Discussion “Maxed Out”: The Sociological Imagination.

- What is the Sociological Imagination and how can you apply it to the film? What do you gain from using this approach to analyze the film?
- Give one example of a “person trouble” and one example of a “public issue”.
- What the latent and manifest functions of credit cards?
- How would sociologist using social theory--symbolic interactionism, conflict theory, globalization and multiculturism--explain credit cards and consumer debt.
Culture and Society

• culture
• cultural diversity
• ethnocentrism
• cultural relativism

six elements of culture.
Culture

- Culture
  - Material
    - things made and used
  - Nonmaterial
    - ideas, values and beliefs

Cultural Diversity
- the world’s cultures are vastly different from each other
  - culture shock
  - ethnocentrism
  - cultural relativism
Try It: Thinking about Culture in Everyday Life

- Think about something that represent your culture/subculture bring a material artifact to class.
- Briefly share what came to mind about this object.
- Makes some notes about each culture/subculture. Are you surprised the diversity or lack of diversity in our class? Why or Why not?
Culture

- Subcultures and Countercultures
  - creation of cultural forms – music, literature, news media, art
  - **Subcultures**
    - prejudice
    - social power
  - **Countercultures**
    - difference *and* opposition
    - often seen as a threat
Elements of Culture

- Material Culture
  - Meets basic subsistence needs
  - Basic need for meaning

- Symbols
  - Anything that takes on additional meaning beyond itself to others
    - can be created at anytime
    - meanings can change over time
    - not universally shared
Elements of Culture

- **Language**
  - set of symbols
  - not solely a human trait
  - **Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis**
    - language shapes thought and perception

- **Ritual**
  - "Pledge of Allegiance"
Article: “Body Ritual among the Nacirema”

- Read the article "Body Ritual among the Nacirema" to learn about the rituals and culture of the Nacirema.
- Write a short reflection that identifies 3-4 rituals that the Nacirema perform, discuss these rituals from an ethnocentric position and then from a cultural relativism position. What points about culture do you think the author is trying to make?
Elements of Culture

■ Norms
  – rules of behavior
    • folkways
    • mores (MO-rays)
    • laws

■ Values
  – ethical foundations of culture
  – right and wrong/good and bad
Elements of Culture

What Are American Values?

1. Achievement and Success
2. Individualism
3. Activity and work
4. Efficiency and practicality
5. Science and technology
6. Progress
7. Material Comfort
8. Humanitarianism
9. Freedom
10. Democracy
11. Equality
12. Racism and group superiority

• value contradictions
Elements of Culture

- Luck and pluck
- Community
- Leisure and cheating
- Luxury
- Religion
- Karma

- Distrust the rich
- Entitlement
- Tolerance has its limits
- Security over democracy
- Inequality
- We’re all just people

- Emerging Values
- Changing and Contradictory Values
Discussion Point: “Deferred Gratification”

- Do we still value “deferred gratification” as Americans did in the past? Is it possible that deferred gratification was a cultural norm of some sectors of the population (Puritans) and not others? What have been the social forces that have led us to abandon this particular value?
Cultural Expressions

- Universality and Localism
  - Cultural universals

- High Culture and Popular Culture
  - *high culture* – affluence
  - *popular culture* – the “masses”
  - cultural capital
Cultural Expressions

- Forms of Popular Culture
  - Fads
    - Objects
    - Activities
    - Ideas
    - Personalities
  - Fashion
Cultural Expressions

- The Politics of Popular Culture
- The Globalization of Popular Culture
  - cultural imperialism
- Culture as Tool Kit
Cultural Change

- culture lag
- cultural diffusion

Culture in the 21st Century
What Does America Think?

2.1 English as Our Official Language

This is actual survey data from the General Social Survey, 2004.

1. Do you favor or oppose making English the official language of the United States? Overall, slightly more than three-quarters of the U.S. population favors English as the official language of the United States. There are significant class differences in this, with those who identify as lower class being less likely than other groups to be in favor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Working</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>Row Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>78.4</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
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CRITICAL THINKING | DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How can we explain the social class differences in responses to this survey question?
2. How do you think the results might have differed had we looked at them by race or by gender?
2.2 Pride in Being American

This is actual survey data from the General Social Survey, 2004.

1. How proud are you of being an American? An overwhelmingly high proportion of respondents said they were very proud to be an American (89 percent). Less than 3 percent of respondents said they were not very proud or not proud at all to be American. Those who identified as working class were the least likely to say they were very proud to be American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pride in Being American, by Social Class, Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat proud</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not very proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not proud at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not American</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

CRITICAL THINKING | DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. While the class difference in responses was not that great, it is still interesting. Why do you think those who identify as lower class and those who identify as upper class were most likely to report being very proud to be American? Why do you think those who identified as middle class were least likely to report being very proud?

2. The number of Americans who are proud to be American is very high. Why do you think this is so? Do you think pride in country is as high in other countries? Why or why not? Give examples.