perspective in sociology. (13)
- Laud Humphreys:** This sociologist carried out doctoral research on homosexual activity but ran into problems when he misrepresented himself to his research subjects. Although he earned his doctorate degree, he was fired from his position because of his questionable ethics. (30)
- Robert Merton:** Merton contributed the terms *manifest and latent functions* and *dysfunctions* to the functionalist perspective. (15)
- C. Wright Mills:** Mills suggested that external influences (a person’s experiences) become part of his or her thinking and motivations and explain social behavior. As the emphasis in sociology shifted from social reform to social theory, Mills urged sociologists to get back to their roots. He saw the emergence of the power elite composed of top leaders of business, politics and the military as an imminent threat to freedom. (11, 19)
- William Ogburn:** As early as 1933, Ogburn noted that personality was becoming more important in mate selection; this supported the symbolic interactionists’ argument that there was a fundamental shift in the symbolic meaning of U.S. marriages. (14)
- Talcott Parsons:** Parsons’ work dominated sociology in the 1940s and 1950s. He developed abstract models of how the parts of society harmoniously work together. (11)
- Diana Scully and Joseph Marolla:** These two sociologists interviewed convicted rapists in prison and found that rapists are not sick or overwhelmed by uncontrollable urges, but rather, are men who have learned to view rape as appropriate in various circumstances. (28)
- Albion Small:** Small was the founder of the sociology department at the University of Chicago and the *American Journal of Sociology*. (18)
- Herbert Spencer:** Another early sociologist, Spencer believed that societies evolve from barbarian to civilized forms. He was the first to use the expression “the survival of the fittest” to reflect his belief that social evolution depended on the survival of the most capable and intelligent and the extinction of the less capable. His views became known as *social Darwinism*. (6, 15)
- William I. Thomas:** Along with Mead and Cooley, Thomas was important in establishing symbolic interactionism as a major theoretical perspective in sociology. (13)
- Max Weber:** Weber’s most important contribution to sociology was his study of the relationship between the emergence of Protestant belief system and the rise of capitalism. He believed that sociologists should not allow their personal values to affect their social research; objectivity should become the hallmark of sociology. He argued that sociologists should use *Verstehen*—those subjective meanings that people give to their behavior. (7, 8)

Discussion Topics to Encourage Student Participation

- Using the symbolic interactionist perspective, have the students evaluate the sociology course and its instructor. Identify the symbols that are a part of the course and the meanings that each student applies to that symbol. Initially have the students make their own lists that include symbols and meanings and then share them with the class in a group discussion.
- Herbert Spencer is credited with developing the “survival of the fittest” concept and the philosophic approach known as Social Darwinism. The idea behind this approach was societies evolve from primitive to civilized and that to help primitive societies interferes with the natural process of either evolving or becoming extinct. As an example, nations like the United States have for decades intervened in sub-Saharan African countries in an attempt to fight AIDS and end poverty with little success. Discuss your thoughts on this subject and whether or not aid to poor societies actually helps them or simply creates dependency?
- Given the plethora of special-interest groups, have your students discuss whether sociology should extend their role in politics and be added to the list of special-interest groups. Second, have them discuss if an academic discipline, such as sociology, extends its interest into politics, should politics extend its interests even further into governing academia.
- Pointing out that sociologists conduct research on almost every area of human behavior conceivable, ask your students to try to conceive some areas of human behavior that may be beyond the reach of sociologists. Are there any such areas? If they cannot think of any such areas, ask them to consider and discuss the following question, “Is human behavior so predictable that all aspects of it are researchable?”
- Have your students imagine they are conducting research about date rape on university campuses. Then ask them the following questions: Which research method or methods would be most conducive or least conducive to such a study? Why? If you were to use interviews in your study, what would be the advantages and disadvantages of employing closed-ended questions? How about open-ended questions? In conducting the interviews, what would you do to try to establish good rapport with your subjects? Finally, no matter which research method you choose, what are some of the ways gender may affect the viability of your study? What, if anything, can you do to minimize its effects?
- As globalization continues to break down national boundaries we become more connected to the global village. What impacts do you think this will have on the larger US society? What impacts will it have on your own personal perception and behavior?

Classroom Activities and Student Projects

- To understand peoples’ behavior, sociologists look at their social location in society. Ask students to identify the corners in life they occupy by describing their jobs, income, education, gender, age, and race-ethnicity. Have them explain how each of these elements influences their self concept and behavior. Then have them select 2 or 3 elements to change

(for example, gender and race-ethnicity) and describe what differences may exist in their self concept and behavior if they occupied this social location.

- An issue that remains controversial among sociologists is the degree to which personal values should enter into research efforts. Ask students who support the pro-choice position and students who support the pro-life position to participate in a debate. Try to keep the numbers in each group approximately the same. Have each group research their position and then present their positions to the class. The rest of the class will then critique the presentations based on each group's objectivity. Can people who have a stake in a position objectively research that topic? Regardless of the presence or lack of objectivity, which side of the debate had the most support among students? If the results support the research that younger people hold a more liberal ideology, then the pro-choice team should win the debate because they will also lack objectivity and allow their own attitudes to effect their decisions.
- W.E.B. DuBois was a forerunner to promoting racial equality. Oddly, even though racism seemed more prominent in those days, DuBois was able to fund his education and pursue a Ph.D. at Harvard University. He was also able to gain a position at the University of Atlanta. Ask students to think about and openly debate how a black man was able to fund an education at a prestigious University like Harvard, and study in Berlin, yet Henslin states in the textbook that he was too poor to attend an ASA convention in the U.S.? If he were alive today, how would DuBois respond to the current state of race relations, and what would be his reaction to the current N.A.A.C.P.?
- Assign a visit to the university library to come up with a list of journals that would accept articles devoted to sociological research. For each journal chosen, instruct the students to copy the submission requirements for the journal and to make an effort to determine if the journal accepts research articles authored by undergraduate students. Require each student to compile a list of five journals with the accompanying data on submission requirements. Lead a discussion on the students' findings. Collect the assignments and ask for volunteers to separate the duplicate journals submitted and to develop a folder of the journals selected along with the criteria for submission. A one-page summary for each journal chosen should be prepared for this purpose.

Service Learning Projects and Field Trips

- Invite a representative from one of the major social service agencies in your area to make a presentation to the class. Have the students develop a set of questions they may wish to ask the presenter before they appear in class.
- Assign students to choose a film that illustrates one of the three sociological perspectives and to write a brief report on how that film illustrated the perspective. A few examples of the film and the perspective(s) it illustrates include *Shrek* (symbolic interactionism), *Antz* (functionalism), *Titanic* (the conflict perspective), or *Apollo 13* (a case can be made for this film as illustrating any of the three perspectives). Other films may also be used depending on their subject matter and plot.

- Most universities have a library liaison that interfaces with various departments to provide support services. Ask your department's library liaison to conduct a tour of the library for your classes with emphasis on the library's capability to assist students engaged in research.

Suggested Films

Beyond Borders. Cadec Pictures. 2000, 26 minutes (Video).

This program explores the repercussions of **globalization** as industrialized and developing countries are, to a greater or lesser extent, becoming increasingly similar.

49 Up. 2006, 134 min. (Video).

Interviewing. 14 children from diverse backgrounds were interviewed about their lives and dreams. Every seven years, the researcher has been back to talk to them, examining the progression of their lives.

From Social Interaction to Social Structure. Insight Media. 1991, 30 minutes. (Video).

This video shows, with illustrations, different levels of social structure and how sociologists study them.

Sociological Thinking and Research. Insight Media. 1991, 30 min. (Video).

This video shows how sociologists do analytical work.

Television and Human Behavior. Insight Media. 1992, 26 minutes, (Video).

This video examines television content as a "distorted mirror" of society.

The Sociological Perspective. Allyn and Bacon Interactive Video for Introductory Sociology. 1998. 3 minutes, (Video).

A brief introduction to the sociological perspective which works well to present at the beginning of the lecture on Chapter One.

Chapter Two: Culture

Chapter Summary

The concept of culture is sometimes easier to grasp by description than by definition. All human groups possess culture, which consists of the language, beliefs, values, norms, and material objects that are passed from one generation to the next. Although the particulars of culture may differ from one group to another, culture itself is universal—all societies develop shared, learned ways of perceiving and participating in the world around them.

Culture can be subdivided into material culture and nonmaterial culture. Material culture consists of tools and the technology required to use them that members of society create and utilize. This includes art, buildings, weapons, jewelry, and all other man-made objects. Nonmaterial culture includes a group's ways of thinking (beliefs, values, and other assumptions about the world) and patterns of behavior (language, gestures, and other forms of social interaction).

The effects of culture are profound and pervasive, touching almost every aspect of people's lives. However, most people are generally unaware of their own culture; culture is so engrained it is often taken for granted. People often become more aware of their own culture when their cultural assumptions are challenged by exposure to other cultures, particularly those with fundamentally different beliefs and customs.

When people come into contact with cultures that significantly differ from their own, they often experience culture shock, a condition of disorientation that requires them to question their cultural assumptions. Culture shock is influenced by ethnocentrism, the practice of viewing one's own culture as preferable and using it as a yardstick for judging other cultures.

Although all groups practice some forms of ethnocentrism, people can also employ cultural relativism, the practice of understanding a culture on its own terms without assessing its elements as any better or worse than one's own culture. Cultural relativism presents a challenge to ordinary thinking because we tend to use our own culture to judge others.

Sociologists sometimes refer to nonmaterial culture as symbolic culture, because the central component of nonmaterial culture is symbols. Symbols include gestures, language, values, norms, sanctions, folkways, and mores. Gestures involve the ways in which people use their bodies to communicate with one another. Although people in every culture use gestures, the gestures people use and the meanings they associate with those gestures vary greatly from one culture to another.

The primary way people communicate with each other is through language: a system of symbols that can be strung together in an infinite number of ways. Like gestures, all human groups have language. And like gestures, the meanings that people associate with different sounds and symbols can vary greatly from one culture to another.

Language is the basis of culture. It is critical to human life and essential for cultural development. Among other things, language allows human experience to be cumulative; gives people the capacity to share understandings about the past and develop common perceptions about the future; and provides for complex, shared, goal-directed behavior. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, language not only expresses our thinking and perceptions but also shapes them. The “descriptive terms” that we use can—and do—influence how we see other objects, other people, and ourselves.

All groups have values (beliefs regarding what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, beautiful or ugly), which they channel into norms (expectations, or rules of behavior, that develop from values). Norms include folkways (norms that are not strictly enforced), mores (norms that are strictly enforced), and taboos (norms so strong that the thought of violating them is universally revolting). Norms can be enforced through both positive sanctions (rewards ranging from approving looks and gestures to material compensation) and negative sanctions (punishment ranging from disapproving looks and gestures to imprisonment and execution).

Cultures may contain numerous subcultures and countercultures. A subculture is a group whose values and related behaviors set it apart from the larger culture; a counterculture is a group whose values and related behaviors stand in opposition to the dominant culture.

Because the United States is a pluralistic society made up of many different groups, competing value systems are common. Some sociologists, however, have tried to identify some underlying core values in the United States. These core values (values shared by many groups that make up American society) include value clusters (a series of interrelated values that together form a larger whole) and value contradictions (values that contradict one another). Social change often occurs when a society is forced to face, and work through, its value contradictions.

Cultural universals are values, norms, or other cultural traits that are found in all cultures. Although anthropologists and sociologists have identified some universal human activities, they have also found that the ways of carrying out these activities differ from one group to another.

Technology is central to a group’s material culture, while also setting the framework for its nonmaterial culture. The term “new technology” refers to any emerging technologies of an era that have a significant impact on social life. The current “new technology” includes computers, satellites, and various other forms of the electronic media. Cultural lag refers to a condition in which a group’s nonmaterial culture lags behind its material culture.

With the emergence of new technologies in mass transportation and mass communication, the world is becoming more interconnected. This has resulted in more cultural diffusion (the spread of characteristics from one culture to another) and culture leveling (the process by which cultures become similar to one another). Cultural leveling is occurring rapidly around the world. Mickey Mouse, Fred Flintstone, and the golden arches of McDonald’s can be found in Miami, Mexico City, Moscow, and in most other major cities of the world.