Intro to American Culture
The Foundation of American Culture

- Then: “melting pot”
  Now: “salad bowl”
- Equality and Diversity
- Value Individualism and Independence
  - Held accountable for own actions
  - Hard working, productivity, accomplishment, achievement
Stereotypes about Americans

Welcome to America!

I'm gonna let you finish, but...
Different regions have their own culture
*Yes, including their own stereotypes
Stereotypes about Americans

Southern (In this case, Louisiana)

REDNECK RULE NUMBER ONE

MOST THINGS CAN BE FIXED WITH DUCT TAPE AND EXTENSION CORDS.

Northern (In this case, New Jersey)

VS
Shopping - Discount Department Stores

ADVANTAGES
- Ideal for living on a budget
- Can buy cheaper clothing, food/groceries, household & home improvement items

DISADVANTAGES
- Discount grocery stores have a smaller selection than a supermarket, and you’ll likely need to visit a supermarket if grocery shopping
- Often will not carry a variety of specialty items (i.e. fancy cheeses, ethnic spices, gluten free, etc)
- Can be overwhelming due to size and number of selections
Shopping – Grocery Stores and Supermarkets

**ADVANTAGES**
- Reasonable or low prices of goods
- Easy & quick
- Freedom of selection
- More options than discount department grocery

**DISADVANTAGES**
- Does not provide various services such as free home delivery, credit facility and after sale service

**Aldi** – No personal guidance; cheaper food; Fewer amenities (i.e. no bags, shopping cart is loaned out to customers)

**Publix** – Slightly pricier with higher quality of selection; More personal guidance; Always spotless & clean

**Winn Dixie** – Mid-range pricing; Less customer service support
Shopping

**ADVANTAGES**
- Can have hundreds of shopping options
- Food court
- Multiple department stores
- Movie theaters

**DISADVANTAGES**
- Crowded (especially around American holidays)
- Food court
- Can be pricy (Look for sales or seasonal discounts!)
American Fashion - Men
American Fashion - Women
*Due to the humid weather in Florida, it is common for shorts and thinner shirts year round.
Communication

- Direct - “to the point”
- Ask a lot of questions
  - Sign of interest/clarity
- Body Language
- Slang/Sarcasm
- Formal vs. Informal
  - Professor, Staff
  - Other students
- Greetings

Eye-Contact

“YOU SHOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE ASKING QUESTIONS IN CLASS”

“MAKES YOU FEEL STUPID.”
Communication: Personal Space
In the U.S, many people prefer to keep one to two meters' space between friends and family members, and up to three meters between strangers and business associates.
Communication: Small Talk

One might expect that, in an environment where directness is valued in communication, all topics are appropriate for conversation. That is not really true.

Topics that are generally discussed with acquaintances or those one does not know very well:
- The weather
- One’s commuting experience and cars
- Classes and jobs
- Sports
- Music, movies
- Fashion, shopping, and clothes

Topics not to discuss unless you know the people well:
- Money, how much one earns
- Family issues/marital status
- Religion
- Weight
- Age
- Politics
• Be on time!
• Classes, appointments, work, group meetings
  • Being late = sign of disrespect
  • Arrive early
• Social Settings
  • More flexible
  • “fashionably late”
Recreational

• Holidays
  • Independence Day (4th of July), Thanksgiving, Halloween, Christmas, Labor Day, Memorial Day

• Sports
  • Football, Soccer, Hockey, Lacrosse, Baseball

• Food
  • Pizza, Burgers/Hotdogs, Garbage Plates, Fried/Fast Foods, Apple Pie
  • Large Portions!

* There are regional differences in preference within every aspect of American culture
Tipping in Restaurants

- Waiters/Servers make $2.13 an hour as the national minimum in the U.S.

- Servers depend on tips to make their living
  • 15% of the bill (if server does a poor job)
  • 18% of the bill (if server does a standard job)
  • 20%-25% of the bill (if the service is outstanding)

- If you receive bad service, you should speak to management, not just ignore the tip as the server is unaware of the situation.

- In some places a clearly displayed "Service Charge" or "Gratuity" might be automatically added to a bill, especially for party sizes of 8 or more. Check your bill for these charges before tipping.
5 Useful Phone/Tablet Apps to Navigate USF & the United States

1) MyUSF

What it does: Track the USF Bullrunner Bus System; pulls up a campus map; athletic events; campus safety tips; dining options, USF calendar, your courses, etc

2) WeChat

What it does: Allows you to send text messages, voice calls, voice messages, facetime & video chat, and much more with a WiFi connection.
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3) Around Me

What it does: Identifies services (ranging from Banks/ATMs, bars, coffee shops, hospitals, restaurants, movie theaters, etc) based on your location.

4) Google Translate

What it does: Easily translates 80+ different languages
5) FreeRice

What it does: An online game that offers fun trivia questions on geography, mathematics, world pop culture, etc.

**For every correct answer in the game, FreeRice.com donates 10 grains of rice to the United Nations World Food Program.**

**The website cautions that “WARNING: This game may make you smarter. It may improve your speaking, writing, thinking, grades, job performance.”**
Getting a Driver’s License in the U.S

www.gathergoget.com
Helpful Resources

- Family and friends
- USF Office of International Services
- USF Counseling Center
- USF Student Health Center
- Student Organizations
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
  - iBuddy Global Friendships Program