Research Paper

All Assignments must be typed, double-spaced, & include your name and topic.

1) Due Friday, January 13 — Topic selection. (20 points) Identify a culture you will research for your paper and write a brief description of the basic values and beliefs of the culture in no more than 80 words. When selecting a culture as your topic, keep in mind that you will need to research the following:

   a. **Language:** a set of symbols used to assign and communicate meaning.
   b. **Norms:** humanly created rules for behavior, which includes folkways, mores, taboos, and rituals.
   c. **Values:** Anything members of a culture aspire to or hold in high esteem. Values are things to be achieved, things considered of great worth or value.
   d. **Beliefs and Ideologies:** Beliefs are the things members of a culture hold to be true. They are the “facts” accepted by all or most of the members. These are not limited to religious statements, but include all the things a people know and accept as true, including common sense, everyday knowledge. Ideologies are integrated and connected systems of beliefs.
   e. **Social Collectives:** Such as groups organizations, communities, institutions, classes, and societies are also collectively produced symbolic social constructions.
   f. **Statuses and Roles:** Status is a slot or position within a group or society that tell us who people are and how they “fit” into the group. Roles are norms specifying the rights and responsibilities associated within a particular status.
   g. **Cultural Integration:** how interconnected complementary and mutually supportive the various elements of the culture are.

2) Due Friday, February 3 — Annotated Bibliography. (100 points) You must research at least ten sources, three of which much be books, and summarize the information you find. Include the following in each source summary: MLA format citation, the type of information you find, how relevant it is to your research, and explain why you believe the source you are using is reliable or biased in any way.

   **WARNING:** If you use a website to help with MLA formatting, make sure you proofread it before turning it in to ensure the punctuation is correct and the elements are all in the correct places.

3) Friday, March 3—Research Paper Rough Draft (100 points)
You must turn in your rough draft in paper copy by class March 3. We will be peer editing these. Make sure you have included the following in your draft: a proper introduction and thesis; all seven elements of a culture, three quotations; a strong conclusion; and a Works Cited page. Failure to turn in a draft in paper form by March 3 will result in a 0 for the rough draft and a 0 for the in-class editing assignment, since you will not be able to participate.

4) Due Friday, March 24—Final Draft of Research Paper (200 points). All elements necessary in the rough draft are required in the final draft (a proper introduction and thesis; all seven elements of a culture, three quotations; a strong conclusion; and a Works Cited page). You must also include your name and page number on each page of the paper. Your paper MUST be turned in bound and with a title page, so you must hand this in—not email it.
Research Paper Guidelines

Introduction:
1. State the culture you will be discussing, and name the seven elements and briefly explain that to be defined as a culture it must comprise these elements—this is your thesis statement.

2. If, through your research, you have discovered something personally intriguing about the culture that you want to convey to the reader, you may incorporate that into your thesis and angle your paper in that direction. For example, if you are studying an ancient culture and you are impressed by the relevance of that culture in today’s world, please feel free to include that in your thesis and drive that point home throughout the paper.

— Each element of a culture should be addressed with its own heading.

— There is a minimum of 150 words for each section. The idea is to address each element thoroughly as it pertains to your culture.

— You must also include at least three in-text quotations in your paper that are properly cited.

Language:
1. Consider explaining the origins of the language; perhaps give an example of the language here (this may fulfill one of your required quotes).

2. Consider your audience is coming primarily from the American viewpoint, so direct your explanations from that perspective. For example, our language evolves over time and is comprised of various derivations of different languages. Our written language is the same as our spoken language, and there is no difference in dialect except regional accents, which don’t change the meaning of the spoken or written word. We don’t use pictures or characters, just letters, and we write from left to right. We communicate with words and speech in a variety of media, such as letters, conversation, e-mail, twitter, text messaging, and public forums.

Norms:
1. Explain the culture’s rules for behavior. Again, consider how it differs from the American culture when explaining it. Are all people considered equal? Are the elderly venerated? Are females more prized than males? Who gets to make the rules for the culture? Are those rules changing?

2. Consider what rituals, folkways, mores, or taboos are in the culture. Do young adolescents have to go through a “coming-of-age” ritual to be considered an adult? Is kissing in public a taboo? What assumptions, values, or rules are behind the rituals or taboos?

3. Are the norms of that society changing? Explain why or why not?

Values:
1. What are the underlying values of the culture? What is most valued, treasured, or revered in the culture?

2. Our American culture promotes the idea of capitalism—anyone can achieve “The American Dream” with a lot of hard work and sometimes a bit of good luck. Many Americans value hard work, honesty, and compassion toward others. Many like the idea that they are not bound to one social class, but they can achieve anything they have the desire and determination to achieve. Americans also have a fascination with celebrities. With no royal class, we have elevated models,
clothing designers, television personalities, and movie stars to the upper eschelon of society and seem to highly revere them. Why? What do we value as a culture that makes them so worthy of such high esteem?

**Beliefs and Ideologies:**
1. What “facts” do the members of the culture hold to be true? What assumptions are made; what beliefs are accepted by all members as inherently true? Some American beliefs might include “honesty is the best policy,” “you can achieve anything you set out to do.”

2. These beliefs don't always have to be facts, only what the culture accepts as fact. For example, the people in *Things Fall Apart* believe that twins are evil.

3. Ideologies are systems of beliefs, which can also be religious in nature. For example, some cultures have adopted a particular religious ideology that is so connected to their culture it is not possible to distinguish that ideology from the culture because they are so interconnected. An example of this would be many Irish, who combine their ancient Celtic origins with their more recent Catholic ideology.

**Social Collectives:**
1. Consider the social constructions within the culture. Ancient Romans and Greeks enslaved the prisoners of war; the Hindus believe in the caste system, and the Amazons prized women. What do the systems reveal about the culture and its beliefs, values or ideologies?

2. Are there specific organizations within the culture? Are there prominent institutions within the culture that play a vital role?

**Statuses and Roles:**
1. Explain how certain groups or positions fit into the culture and what rights or responsibilities are associated with that status?

2. As mentioned before, Americans seem to highly regard celebrities, why? What are their responsibilities and why are they granted that status?

**Cultural Integration:**
1. How interconnected are the various elements of a culture? Does the ideology of the culture play a prominent role in the societal norms and values? Does the language of the culture play an important role in supporting the culture?

2. Explain how the above six elements of the culture work to complement or support the culture, or explain how any of the elements seems to contradict components of the culture.

3. If you are studying an ancient culture, is there a specific conflict any of the elements have with other aspects of the culture that led to the culture’s overall demise?

4. Do the different elements work together and support the culture or do they seem to create tension within the culture, which may someday cause problems within the culture in the future?

5. Feel free to make your own conclusions here, without referring to yourself. If you were making a specific point with your thesis and driving it home throughout the body, reiterate your points here.