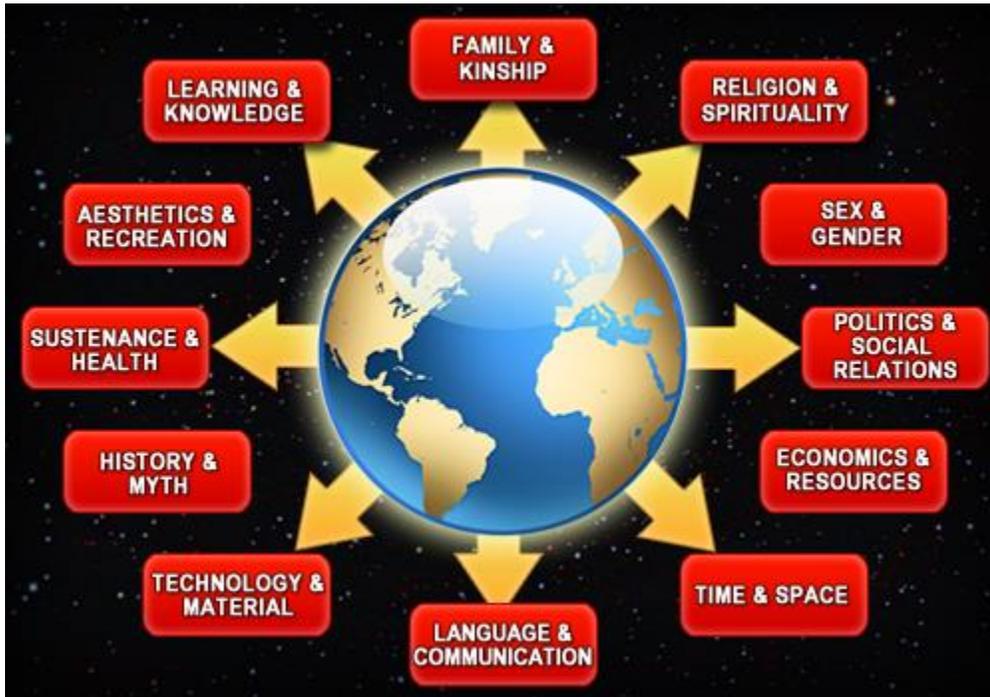


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Cultural domains are categories of human interaction, belief, and meaning that every culture shares. We often talk about them as **cultural universals**. There are many ways to classify universal areas of human interaction; the AF Culture and Language Center developed the model depicted in the image below, which has twelve cultural domains. People in all cultures share these broad categories of behaviors, beliefs, and meaning, even though they have different ways of behaving, expressing meaning, and living out their beliefs.



Certainly, activity in one area overlaps or intersects with another. The intersections across domains show how cultures are holistic systems, meaning all the parts are connected, and change in one area will usually cause change in several other areas. For example, one cannot have defined gender roles in a society without also having social groups related to gender, ideas about what constitutes “women’s work” and “men’s work,” and notions of what is beautiful or handsome. If we change what we consider to be “women’s work,” then other aspects of gender roles also tend to change. The domains are not exclusive of one another, but each encompasses part of the whole picture of what people are, what they believe, and what they do.

In this reading, we’ll also cover some characteristics of cultural interactions, such as high and low context communication styles, tendencies toward collectivism and individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and orientations to time and space. Some of these will be discussed in your upcoming classroom discussion on cross-cultural communication, too. If you would like further information on cultural domains or characteristics, please see the references list.

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How does this help me do my job?

These twelve domains provide you general information about aspects of human life that are common across all cultures. The characteristics provide you general information about people's tendencies to see the world in a certain way, or differences in people's interactional styles across cultures. You can use the information as a basis for comparing cultures or predicting and interpreting your cross-cultural interactions.

For example, on one short-term deployment, you learn that your Thai AF counterpart's 15-year-old son is already in a technical school, studying to be a computer programmer. That strikes you as different than the system in the U.S. This bit of knowledge clearly falls within the Learning and Knowledge cultural domain, which you will learn in this reading covers *how* people in a culture transmit knowledge, commonly accepted *means* of learning, and the *values* people put on different kinds of knowledge. With such information, you can begin to be prepared to talk to your counterparts about education in a more informed way, which is one way of building partnerships, AND you can begin to form hypotheses about what influences everyday Thai interactions regarding training and education. The latter may help you interpret the ways your counterpart interacts with you during a training exercise. The next day, you learn that another person's young daughter goes to a Catholic school in Bangkok, which surprises you, since you thought everyone in Thailand is a Buddhist. Going to a religious school could be part of BOTH Learning and Knowledge AND Religion and Spirituality, so then you would have two areas of comparison between U.S. and Thai cultures. The ways children speak to the teacher in the classroom would add a third category for comparison, Language and Communication.

The cultural characteristics further influence the expectations your counterpart has of his son, such as his collectivist tendency to expect his son to follow the family's recommendations for a career. They also affect the ways that students speak to teachers, such as showing great respect for their position (higher power distance) or perhaps greeting them by first name and joking with them (lower power distance).

Even if a particular culture doesn't practice or value activities that are covered in the cultural domains (such as education) in the way *we* generally do (i.e., through organized curriculum and schools, with university-educated teachers, etc.), *every* culture values learning and knowledge. The subject matter and means may be different, but not the value of passing on knowledge to future generations. The same is true for each domain, since all cultures have ways of fulfilling the human needs and desires that the domains include.

This is the heart of learning about culture: helping you to interpret behaviors, practices, values, and beliefs in other cultures that are new to you, whether you are deployed, based abroad, in a new part of the U.S., or getting along with other Airmen from different backgrounds.

Making comparisons

Before you go further, take a moment to think about the iceberg model of culture again. It has three parts: the visible surface area above the water, which corresponds to material culture and behavior; the less visible middle part, just under the surface of the water, which corresponds to systems and structures (from kinship systems to educational systems, for example), and the least

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visible part, deep under water, which corresponds to beliefs and values.¹ During this reading, we'll be asking you to apply your knowledge of cultural domains to the three-level model. Below is an example of a chart you'll see repeated after each domain, with one person's responses filled in:

Level of Culture	Cultural Domain (Family & Kinship, for ex)	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: <i>Moldova</i> _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)	<i>Single family homes are popular; children leave home at adulthood; elderly tend to live in special institutions; gift-giving to immediate family is common; people spend holidays together;</i>	<i>Extended families live together or nearby one another; children do not leave home until marriage; gift-giving to extended family is common; people spend holidays together; religious people have several sets of godparents;</i>
Middle (systems and structures)	<i>Nuclear family, heritage acknowledged from both mother's and father's side, women can inherit, public programs exist for keeping families together;</i>	<i>Extended family; heritage acknowledged from both mother's and father's side; women can inherit; families often separated due to poor economy, members working abroad; strong system of godparenthood supplements the family structure.</i>
Deep (beliefs and values)	<i>Nuclear family considered most important unit in society; parenting is treated as a serious occupation that influences children's lives into adulthood (evidence is how poor parents are talked about, treated); young people are treasured, nurtured, and youth is important;</i>	<i>Family considered most important unit in society; parenting is considered "natural," and less attention is paid to how one does it than in U.S.; young people and youth are valued, but so are family and ethnic traditions;</i>

The person compared her lived experience of U.S. culture (yours may be different!) to her knowledge gained through cross-cultural experience in the country of Moldova. Certainly there can be more to say in each one, but this is a start to get you going. If you're unable to think of something to put for a particular section, or if you feel you don't know another culture well enough to fill in the "Other" sections, then do your best or leave them blank, and bring these as questions to your class discussion.

¹ Adapted from Schein, E. (2010), *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 4th ed., San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. pp. 23-34;
 And Hall, E. T. (1981 (1959)), *The Silent Language*, New York, NY: Anchor Books, pp. 188-194;
 And Hall, E. T. (1981 (1976)), *Beyond Culture*, New York, NY: Anchor Books.

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This exercise of thinking through culture’s three levels, domain by domain, will help you understand:

- how the domains are integrated with one another; and
- how behavior is linked to structures, and how both are related to beliefs and values.

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I. Family and Kinship²

Introduction

Kinship can be thought of as those ties between people who see themselves as related in one of two ways: by blood (i.e. from the family of orientation) or by marriage (i.e. from the family of procreation). Those connections provide the basic organizational principles from which other forms of social and political organization spring. That is, typical family relationships often are reflected in other relationships outside the family in your society. What we are taught as

² The anthropological and sociological information concerning domains of culture has been adapted from generally accepted principles of human culture, such as can be found in Haviland, W. A., H. E. L. Prins, D. Walrath, and B. McBride (2005). *Cultural Anthropology: The Human Challenge*, 11th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Specific examples have been referenced individually.

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important in family life is usually what the society considers acceptable in social interaction in general.

At the most basic level, the family is a child's first social and cultural contact. The family fosters the creation of an identity, and the concepts of who are relatives, friends, and enemies. In some societies, a person may interact regularly with a large number of family members; in others, the family circle in daily life is much smaller, although extended family is recognized. Moreover, the family instills in the child cultural values, norms and behaviors. In this sense, the family transmits and ensures the continuity of a person's native culture. It defines who a person is, what role³ he or she plays in the culture and the society, and even influences his or her worldview.⁴ Nevertheless, you will also find there is considerable change taking place throughout the world in family and kinship practices, as societies adapt to dynamic social and economic situations.

Understanding family relationships in other cultures gives Airmen information about what is important to local people, where their allegiances lie, who they are likely to turn to in times of stress, and even to the social structure of the society itself.

Naming Conventions as One Way to Understand Family and Culture

One way to begin to understand how a group organizes itself is to look at their naming conventions.⁵ Here are some examples:

- In Saudi Arabia, women do not take their husband's last name when they marry. By keeping their family name, they maintain symbolic ties to their family of orientation⁶, and their larger kin group (such as a tribe).
- In Arabic and Persian languages, the people we call "uncle" and "aunt" are called by different terms, depending on whether the person is the mother's brother or the father's brother. The same principle makes the mother's sister and father's sister go by different terms. These kin terms relate to many cultural factors, but the most important is that traditional systems of inheritance favor keeping money within the father's side of the family. Knowing who your mother's brother is versus your father's brother leads to different relationships between you and those two people. In addition, it is more

³ Roles are sets of behaviors and beliefs based on a setting and the people in the setting. Often, they are only situational, as in being a customer at the grocery store, and therefore not part of one's identity. Sometimes, they are longer lasting and part of one's identity, such as being a father.

⁴ Worldview is the way we see the world and the way we understand our relationships to everyone and everything. We interpret the world through our cultural "lens". Worldview includes the totality of our experiences, cultural background, and beliefs and values.

⁵ Naming conventions are the customary ways a group of people has for identifying its members. In the U.S., these are usually terms like mother, sister, brother-in-law, 1st cousin on my father's side, etc. Interestingly, there is a lot of variation across the U.S. in terms for grandparents. Some grandfathers are Opa, others are Papaw, others are Grandpa, others are Abuelo. These more closely follow the ethnic, national, or linguistic origins of one's ancestors.

⁶ Family of orientation is the family or care-giving group into which a person is born and reared, and in which he or she is raised into adulthood. We usually call this our immediate family or nuclear family in the U.S. The other type of family is the family of procreation, or the group that a person creates by choosing a mate and usually by having children.

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acceptable for children to marry cousins from their father's side of the family, but not from their mother's side of the family.^{7,8}



- In Japan, different terms exist for younger siblings and older siblings. For example, *ane* means "older sister"; *ani* means "older brother"; *oto/to* means "younger brother"; and *imo/to* means "younger sister". There are also separate terms if one is speaking about "my older brother" or "your older brother."⁹ What could be the values and beliefs and that support this Japanese naming convention? In Japanese culture, being part of a group, knowing one's responsibility to the group and respecting the hierarchy within the group are all very important. Thus, identifying one's own place in that group through linguistic means has become part of the culture, too.

No matter where you find yourself in the world, learning about people's families will give you clues to what they consider important in their lives. Consider the "ideal" family in that culture, and also the "real" families that you observe. This will also provide information about the culturally acceptable and unacceptable varieties of family in that place.

Here is your first comparison chart. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

	Family and Kinship
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⁷ Mahootian, S. and L. Gebhardt. (1997). Persian. New York: Routledge. Pp. 346-350

⁸ Weinreb, A. A. (n.d.) The Determinants of Consanguineous Marriage in Egypt, 1988-2000. Retrieved from: <http://uaps2007.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=70821>

⁹ Henning, J. (1995). Sidebar: relative terms for relatives. Relative birth order. Model Languages 1(6), Oct-Nov 1995. Retrieved from: <http://www.langmaker.com/ml0106b.htm#2d1>

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Level of Culture	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

II. Political and Social Relations

Introduction

Political relations (also referred to as political organization) refer to individuals' differential access to power, the ways people exercise power, and the ways groups of people govern themselves. The term usually includes some form of governmental or legal structure in society. Each culture has beliefs and values that influence local forms of governance and how power is distributed. This term implies a much broader set of activities and relationships than the term “politics.”

Social relations (also referred to as social organization) refer more generally to the patterns of relationships among people, usually outside of the governance or legal structure. Examples include the wide variety of groups we form and how we use those groups to “get things done,” whether that means dividing up food, celebrating traditions, educating children, practicing religion, or any other human activity. Each culture’s beliefs and values influence what are considered acceptable and unacceptable means of “getting things done.”

The first social and political relationships we experience in our lives are within the family. As noted in the previous section, we learn about our roles and status in the world through our earliest interactions within the family. In the U.S., other forms of political and social relations supplement the family when children are very young. For example, local school systems represent political and social relations, in everything from the student-teacher relationship of respect; to the organization of children by classroom, grade, and learning level; to the cliques and friendships that students form among themselves.

Understanding political and social relations gives you broader information about how people interact with each other, how they transmit culture, how they enforce laws and standards, how

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they organize food and other resource distribution, and how they maintain order in their societies.

What do all cultures share in terms of political and social relations? Every social group has a form of hierarchy and status, whether it is acknowledged as such or not. (Example: The U.S. has social classes, but the majority of people refer to themselves as “middle class” regardless of their income or upbringing.)¹⁰ Every social group enforces behavioral standards, whether by law, coercion, positive reinforcement, shaming (causing to feel disgrace), or ostracism (isolation or banishment). In addition to reinforcing behavior and resolving disputes, groups organize themselves in order to protect and distribute their resources (food, land, people). Conflicts usually arise as a result of the different objectives, values, and practices held by competing groups and alliances.

Two general rules for political and social relations seem to be followed across human history¹¹:

1. The *fewer* people in a society, their roles (jobs, functions) in society tend to be *less specialized*. In other words, people in smaller groups tend to fulfill more roles. The *more* people in a society, the *more specialized* people's roles (jobs, functions) become.
2. The *fewer* people in a society, the *less stratified* (hierarchical) their political relations are likely to be. The *more* people in a society, the *more stratified* (hierarchical) their political relations are likely to be.

In smaller societies, people usually hold multiple roles, such as those we would separate into "home" and "work" activities: growing their own food, making their own bread, raising and killing their own animals for meat, weaving items for clothing or furnishings, acting as a spiritual leader, serving as a political leader, teaching children, representing the group in state political life, selling products at the local market, etc. Because of their multiple roles, there is less stratification. In addition, all people still retain roles within the family, but even these can be allocated to specialized workers, such as nannies, day care staff, or home nursing services.

These general rules apply to micro-cultures, too. If you've seen the TV show “The Office,” you know that the Dunder Mifflin office in Scranton employs about twenty people. One person acts as the receptionist, but what happens when she's out to lunch? Doesn't anyone answer the phones or greet customers? No, as in real life, characters on “The Office” take up the slack and temporarily perform that role in addition to their own roles. Nevertheless, everyone still knows his or her "rank" in the local hierarchy, which usually corresponds to his or her job: management, warehouse, sales, reception, accounting, etc.

You may remember the 33 Chilean miners¹² who were trapped underground for 69 days after the mine where they were working collapsed. They reported that by their 17th day underground, they had organized their living space into eating and sleeping quarters, had appointed three leaders,

¹⁰ See <http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/19/rich-people-still-dont-realize-theyre-rich/> and the Gallup poll cited in that blog, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/147152/Americans-Split-Whether-Taxes-High.aspx>, for supporting information.

¹¹ Some of this information intersects with the cultural domains of Economics and Resources, and Sustenance and Health.

¹² For more information, see <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130342897aa> And <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/02/10/60minutes/main7337759.shtml?tag=currentVideoInfosegmentTitle>

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including a spiritual leader, and held group meetings every day to deal with the stresses of living in such a cramped, resource-poor environment.

As you can see, all kinds of resources (food, people, land) matter in how much and what kind of political and social relations that people develop to meet their needs. If there are few resources and many people, then there will likely be more conflict. People develop institutions (like schools, armies, councils, etc.) to deal with the potential for conflict or to arbitrate disputes over resources. It might be your job as an Airman to work with such institutions, to help people arbitrate disputes, or even identify opposition leaders and potential partners in a conflict situation.

Comparing the U.S. to Other Cultures

In the U.S., there is a more distinct division between social and political activities. We tend to elect or appoint leaders based on their qualifications and based on their goals for the position. Although we have cases where "old boy networks," nepotism, and conflicts of interest affect people's promotions at work or access to elected positions, our system is set up with rules for keeping our personal lives and professional lives separate. We have laws that protect workers and give them routes to protest against mistreatment. We are discouraged from "bringing our personal lives to work." This is part of our tendency toward individualism: an individual can be seen as separate from the family, and we believe that a person should be able to succeed based on his or her merits.¹³

This is not the case in every culture. However, remember that cultures with other systems of organization and hierarchy have just that: systems that work for them.

To aid you in identifying different forms of social and political relations and how they might aid you in your work, here are three charts that list some basic characteristics of different types of political organization. Remember that culture and history both influence the ways societies organize themselves, and that you may interact with people in all of these types of political and social organization in a single country.

States:

Division of Labor	Division primarily based on gender, age, ability, social class, a ruling class, a bureaucratic class (a class of people who work for the government)
Social Stratification	Hierarchy based on social class
Ways of Resolving Conflict	At the state (national) level, institutions like Congress, parliament, and courts make laws and resolve national disputes by discussing among themselves, enacting legislation, and handing down court decisions. The members

¹³ Remember that this is an ideal that is not always enacted in reality.

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	of the institutions are elected by the population or appointed by elected leaders.
Ways of Enforcing Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -National police forces (like the FBI) enforce laws. -Local police forces are smaller versions of the national force. -All group members also enforce proper conduct.

Examples of societies with state-level political organization are the U.S., individual U.S. states, Canada, France, Germany, Ghana, Botswana, Japan, Mongolia, Argentina, and Chile.

Tribes, Clans, Chiefdoms, Warlordships¹⁴

Division of Labor	Division primarily based on gender, age, ability
Social Stratification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Less hierarchy than in a state system; -Hierarchy based on closeness to leader(s) and on one's economic power -When the group is not centrally managed, there are many leaders of smaller groups of people, but all consider themselves part of the tribe (or other group) -When the group is more centralized, there is a central group leader and any leaders of smaller groups report to him or her.
Ways of Resolving Conflict	Group discussions among a group of leaders are the primary way of resolving conflicts.
Ways of Enforcing Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Elders and tribal leaders are given more respect and power in resolving conflict. They usually cannot enforce laws. -Group members enforce proper conduct and leaders' rulings.

Examples of societies with tribal political organization, chiefdoms, or warlordships are: (these are groups of people within countries, or whose population exists in multiple countries) the

¹⁴ These groups and their means of social and political organization can exist alongside state government. However, when the state government has broken down or been overthrown, these groups and their means of organization can take the place of the state. When the state government loses power or cannot exert control over a territory, other forms of social and political organization fill in the gap.

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Khams extended family system in Iraq¹⁵; the Dani people of New Guinea¹⁶; and warlords in Somalia¹⁷.

Be aware that the word “tribe” is often used outside of social science to mean “ethnic group” or “people who speak the same language.”¹⁸ We use it as noted above, to describe a hierarchical system of social and political organization with more or less centralized leadership. People in the tribe usually have to pay tribute in some form to the leader(s), and the leaders are considered responsible for the well-being of the tribe.[source] Furthermore, tribes, clans, chiefdoms, and warlordships *are* different, but have been grouped together here based on the similar noted in the table above.

Small, relatively independent communities,¹⁹ such as fishing communities, farming communities, pastoral herding groups, and foraging groups (hunter/gatherers):

Division of Labor	Division primarily based on gender and age
Social Stratification	-No fixed hierarchy or leaders -Most respect given to elders
Ways of Resolving Conflict	Discussions among the whole group are usually used to resolve conflicts.
Ways of Enforcing Conduct	-Elders are given more respect and power in resolving conflict. They usually cannot enforce laws. -Group members enforce proper conduct and leaders’ opinion.

Examples of small, independent communities that fit in this category are: (these are groups of people within countries, or whose population exists in multiple countries) mobile fishing

¹⁵ Hassan, H.D., (2007). Iraq: Tribal Structure, Social, and Political Activities. CRS report for Congress, RS22626. Retrieved from: <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/81928.pdf>. Accessed January 2013.

¹⁶ Heider, K. (1997 (1979)). Grand Valley Dani: Peaceful Warriors. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1979, 4th ed.. See also http://www.wannabe-anthropologist.com/wba_writing_dani.php for synopsis.

¹⁷ Brand, J. (2007). Somalia’s Struggle for Stability: Warlords. Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/indepth_coverage/africa/somalia/keyplayers/warlords.html. Accessed January 2013.

Ingiriis, M. H. 2012. Abdullahi Yusuf: A Somali Warlord’s Life and Days. Retrieved from: <http://africanarguments.org/2012/08/03/abdullahi-yusuf-a-somali-warlord’s-life-and-days-by-mohamed-haji-ingiriis/>. Accessed January 2013.

¹⁸ Lowe, C., T. Brimah, P. Marsh, W. Minter, and M. Muyangwa (2007). Talking about Tribe: Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis. Retrieved from: <http://www.africaaction.org/talking-about-tribe.html>. Accessed January 2013.

¹⁹ These may also co-exist with other communities and groups within a state, tribe, warlordship, etc.

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communities along the shores of Lake Victoria in Kenya²⁰; sheep and cattle herders in northern Azerbaijan²¹; and Ache foraging groups of Paraguay²².

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Political and Social Relations	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

III. Sex and Gender

Introduction

This domain concerns the ways different cultures acknowledge biological differences between men and women in terms of the roles and responsibilities of each, and the beliefs and values concerning those roles and responsibilities. A person's *sex* refers to the suite of biological characteristics that make the person male, female, or perhaps intersex²³. A person's *gender* refers to the culturally-defined roles and responsibilities assigned to males, females, and others (transgender people for example), and the meaning of each of those roles and responsibilities in the culture. People's sex and their gender often influence or even fully determine their

²⁰ For example: MerlinUSA.org (2006). HIV Crisis in Kenya's Fishing Communities. Retrieved from: <http://www.merlinusa.org/2006/11/hiv-crisis-in-kenyas-fishing-communities/>. Accessed January 2013.

²¹ For example: BP (2002). Azeri, Chirag & Gunashli Full Field Development Phase 1: Environmental & Socio-economic Impact Assessment. Chapter 7. Retrieved from: <http://subsites.bp.com/caspian/ACG/Eng/esia1/chp07/chp07b.pdf>. Accessed January 2013.

²² For example: Kaplan, H., and K. Hill (1985). Food Sharing Among Ache Foragers: Tests of Explanatory Hypotheses. *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Apr. 1985) 223-246. Retrieved from: http://www.unm.edu/~hkaplan/KaplanHill_1985_SharingAche.pdf. Accessed January 2013.

²³ Intersex is the adjective for someone whose biological or genetic characteristics do not allow a distinct designation as male or female. See http://www.isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex for more information.

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relationship to parts of every other cultural domain, such as their access to resources, their work, the kinds of social and political relations they can enter, and how they can worship.

Industrialized societies (see Economics and Resources, below) tend to have more gender inequality than non-industrial societies because the household is no longer the main place of work for both men and women. However, some cultures in sub-Saharan Africa allow women to take on male gender roles in certain circumstances.^{24,25} For example, a woman may “marry” another woman in order to advance social, political, and economic ends in several cultural groups in Kenya, Nigeria, and North and South Sudan.^{26,27} On the other hand, in societies (such as many in the Caribbean) where females are gaining more equal ground in the workplace, men’s roles as the dominant providers and protectors becomes challenged, causing stress in families and at work.²⁸ It’s important to be aware of both men’s and women’s roles in a culture or society; too often, we focus gender discussions only on women’s issues, which tends to marginalize men and cause different sorts of social and economic problems.

The inequality present in women’s lives in Afghanistan has been a major point of development and reconstruction efforts from a coalition of governmental and non-governmental agencies. It’s important to remember that U.S. foreign policy promotes gender equality. In groups that primarily forage, Women tend to hold roles and responsibilities similar to those of men in

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Sex and Gender	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		

²⁴ For example: Cadigan, R. J. (1998). Woman-to-Woman Marriage: Practices and Benefits in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1. Reference and abstract available online at: <http://www.questia.com/library/1G1-21263199/woman-to-woman-marriage-practices-and-benefits-in> . Accessed January 2013;

And: Greene, B. (1998). The Institution of Woman-Marriage in Africa: A Cross-cultural Analysis. *Ethnology*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Fall 1998), pp. 395-413.

²⁶ Njambi, W. N. and W. E. O’Brien (2000). Revisiting “Woman-Woman Marriage”: Notes on Gikuyu Women. *NWSA Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 1-23. Reference and abstract retrieved from: http://130.102.44.246/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/nwsa_journal/v012/12.1njambi.pdf . Accessed January 2013.

²⁷ OnlineNigeria.com (2013). Woman to Woman Marriage in Nigeria (Customary Marriage). Webpage. Retrieved from: <http://www.onlinenigeria.com/marriages-in-nigeria/Other-Types-Of-Customary-Marriage/woman-to-woman-marriage.asp> . Accessed January 2013.

²⁸ Lewis, L. (2003). Gender Tension and Change in the Contemporary Caribbean. United Nations publication EGM/Men-Boys-GE/2003/EP.11, 9 October 2003. Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/men-boys2003/EP11-Lewis.pdf> . Accessed January 2013.

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Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

IV. Economics and Resources

Introduction

This domain refers to the many ways that goods and services are allocated, produced, distributed, and consumed in a society. Culturally, each society holds beliefs about appropriate and inappropriate ways of accomplishing these activities. Tradition, the technology available, and political, social, and geographical environments all equally influence attitudes regarding the use of resources. Among the political, social, and geographical factors, one might find that rampant corruption, political turmoil, limited landownership, and tribal and civil wars may prevent the general population from effectively managing their resources and economies. Some areas have extremely limited natural resources to begin with, and without a stable political/social environment, they may find it difficult to prosper. No culture or society is inherently maladaptive. If some part of their system of economic exchange is not working for them, it is probably because of significant differences between their traditional (pre-industrial) sociocultural and economic systems and their contemporary industrial or post-industrial systems. These types of economic systems will be discussed below.

Understanding *cultural* differences in the ways people use resources and produce goods improves cross-cultural awareness. Better knowledge of *why* systems of production and resource use are different and what people think about them can help you interpret what is important locally and nationally.

Allocation, production, distribution, and consumption of resources reflect political and social relations. Here are some general principles:

- a) Resources are allocated, claimed, or governed according to the kind of political and social relations. In general, groups control resources. In non-industrial societies, such groups are usually families or ethnic groups or tribes; in industrialized and post-industrial societies, such groups are usually businesses or governmental organizations.
- b) Resources are produced according to divisions of labor associated with group size, organization, and level of industrialization. The least stratified groups divide labor according to gender and age, while the most stratified divide labor according to job type, level of expertise, social class, gender, age, etc.
- c) Groups distribute resources according to levels of stratification, group size, organization, and level of industrialization. Less stratified, smaller, less

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industrialized groups are characterized by more reciprocity; while more stratified, larger, and more industrialized groups are characterized by more redistribution by a central authority, or strict market exchange for money.

- d) Consumption of resources follows similar patterns as for the previous three sub-items. Consumption may be divided by gender, age, social class, ethnic group, etc.

Non-industrial, industrial, post-industrial societies

We can describe societies as non-industrial, industrial, and post-industrial.

Non-industrial societies are few in the world today, but some still exist within larger states. Examples are groups of people such as the foragers, small fishing communities, and herding communities that were introduced in the section on Political and Social Relations. Such societies maintain a non-industrial base of production and exchange; in other words, they rely on technology that does not enable mass-production. They survive by foraging, raising animals and/or growing crops; and they depend highly on the climate, geography, and access to natural resources. Prosperity and progress are highly affected by natural disasters such as floods or droughts. Families generally work together, often form groups or tribes for protection and for distribution of goods, and do not require high amounts of formal education to be considered successful members of society. Some people may specialize in certain tasks, but most perform a wide variety of work-related tasks and do not specialize in any. In addition, people in non-industrial societies depend much more on barter and trade for survival than on money. Economic relations usually operate on principles of reciprocity between group members, market exchange between group members and non-members, and through redistribution when the group operates under a central leader. In non-industrial societies, labor is usually divided by gender and age, and sometimes by job specialization (like weaving, farming, etc.). Culture influences social relations, including what people consider appropriate and inappropriate economic exchanges.

Examples of non-industrial societies (often found within industrial or post-industrial societies) are: the Ache foraging groups of Paraguay; foragers among the Hadza people of Tanzania²⁹; nomadic herding groups in Mongolia³⁰; and some aspects of Inuit people's lives in Arctic regions³¹.

Industrial societies are those that predominantly utilize technologies (like power-driven machinery) that enable mass collection of resources and mass production of goods. Industrialism came about during the Industrial Revolution, which began in the 18th century. Industrialization of a society usually entails people moving from rural to urban areas, because farming becomes more mechanized and less reliant on human labor, and because factories (usually located in cities) need that human labor to operate. In industrial and post-industrial societies, labor is

²⁹ For example, see: Finkel, M. (2009). The Hadza. National Geographic.com. Retrieved from: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2009/12/hadza/finkel-text> . Accessed January 2013.

³⁰ For example, see: Vernooij, R. (2011). How Mongolian Herders are Transforming Nomadic Pastoralism. Solutions Journal, Vol. 2, Issue 5, pp. 82-87. Retrieved from: <http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/983> . Accessed January 2013.

³¹ For example, see: Inuit Cultural Online Resource (2013). Modern vs. Traditional Life. Webpage. Retrieved from: <http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/48> . Accessed January 2013.

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divided by age, job specialization, social class, and sometimes gender. Labor is also usually divided into what occurs at home (usually unpaid work) and outside the home (usually paid work). With industrialization, division into social classes becomes more common, since people are likely to specialize in performing certain work-related tasks instead of being generally able to do all tasks; and they are more likely to require higher amounts of formal education in order to become more specialized in their work. Because of this, social classes become more varied (not just poor and wealthy). There may be a poor class, a working class (workers at industrial plants), a middle class (managers and more educated individuals), and an upper class (owners of industry). Governmental institutions grow, along with more bureaucracy. Prosperity in industrial societies is contingent on availability of raw materials, or the ability to import materials, the ability to export produced goods, and the ability to maintain a trained workforce. Economic relations usually operate on principles of market exchange and the exchange of money for goods and services. Culture still influences social relations and what people consider appropriate and inappropriate economic exchanges.³²

Post-industrial societies are those that predominantly produce and exchange services rather than industrially produced goods. Even though they all still conduct mass collection of resources and mass production of goods (and some states still contain people who live in a non-industrial condition), industrial activities occur on a smaller scale and are sometimes less valued than the production of services. Information and technology are the hallmarks of the post-industrial society. The speed of technological advances in all areas drive the wealth and competitiveness of post-industrial societies; these areas include agriculture, mass production, medicine, media, and the generation and real-time availability of massive amounts of data and information. There is likely to be high specialization of tasks, more free time for non-work activities, and higher regulation by formal governmental institutions. Education is paramount, and the differences in the levels of education and technical skills in citizens, rather than land ownership or cultural privilege, influences the determination of "Haves" and "Have-Nots" in society. Consequently, the working class diminishes and three general social classes are more common: lower (less educated, lower-status jobs), middle (better educated, manager-level, higher-status jobs), and upper (well-educated, owners in all areas of economy, leaders in technological advances).

Lines are often blurred between industrial and post-industrial societies these days, and there are not pure examples of either. Rural regions in the U.S. are more likely to be industrial, while urban regions tend to be more post-industrial these days. In countries like China, urban areas are likely to be a mix of industrial and post-industrial, while rural areas may have more of a non-industrial economy (though not purely non-industrial).

Ways Economies are Managed

There are three basic ways to classify how various world economies are driven and managed. Economies are either Market (driven by consumers), Planned (driven by government), or Mixed (combination of market and planned). All economies are mixed to some degree. For instance, the United States is primarily a market economy, yet the presence of government subsidies and regulations reflect a degree of government control that makes ours a mixed economy. There are very few, if any, true market economies in the world, at least at the state level. There may be

³² Additional information can be found at: What is "Industrial Society"? (n.d.) Webpage. Retrieved from: <http://glori.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/airspace/NUSarchive/SC2202/IndusSociety.htm>. Accessed January 2013.

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market economies for certain *products*, such as the production and sale of what we consider illegal drugs, since they are produced and bought *despite* government regulation. Most predominantly market-driven countries like the U.S. use government regulation to protect consumers and workers, to enforce standards, and to limit collusion among owners of industry and technology.

In a planned economy, the government makes the major decisions related to production, distribution, and pricing, and there is no need to employ financial resources for advertising. The former Soviet Union operated as a state-planned economy. This type of economy is very slow to react to consumer needs and is vulnerable to disruptions in supply. In the Soviet Union, the population produced more on their personal plots of land than they did on the state-owned lands because they felt a personal incentive to produce food for themselves. Ultimately, the economy was mixed (see below), but the market driven aspects of it were considered illegal or even immoral in the Soviet Union. In contemporary Ethiopia, a similar pattern has occurred. Ethiopian agriculture accounts for more than 40% of its national gross domestic product and 85% of the people depend on agriculture for their livelihood (they live on the land and/or sell what they grow). When the government nationalized all industries and services, and took ownership of all farmland, living standards and crop yields improved until a drought reversed the trend. However, with all farmland being government-owned, there has been little incentive for local managers to invest in modern equipment or soil and water improvement methods.³³

Finally, a mixed economy combines both private and government sectors in decision-making. Mixed economies include both market-driven and government-planned economic policies and often arise in societies attempting to balance a wide range of societal, political, and economic views.

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Economics and Resources	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		

³³ Diao, X. (2010). Economic Importance of Agriculture for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction: The Case Study of Ethiopia. OECD Global Forum on Agriculture publication: TAD/CA/APM/WP(2010)23. Retrieved from: <http://www.oecd.org/tad/agriculturalpoliciesandsupport/46378942.pdf> . Accessed January 2013.

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Deep (beliefs and values)		
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V. Sustenance & Health

Introduction

This domain covers the ways humans feed themselves and treat their bodies. More specifically, a focus on sustenance leads to discussion of the patterns of subsistence (what people eat at different times of year), values placed on food rituals, food taboos, beliefs about properties of certain foods, etc. A focus on health includes discussion about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, how to be or get healthy when one is sick, how illness is defined, the causes of illness, medical rituals, people who can treat illness, etc.

Eating together is a common way to bond with people from different cultures. By now, most Airmen have heard of or experienced the ritual of drinking tea in the Middle East and Central Asia as a way to get to know one another. Through the variety of food and beverages available, one can come to understand the products of the local economy, the socioeconomic level of one's hosts, any dietary customs and taboos, the family structure and social relations among local people, and even the value they place on hospitality and formality.

Maintaining one's health is another way to sustain the body, but culture plays an important role in health and medicine. For example, many of us have argued with a relative about whether or not a draft through an open window can cause a cold. We might have chalked the difference up to age or ignorance, but the example is one way to remember that beliefs about causes of illness do not always fit into our Western medical framework. Such beliefs can be as real to others as the belief in medical science is to most of us.

What would you do if a young man in Eastern Europe cautioned you against drinking a cold drink because you would get a sore throat? How would you react if a person in North Africa told you her baby was sick because of jealousy and the "evil eye"? Each of these people could cite supporting examples of how cold drinks or the evil eye have caused illness. Your response in such situations may make the difference between building a relationship and ruining it. One response would be to ask them for more information: "tell me more about how that happens," or "why do you think so?" Another would be to say that it has never happened to you and is not a common cause of illness in the U.S. This type of response does not deny the validity or rationality of the person's *belief*, because you are only saying that it's new information to you or asking for a longer explanation.

Understanding cultural differences in approaches to sustenance and health will help you to see others' ways of life from their perspective and to think about how their beliefs and values in this area are influenced by many different parts of their culture. It's important to remember that

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people adapt to their environment through culture, and that sustenance patterns are related to the environment and the movement of people.

Examples:

Food and Eating Practices

You often hear that people either eat to live or live to eat. While this may depend on the individual, there is always a cultural component to how we sustain ourselves. These different cultural perceptions towards sustenance can cause miscommunication and even potentially insult people when we interact across cultures.

The types of food we eat are both environmentally and culturally determined. In the U.S., it is common to find pork, beef, and chicken readily available in the supermarkets, but it is unlikely you would find dog, which is frequently eaten in countries such as Vietnam, China and Korea. In these countries, dog is considered to be good for the health and metabolism because it makes you sweat. Likewise, eating beef in India is sacrilegious according to Hindu beliefs because cows are worshipped as the mother that gives milk to all beings. For Muslims and Jews, consuming pork is taboo since the pig is considered an unclean animal.

How we eat and with whom is also cultural. Depending on the culture, people sit on the floor, at a table or around a fire to eat; some use their hands, others use utensils; some eat primarily at home, while others are used to eating in restaurants frequently. Some East Asian cultures leave food at altars for their ancestors, a practice unusual for Americans. In addition, in most countries outside the U.S., it is considered improper to eat in front of someone else without offering that person some food, and it is also considered unhealthy to eat while doing something else, whether walking or working. Some Muslim cultures maintain separate eating facilities in restaurants for women and children; in other cultures, this is not an issue. Holidays are important occasions that people celebrate with food all around the world.

Food safety

In the U.S., there are strict regulations put forth by the FDA that determine how food can be served, packaged and how long it can remain on supermarket shelves. This protocol is rare in countries where food is purchased daily from markets and meat and produce may sit in the hot sun for hours before being purchased. Consumers will usually buy from trusted vendors, and word of mouth about which vendor's food made a person sick will travel fast.

Hygiene and Healthy Lifestyles

While most cultures have certain protocol about cleanliness, hygienic practices can vary dramatically from culture to culture and may be determined by religious beliefs. Our approach to health and healing is frequently shaped by our belief systems and spiritual values. Exercise, a low-fat diet with an emphasis on fruit and vegetables, sufficient sleep, and low stress are frequently touted in the U.S. to enable us to maintain a healthy lifestyle. These recommendations are influenced by our sedentary lifestyle. In cultures where people work outside all day, exercise for health is not seen as necessary, and you are more likely to find high-calorie foods in everyday meals.

Healing

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American methods of healing tend to focus on medicine prescribed by a doctor or health-care specialist, who try to "fix" whatever ails us. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that “in some Asian and African countries, 80% of the population depend on traditional medicine for primary health care” and wellness.³⁴ These are likely ingrained in another’s culture as much as our methods are seen as natural and best to us.

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Sustenance and Health	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

VI. Technology and Material

Introduction

Technology in relation to cultural domains refers to the result of the raw materials, equipment, knowledge, and skills that humans use to transform their natural environment and to produce items necessary to the culture and society. As an American, when you hear the word "technology", you likely think of items such as Blu-ray players, smartphones, laptops, the Internet, Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scans, titanium body parts, and even unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These are indeed technological items that require certain skills to create and use.

This domain also includes the wide array of technologies we have to capture and use energy (geothermal plants, steam train engines, coal-fired electrical plants), to harvest crops (from slash and burn methods to sophisticated mega-machines), and to move from one place to another

³⁴ World Health Organization (2008). Traditional Medicine, Fact Sheet No. 134. Webpage. Retrieved from: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs134/en/index.html>. Accessed January 2013.

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(boats, autos, domesticated horses). It also includes the infrastructure (roads, water systems, electrical grids) that helps a society be as productive as possible in the contemporary world. The development and use of technology is heavily influenced by culture and history.

Material in this cultural domain refers to the range of “things” that a culture has access to, such as raw materials, and the “things” it produces, such as the smartphones, UAVs, and automobiles noted above. We often call the latter “material culture,” because one can study a society’s material culture to get an idea of how they live and what they value (archaeologists do this for historical sites).

Understanding the cultural meaning of technology and material can seem simpler to do than understanding other parts of culture, such as religion or social relations. We can certainly observe how people work and the tools and resources they use to achieve their goals. However, we may not easily perceive the values associated with technology and material, or the beliefs people hold about them.

When we observe technology in many Middle Eastern and African cultures, we can readily identify infrastructure differences (as compared to most Western cultures) in transportation, telecommunications, manufacturing, energy sources, and environmental issues. Many of the reasons for this are the very things we discussed in the Economics and Resources domain, such as unstable social and political systems. In fact, the two domains are very closely related. Additionally, the varied influences of religious beliefs, governmental controls, limited education opportunities, and limited access to resources influence the application of technology in a culture.

When you deploy to a region with limited infrastructure and technology, it influences the kind of development aid people may accept, and how you should understand the priorities and concerns of the local population. Because of their own history with technology and material, they may have very different perspectives about how a resource should be used, who can use it, and its meaning.

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Technology and Material	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		

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Deep (beliefs and values)		
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VII. Religion and Spirituality

Introduction

From a social science perspective (that is, one focused on describing and understanding people, culture, and society), religion can be defined as “an organized system of ideas about spiritual reality, or the supernatural, along with associated beliefs and ceremonial practices by which people try to interpret and control aspects of the universe otherwise beyond their control.”³⁵

Spirituality also refers to sacred beliefs and practices related to the supernatural, but it usually refers to individual practice and belief, often without fixed format or organization, rather than a widely organized system of beliefs and practices.

These definitions leave room for a variety of interpretations of religion and spirituality, ranging from what we might call "superstition" to organized observances in a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple. In discussing this cultural domain, we focus on the relationship between religion and culture, such as observable expressions of religious beliefs within cultures, as well as how religion and spirituality influence and are influenced by the cultural values and norms within a society.

Religious tolerance is a deeply held value among Americans, and it is the official policy toward religion in the USAF. All Airmen are expected to respect and defend the freedom of religious belief, non-belief, and expression accorded under the First Amendment of the United States. One should be prepared to recognize the variety of religious and spiritual beliefs and practices one might encounter as *very important to the people who practice them*. At the same time, Airmen need to remember that religious tolerance might not be considered a value in areas where they may be assigned.

Here are universal characteristics that all types of religion and spirituality share³⁶:

1. *The sacred vs. the profane.* Religions tend to clearly distinguish between what is sacred (holy and spiritual) and what is profane (ordinary and worldly). The sacred can include places and monuments, food items, and many other aspects of life. In addition to items listed below, sacred items can also be symbols of belief, like Christian crosses.
2. *Sacred places.* Every culture has places that are believed to be holy, spiritual, or reverential and are separate from the ordinary places of everyday life. These things can include churches, temples, mosques, or natural settings. They are usually significant because of real or mythical past events.

³⁵ Haviland et al. (2005), p. 339

³⁶ Matthews, W. (2003). *World Religions*. Belmont, CA: Thompson-Wadsworth, pp. 2-4.

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3. *Sacred stories.* Stories passed orally from generation to generation are an integral part of understanding religious influences on culture. As you remember, a key component of culture is that it is shared among generations. Passing sacred stories down through generations helps transmit culture and religious beliefs, while at the same time endowing the stories themselves with a sense of sacredness. Many religions have origin stories as sacred stories, such as the story of Adam and Eve; others have stories about particular individuals or deities, like Shiva in Shaiva Hinduism.
4. *Sacred writings and texts.* Many religions have a collection of texts that act as the final authority on religious matters. These written records are different than the religious stories mentioned above in that they are usually considered to contain indisputable truths about the religion rather than simply providing moral guidelines. In many cases, the texts are considered to represent, or in some cases are the actual words of the religion's deity.
5. *Rituals.* Most religions contain repetitive, prescribed, and ceremonial actions that are reserved for religious use. These can include specific postures (kneeling, bowing, etc.), prayers, greetings, and many other activities and actions.

The major religions of the world all have these five characteristics in common. This helps make it easier to understand that while individual religious *beliefs* may be very different from one another, the cultural characteristics of religious *practices* can serve as context for comparison. They are also a good basis for learning about what people hold sacred, thereby reducing the potential for cross-cultural mistakes. Such knowledge also opens greater understanding of the values that support reverence for certain rituals, texts, stories, etc.

"Ethnic" and "Universalizing" Religions

There are also two general types of religions, “ethnic” and “universalizing” religions.³⁷ While all religions share the five characteristics outlined in the previous section, there are significant differences among the major religions of the world. One substantial difference is whether or not practitioners of a religion seek converts to their belief system. There are some religions who teach that everyone in the world should be a member of that religion in order to reach salvation in the afterlife, while others are limited in size and scope to a particular place or group of people.

Ethnic Religions

Ethnic religions are limited to a particular group of people originating from a specific place. Members of ethnic religions tend to be born into the religious group. Remember that ethnicity is a major factor in cultural identification, and when the religion is limited to a particular ethnic group, religion will play a strong role in the culture of that group. Examples can be found in the table below.

Universalizing Religions

Practitioners of universalizing religions believe that they have found the way to truth and salvation (gaining access to an afterlife, or becoming holier during one's life), and that their religion is the one true religion for all people. Therefore, they desire to bring their truth to all other people, and they actively work at converting non-believers to that religion. Ethnicity is not

³⁷ Information for this section comes primarily from the fields of human geography and sociology. For more information about ethnic and universalizing religions, see texts such as Fouberg, E. H. , A. B. Murphy, and H. J. de Blij. (2012). *Human Geography: People, Place, and Culture*, 9th ed. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

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a defining character of these religions because the practitioners believe their religion is applicable to all humanity and not any particular group. The table below helps illustrate how the major religions can be categorized as ethnic or universalizing.

Ethnic Religions	Universalizing Religions
Judaism Note that Judaism differs from the other two Abrahamic faiths, Christianity and Islam, which both fit into the universalizing category. While one can convert to Judaism, Jews primarily consider their religion as a characteristic that passes to people through family members. Judaism has about 13-14 million practitioners.	Christianity and Islam These religions have the largest amount of followers in the world, with roughly 2 billion practitioners each. In its developmental stages, each religious group overcame initial hostility and quickly developed a large following of believers from diverse cultural groups. Persecution did not stop the spread of these faiths, because they teach that spiritual rewards are more important than earthly ones. One gains spiritual rewards by converting others to the faith, among other activities. (This point is a good illustration of one of the characteristics that were listed earlier: identification of what is sacred (holy and spiritual) and what is profane (ordinary and worldly.)
Hinduism Hinduism, with origins in India, is practiced by almost a billion people. Just because a religion is limited in scope to a particular group of people does not mean that it is practiced by a small amount of people or that it does not have a <u>large scale cultural impact</u> in the world.	
Shintoism Shintoism is an ethnic faith in Japan. Although not all Japanese practice it (Buddhism and Christianity are also popular in Japan), it fits into the ethnic category. There are about 119 million practitioners of Shintoism.	Buddhism This faith was founded in the 5 th century B.C. in India by an Indian prince. It preaches the attainment of Nirvana (elimination of suffering) via moral behavior and a life of moderation. Buddhism is the predominant religion in the Far East.
Other examples of ethnic faiths are indigenous belief systems, such as Native American faiths and other traditional religions (non-Abrahamic religions) in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the South Pacific.	

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Religion and Spirituality	
	U.S. Culture	Other Culture: _____

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	(or your home culture)	(you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

VIII. Aesthetics and Recreation

Introduction

Aesthetics are the expressions of cultural norms of beauty or style. Recreation is the way people spend their leisure time – the things they do for pleasure, relaxation, or personal interest. Activities within this cultural domain also relate to the ways people in a society express themselves creatively. The cultural indicators of Aesthetics and Recreation can be items people wear; how people decorate or modify their bodies in the name of beauty; building styles; the arts (theater, dance, music, painting, etc.); ways people spend their free time; hobbies, sports, and all types of games. Along with the external expressions of beauty or leisure, people attach meaning to these activities, which is reinforced by their beliefs and values about what is “good/bad,” “right/wrong,” “moral/immoral,” etc. Because aesthetic and recreational activities demonstrate beliefs and values, they are integrally connected to culture. In addition, people use aesthetic and recreational activities to represent their culture to others and also to transmit culture to future generations. Moreover, sports are often used as a symbolic substitute for war or conflict. This can occur in any size group, such as in crosstown rival high school football teams or adversary states’ athletes participating in the Olympics.

Why is the study of Aesthetics and Recreation important to Airmen and to cross-cultural competence (3C)? The activities people undertake for fun and enjoyment can tell you as much about their culture as activities in the other cultural domains. The division between work and play is significant, because it's the difference between time spent on the job or doing things necessary for survival, and the time spent doing things for pleasure, relaxation, and personal interest. There are many cultures that do not view time or business in the same "git-er-done" mentality as most Americans, and prefer to spend time on building social relationships before getting down to business. Discussing or participating in leisure activities is a great way to help establish rapport and show interest in the host culture.

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In fact, sports, leisure, and artistic activities relate strongly to the previous domain, Social and Political Relations. People use creative and leisure activities and aesthetic demonstrations to show their belonging to a particular group, or mark themselves as different from other groups.

Example: Clothing as Symbols

Take a look at this photo of a martial arts class and make a list (mental or real) of all the symbols and other indicators of meaning you can find. Then, add to your list three values you think are reflected by the clothing the people are wearing.



When you are finished, look at the information on these sites (or search for your own) for more information about the culture of this particular martial art, Taekwondo, and the meaning of the clothing in the photo.

<http://www.southhamstkcd.co.uk/whatistkd/behaviour.html>

<http://www.southhamstkcd.co.uk/whatistkd/grading.html>

Were you able to lengthen your list after reading the sites?

Read on for a look at what our local expert saw in the photo.

An Expert's View

One of our colleagues, a second degree black belt with 12 total years of Taekwondo experience, had this to say when he described the clothing and other symbolic meaning presented in the photo:

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"First, it's clear this is a Taekwondo class because of the style of the belts the people are wearing (the width, length, and markings on them) and the way the belts are tied. All of these are clues. For instance, jujitsu belts are not as thick, have no markings except white or red tape, and generally are more flexible. The bars on the belt of the man standing with the black pants indicate his rank, second degree black belt. This looks like an advanced level class because of the color of the belts on the different people. I see black, red, and maybe blue belts here. Black is the highest "color" belt, but there are up to nine levels of black belt. Black symbolizes that you have learned the techniques, but ranks in black belt show that you continue on to master these techniques as well. Blue and red are below black, but above green, yellow, and white. Green, blue, and red are known as 'sparring ranks' because they can spar with each other in class and in competitions. Next, I believe the man executing the kick is the highest ranking person present, because the person who holds the focus point for a class demonstration is usually a lower-ranking instructor than the instructor performing the action.

The people in the back wearing the helmets and pads with the blue and red dots are probably preparing for a competition. Those pads are worn to distinguish one competitor from another (blue vs. red) and also as markers of where competitors can score points for successful blows. It's common for people in more advanced levels to compete all year round, so this could be any time of year. Finally, this photo was probably taken in the last five years because of the style of shirt and pants the man holding the focus pad is wearing. This style was more recently officially adopted in the U.S. because it is of lighter material, easier to wear and less constricting than the tunic that crosses over in the front."

We went to on to ask our local expert about values transmitted when one studies Taekwondo. He replied:

"The values represented by the clothing and the other symbols I see here can be a regard for self-discipline and training; and respect for higher ranking practitioners and one's colleagues. It's also a way of saying you belong to a group (and all groups) of people who practice Taekwondo. By wearing the uniform, people are also indicating respect for the sport and for other people who do Taekwondo. The students who are sitting are showing respect for instructors of higher rank. By taking part in the belt system, the practitioners show they value the training and self-discipline required for a person to advance in Taekwondo practice."

One website our expert pointed us to says that the Taekwondo uniform (also called a Dobok) "should be white to symbolize cleanliness and innocence and a willingness to learn."³⁸ These are all values!

How would you treat a person you know is steeped in Taekwondo culture? What kinds of assumptions could you or would you make about the person? What kinds of responses might you expect from him or her in stressful situations? Now replace "Taekwondo" with another cultural group, such as players of a sport, members of an ethnic group, or people who practice a certain religion, and ask yourself the same questions. Thinking about behaviors, symbols, beliefs, and values should help you answer.

³⁸ Taekwondo Training (2013). Taekwondo Dobok. Webpage. Retrieved from: <http://www.taekwondo-training.com/education/taekwondo-dobok>. Accessed January 2013.

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Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Aesthetics and Recreation	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

IX. Language and Communication

Introduction

Communication is the activity of transmitting information between people.³⁹ It is different than language, which is one method by which people communicate and express themselves.

Human languages are systems of communication. Although all animal species exchange information to survive, only human language actually recreates complex thought patterns and experiences in words. Language is crucial to establishing social relationships. By translating experience into language, humans gain knowledge that can be communicated to new members of the group or society - we use language and non-verbal communication to teach and convey culture. When entering an unfamiliar culture, one of the easiest and quickest ways to create unnecessary conflict is to miscommunicate. Language and communication barriers can frustrate the most seasoned and patient Airmen.

Our coverage of this domain will not focus on language, but on language *use* and other forms of *communication*, as well as the complexities of cross-cultural interaction. We often have difficulties communicating with people from our own culture, but when encountering people from different cultures, the possibility for miscommunication multiplies. This section approaches

³⁹ Merriam-Webster (2011). "Communication." Merriam-Webster Online. Retrieved from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/communication> . Accessed January 2013.

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cross-cultural communication via features of communication, such as verbal and nonverbal ways of conveying messages that are not always included in words.

Communication may be the most diverse of all the cultural domains. We continually change our verbal and nonverbal means of communicating, and these can differ according to settings, roles, and micro-cultures. The range of nonverbal means of communication (body language, interpersonal distance, touch, etc.) is as rich a field as verbal communication.

Because you have a separate lesson on cross-cultural communication, this section has been intentionally kept short.

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Language and Communication	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

X. Time and Space

Introduction

Information in this cultural domain intersects a great deal with that in the Language and Communication domain, because cultural differences in treatment of time and space are often difficult to observe but are easier to notice when you are communicating with others. For example, the distance you stand from someone when talking is influenced by culture and circumstance. In addition, the way you think of yourself in relation to the past, present, and future is culturally influenced: the U.S. dominant culture encourages people to “plan ahead,” “think ahead,” and “look to the future,” while people with other orientations to time may value

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“living in each moment.” Moreover, others may feel that planning ahead tempts fate or is incompatible with their faith in the power of their god(s).⁴⁰

How we navigate time and space can vary dramatically from one culture to the next. People’s sense of time and space (how they use both, where they fit into both) is usually related to their religious or spiritual beliefs. The different approaches we have to time and space can also create problematic misunderstandings when people with different approaches interact. This topic is addressed further in the section on cultural characteristics, following the last cultural domain.

Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Time and Space	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

XI. History and Myth

Introduction

History is a critical component of human knowledge and culture; it informs both human experience and our cultural knowledge. People's perceptions of history are cultural, however. Some may think of history as a linear stretch of time from long ago until now; others may think of it as something that is all around us, influencing everything we do today. Some peoples may refer to historical events from centuries ago as if they happened just a few years ago. An example is the different perspectives on colonial powers held by the U.S. and some countries in Eastern Europe. The U.S. has a friendly relationship with Great Britain and we variably take pride in or joke about our colonial past, despite the grievances that led us to claim independence. In some Eastern European countries, the period when they were ruled by the Ottoman Empire is still a source of bitterness, even though in some places it ended at approximately the same time as our

⁴⁰ See http://home.sandiego.edu/~pavett/docs/msg1_503/mytime_or_yours.pdf for a breakdown of many culturally different approaches to time.

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colonization by Britain. Turks are often mistrusted and the state governments have cautious relationships. You might chalk these differences up to the treatment each group received, but it is also related to cultural perspectives on the importance of history, and the importance of long-term relationships. Every culture sees “history” from its own perspective. They may not know it in the same way we read about it in our school textbooks, or the way we experienced it. Likewise, we may not know how others learned about and experienced history. There is not one unified interpretation of history. People in power usually decide what historical events will be taught in formal educational settings, and how they will be taught and remembered. The less powerful people in a society may have vastly different interpretations of the same events, and may teach and remember them differently.

Myth, on the other hand, is often associated with fiction and the supernatural. Nevertheless, myth is important because it embodies popular ideas about the natural world and historical events in a given culture. Mythical stories often support customs that are passed on through the generations. We often tend to discount myth as not very important or “just stories”, but in some cultures, myth is sacred and heavily influences their cultural beliefs and values in everyday life. Myths set standards of behavior, distinguish the sacred from the profane, preserve culture, tell of the origins of a people, teach basic religious and spiritual principles, and shape worldview. All cultures have myths that represent values, superstitions, beliefs about creation and origins of man, higher powers, etc, and folk tales and legends that pass down orally from generation to generation. Myths have many parallels between cultures. Comparing stories about creation, doomed lovers, power and properties of nature, and other common themes can be interesting as well as provide insight into the beliefs and values of an unfamiliar culture.

Finally, historical events and myths influence the predominant symbols used to represent a culture or society.

Historical Influence on Cross-cultural Interactions

The United States is unique in that we have never been conquered since becoming an independent state, have never had to bow to foreign imposition of what to believe or how to behave, and do not host foreign military forces on our soil. Many of the cultures we interact with do have an eventful history of conquering and being conquered, overthrow of governments and political systems, imposition of foreign rules, geographical boundaries, and customs, plunder of their riches and resources, and, have often experienced (voluntarily and involuntarily) foreign military forces in their homelands. The impact of this on cultural perspective should not be treated lightly or ignored. Europeans, in particular, have a long history of having colonized countries in the Middle East, Africa, Caribbean islands, and the Americas. As countries were handed back or won back their sovereignty over the years, many were unable to shake off the influence of and dependence on their former colonial masters. This has resulted in a backlash against Westerners and becomes a rallying point for national pride. On the other hand, the U.S. may be seen as different from the former colonizers, and treated better. To compound that, the United States' position as a military and economic powerhouse, combined with being a relatively young country with “no culture or history,” according to some critics, can add insult to injury when we are present in much older cultures. It is likely we are viewed as upstarts and represent the specter of imperialism, no matter why we are involved with another country.

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Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	History and Myth	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

XII. Learning and Knowledge

Introduction

Every culture has multiple ways of transmitting knowledge to others. Who teaches whom, what is taught, when (at what age or stage of life), where (in a specific place or anywhere), how (formally, informally), and why (tradition, survival, etc.) all are influenced by culture. The transmission of culture is as important to human survival as transmission of genetic material through sexual reproduction.

Through informal and formal education, children are enculturated into a way of life, a belief system, a set of values, a worldview. They are taught their relationship to animate and inanimate objects (animals, toys, earth, other humans), spatial relationships (proxemics, living arrangements, etc.), temporal relationships (importance of ancestors, values of time management, for example), and in general, what is “normal,” “acceptable,” and “unacceptable” in their culture.

To varying degrees, each human society teaches children that they are dependent on the family, the group, the society, etc., and that they should be independent from the family, group, society, etc. For example, most Japanese parents teach children to respect elders and to make sacrifices for the good of the family, yet they also encourage children to establish their own residence after marriage. Most North American parents teach children to share with and respect others and to respect the laws of the land, yet they also strongly emphasize children’s independence from a young age.

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Here is your comparison chart showing the levels of culture. Write in your thoughts, observations, or experiences, then be prepared to discuss them in class.

Level of Culture	Learning and Knowledge	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Surface (material and behaviors)		
Middle (systems and structures)		
Deep (beliefs and values)		

Other Cultural Characteristics

In this section, you will read about a few of the many characteristics of culture that influence cross-cultural interactions. The characteristics are taken from several bodies of work: Edward Hall’s pioneering writings on intercultural communication, including nonverbal communication, proxemics, chronemics, and high and low context communication styles⁴¹; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s studies of value orientations⁴²; and Hofstede’s research on cultural dimensions⁴³.

While each of these researchers focus on slightly different aspects of culture, we have consolidated here those that fellow Airmen have found practical in cross-cultural interactions. They are: tendencies toward collectivism and individualism; chronemics; high and low context communication styles; and power distance. . We will introduce these characteristics here and you will discuss them further in your cross-cultural communication lesson.

⁴¹ Hall, E. T. (1981 (1959)). *The Silent Language*, New York, NY: Anchor Books.

-- (1982 (1966)). *The Hidden Dimension*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

-- (1981 (1976)). *Beyond Culture*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

⁴² Hills, M.D. (2002). Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck’s Values Orientation Theory. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, Unit 4. Retrieved from <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/vol4/iss4/3>. Accessed January 2013; and

Kluckhohn, F. R. and Strodtbeck, F. L. (1961). *Variations in value orientations*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

⁴³ Hofstede, G., G. J. Hofstede, and M. Minkov (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill. See also <http://geert-hofstede.com/national-culture.html> for summaries of main points.

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Collectivism and Individualism

Collectivism is the tendency to consider extended family affiliations and being a member of a larger group (ethnic, national, tribal, etc.) as very important throughout a person's life. Apart from the majority cultures of North America and Western Europe, most cultures in the world tend toward collectivism. The U.S. and most Western European cultures tend to be more *individualistic*. This means that extended family ties play a less important role in our lives, and we do not usually consider the influence of larger groups (or the impact on larger groups) when we make decisions about our lives. However, no culture is entirely collectivist or individualistic, but live somewhere along the continuum.

Americans unfamiliar with the function and significance of the family in more collectivist cultures may face confusion and uncertainty when interacting with people abroad. It is important to remember that in more collectivist cultures, kinship and group membership play a greater role in defining a person's sense of self, family obligations, and responsibilities than it does in the U.S. The two sections below show some contrasts between the collectivism and individualism, especially as they relate to family networks.

Individualism:

- The most meaningful definition of family is the nuclear family: parent(s) and child(ren).
- An individual usually lives separately from the family of orientation after basic education is finished. When the individual initiates his or her own family of procreation, they usually live apart from the family of orientation.
- As a child grows into adolescence, s/he becomes less dependent on family and identifies more strongly with other groups (sports, political, religious, and so forth). These are often called micro-cultures.
- Once a person becomes independent, s/he maintains economic and legal independence from the family of orientation. People are *as likely to* turn to institutions (government, banks, businesses) *as to* their family when it comes to economic support or labor (getting a loan, finding a job, or hiring someone).

Collectivism

- The most meaningful definition of family is the extended family, consisting of: blood relatives of multiple generations and on both parents' sides of the family (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, children, siblings, nephews, nieces, cousins, etc.), and in-laws (relatives by marriage)
- An individual usually lives with the family of orientation until marriage, and even may live in the same household, building, or neighborhood as the family of orientation after marriage. However, wives more often move to the husband's family household than vice versa.
- As a child grows into adolescence and adulthood, the extended family remains a significant source of identity and group affiliation. Family relations influence (but do not absolutely determine) where one lives, what political candidates and parties one supports, one's religious identification, etc.
- People tend to remain economically and legally dependent on on their family of orientation until marriage, and even sometimes after marriage. People also tend to turn *more to* their extended family network for economic support or labor *than to* institutions.

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In this version of the cultural comparison chart, write examples of collectivism and/or individualism in the U.S. and other cultures. These could align to any level of culture, and frequently with all of them, so we've removed the levels of culture from the chart. Use the contrasts above as a guideline, but write examples from your own experience, such as, "we don't believe in putting our grandmother in a nursing home, so she lives with us." This example shows that U.S. majority culture behavior is usually to put elderly in special homes where others care for them; the homes themselves, the system that supports them, and the fact that we consider grandmothers part of the family are all Structures of our society; and an individual's negative value held on the practice speaks to deep levels of culture.

	Collectivism and Individualism	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Examples		

Chronemics



Anthropologist Edward T. Hall, spent years studying *chronemics*, or how time is expressed in non-verbal communication.⁴⁴ He concluded that cultures that tend to have a more linear sense of time are *monochronic*. Monochronic cultures tend to view time as something that is earned, saved, spent, or wasted. Cultures with a monochronic orientation typically value punctuality, adhere strictly to schedules and deadlines, and prefer to work in a systematic manner completing

⁴⁴ Hall, E. T. (1981 (1959)). *The Silent Language*, New York, NY: Anchor Books.
 -- (1982 (1966)). *The Hidden Dimension*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.
 -- (1981 (1976)). *Beyond Culture*. New York, NY: Anchor Books.

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one task at a time. Time is measured by events that happen one after another, in the past, present, and future. Monochronic cultures are more prevalent in northern Europe, the United States and Canada. These majority cultures were strongly impacted by the Industrial Revolution, which fostered a task-oriented approach to work. Wasting time is viewed as frivolous. Preoccupation with time management combined with less concern for relationship-building is also a characteristic of a *low context* culture (see below).

Polychronic cultures, however, are the antithesis of monochronic cultures. In a more polychronic culture, time is treated as cyclical, uncontrollable and/or naturally disorderly. Events overlap and are not seen as progressing through history, one after another. Time is viewed as uncontrollable due to the unpredictability of life that may cause a situation to change depending on how events unfold. A common expression heard in many Middle Eastern cultures, *Inshallah* (God willing), typifies a polychronic approach to time where the individual is given a certain amount of latitude for being late—or not showing up at all for a meeting. In such cultures, allowances are made for certain unforeseen circumstances, such as running into an old friend, and delays are viewed as part of life. Actions tend to be spontaneous with relationships being the focus of attention. While people with a polychronic inclination towards time may strive to meet deadlines and schedules, they tend to be more flexible and relaxed. Interruptions are common and the focus tends to be on doing multiple tasks simultaneously. Moreover, people may tend to have a fatalistic view on how and why events occur, meaning they don't see themselves as having much control over the future, or they simply don't dwell on schedules. There are other factors that contribute to what we see as a *laissez-faire* attitude towards time. Many of the places we deploy to have limited infrastructure, with unreliable roads and transportation, and therefore being late is frequently regarded as normal or expected. Finally, a personal or family issue could easily take priority over a business issue, understandably causing one to be late. Polychronic cultures tend to be more prevalent in Latin America, the Middle East, the Mediterranean basin, Africa, and southeast Asia. Placing a high value on relationships and activities with little regard for time is also a characteristic of a *high context culture* (see below).

Along with a monochronic and polychronic view of time, cultures also have different approaches to understanding how the present day fits into the stream of time. Some cultures, particularly those with a long shared history and legacy, tend to focus more on past events. Other cultures may favor living in the present with little regard for the past or future. Newer cultures, may adopt a future-oriented approach, always looking ahead to tomorrow.

In this version of the cultural comparison chart, write examples of polychronic and monochronic time orientations in the U.S. and other cultures.

	Polychronic/Monochronic Time Orientation	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Examples		

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High Context Communication Styles

When listening to someone speak, people in *relatively* high context cultures pay more attention to the message's context, verbal cues, and nonverbal cues than people in *relatively* low context cultures (no culture completely adheres to high context or low context communication styles; these are preferences).⁴⁵

A message's context, or its surrounding and influencing factors, is influenced by:

- the roles of the people communicating and those around them,
- the hierarchy between the people present,
- the speaker's relationship to the group, and
- the history of the people involved, among other factors.

A culture's worldview also influences the ways people interpret the meaning of context in communication. Many collectivist cultures like those predominant in East Asia (Japan, Korea and China), as well as most Middle Eastern, Arab, Latino, and Mediterranean cultures tend toward high context communication styles. In these cultures, one's relationship to the group is a dominant factor in any interaction; it must be preserved and enhanced at all times. That is why group loyalty, patronage, and hierarchy are so important to people in more collectivist cultures. They are more likely to postpone making decisions, since that would be disrespectful to those in the hierarchy above them. They are also less likely to disagree publicly with someone or openly criticize another person, since that would reflect poorly on the other person's family/reputation, and might bring that person's whole clan down upon the offender.

In cultures that tend toward high context communication, it is usually essential to establish trust with your counterpart before you can proceed with business. Therefore, professional engagements are often culturally scripted, and any attempt to accelerate the tempo at the expense of social pleasantries will likely result in deadlock. When interacting with cultures where Western influence and globalization are prominent, you may find the pace has stepped up in some areas. However, you should still respect, and be ready to adapt to if possible, the local cultural communication styles and conceptions of time and space.

These many tendencies lead toward communication styles that favor the listener's ability to read between the lines, understand intonation, and slight gestures. Speakers tend to choose words that are ambiguous, knowing that an adept listener will understand based on the context of the interaction. Lessons are taught through analogies, parables, or other stories that illustrate knowledge and wisdom. These are not attempts to be sneaky, disrespectful, or obtuse. They are more indirect than low context communicators are used to, but they are just different, not better or worse. This is the way people in high context cultures have grown up communicating, and it seems natural to them. They may even highly respect people who are good at communicating in this way.

⁴⁵ Ting-Toomey, S. (1985). Toward a theory of conflict and culture. In W. Gudykunst, L. Stewart & S. Ting-Toomey (Eds.), *Communication, Culture and Organizational Processes*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

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In Japan, for example, preserving harmony within the group and saving face are critically important. Communication leans towards nonverbal subtleties and messages that allow the listener to read between the lines of what is actually being said. You would be more likely to hear indirect criticisms or allusions to a person's behavior, rather than outright critiques. Likewise, people in cultures that tend toward high context communication are not likely to refuse a request outright. Doing so might offend the asker and damage the long-term relationship between the parties. It might not be up to that person to give his or her assent, because of the hierarchical nature of their group relationships. Saying no might also draw undue criticism to a person for making promises that may not be kept. A high context communicator may therefore be vague, using phrases such as "it might be difficult", "it would not be a problem", or "Inshallah" that will not definitely commit them to a course of action.⁴⁶

Low Context Communication Styles

When listening to someone speak, people in *relatively* low context cultures pay more attention to the explicit meaning of the verbal message.⁴⁷ Low context communicators often stress lots of detail, facts, and statistics with little regard given to how the message is delivered. They favor communication that gets directly to the point rather than communicating through analogies and high context hints. It is the sender's responsibility to provide a clear message that can easily be decoded by the receiver.

Many relatively individualistic cultures, like those predominant in North America and much of northern Europe, tend toward low context communication styles. This is not to say that group membership and hierarchy are not valued, but people pay deference to their role in the hierarchy by taking responsibility on themselves. They need to prove their point with verifiable information, since they don't rely on the power of their social group to back them up. Since saving face for the group is less of a concern, "saying what you mean and meaning what you say" are more highly valued characteristics in low context communication.

When people with these differences in communication style interact, they often experience conflict based on communication rather than on their dedication to a particular mission. For example, high context communicators are apt to become impatient and irritated when low context communicators insist on giving them information they don't need, like "preaching to the choir". Conversely, low context communicators are at a loss when high context communicators don't provide enough explicit information about how to proceed or whom to talk to. They may also tire easily of hearing analogies instead of facts.

The American military epitomizes the low context culture and communication style. What we consider direct, concise, and clear language is valued and expected, and we expect people to deliver their message quickly. Anything else is typically reacted to with impatience, confusion, frustration and even contempt. Often, low context communicators presume that high context communication is ineffective. This is not the case. The effectiveness comes from listeners

⁴⁶ Wunderle, W. (2007). *Through the Lens of Cultural Awareness: A Primer for U.S. Armed Forces Deploying to Arab and Middle Eastern Countries*. Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press.

⁴⁷ Ting-Toomey, S. 1985.

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knowing how to interpret speakers' messages in specific contexts, and how to reply in a way that is culturally appropriate.

However, people who have worked closely overseas with allies, local populations and non-governmental organizations will attest that mission success is often directly linked to their ability to adapt to a different, typically high context, communication style. Your counterparts may judge you as more respectful or trustworthy if you can understand, respect, and adjust to their way of communicating. You should also teach them about your way of communicating, so that you better understand each other's styles.

Once again, you should remember that while all cultures use low and high context communication patterns, one form tends to dominate. While most Americans tend to be low context communicators, there are certain situations when we may adopt high context communication techniques, say when we roll our eyes at a friend in a meeting or start an inside joke that we don't need to finish because the other person knows it so well. Also, many micro-cultures found within the U.S. or in other countries may deviate from the communication context adopted by our macro-culture.

In this version of the cultural comparison chart, write examples of high and low context communication styles in the U.S. and other cultures.

	High and Low Context Communication Styles	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Examples		

Power Distance and Communication Styles

Now that we have identified some of the more common features of communication that affect cross-cultural interactions, let's look at a deeper element of communication: the influence of context and worldview on communication.

Power distance is the "extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally."⁴⁸ In other words, every culture accepts the "pecking order" a little differently. In cultures with a higher degree of power distance, the language subordinates use with their superiors is more deferential and less contradictory. Here you might reflect upon the military micro-culture in the U.S., which tends to be more hierarchical than mainstream U.S. culture. Consider the ways that this

⁴⁸ Hofstede, G. (2012). "Dimensions of National Cultures." Webpage. Retrieved from <http://www.geerthofstede.nl/culture/dimensions-of-national-cultures.aspx> . Accessed January 2013.

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influences your communication, from nonverbals such as saluting superiors to addressing superiors and officers formally as "Sir" and "Ma'am" and using their rank.

The more you are able to understand the power distance that exists within different cultures, for instance when addressing elders within an Afghan tribe, the more you can tailor your communication accordingly. Higher power distance cultures tend to be more high context communicators than lower power distance cultures.

In this version of the cultural comparison chart, write examples of high and low power distance in the U.S. and other cultures.

	High/Low Power Distance	
	U.S. Culture (or your home culture)	Other Culture: _____ (you choose)
Examples		

Summary

The impact of culture cannot be overstated in any discussion about the USAF achieving mission success in its wide array of global commitments. This reader has provided you with a broad overview of cultural domains and asked you to apply your knowledge to the three-level model. It has also asked you to generate examples of different cultural characteristics, like high power distance and collectivism. Our intent has been to help you create new categories for organizing cultural experiences and ways to integrate knowledge with skills, in order to help you improve the quality of your future cross-cultural interactions.