



IC GLOBAL WOLVERINES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

EXPLORING CULTURE AND RESPECTFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



INTERNATIONAL
CENTER

What is the **first**
thing that comes to
mind when you
think of **culture**?

Virtual Poll:

Scan QR code or

www.menti.com

Code: 8690 7244



Definition of Culture

“Culture refers to values, beliefs, attitudes, preferences, customs, learning styles, communication styles, history/historical interpretations, achievements/accomplishments, technology, the arts, literature, etc., --the sum total of what a particular group of people has created together, share, and transmit.”

R. Michael Paige , Professor of International and Intercultural Communication, Center for Applied Research on Language Acquisition. University of Minnesota



The Cultural Iceberg

Observable vs. “Underwater” Elements of Culture

The iceberg concept of culture

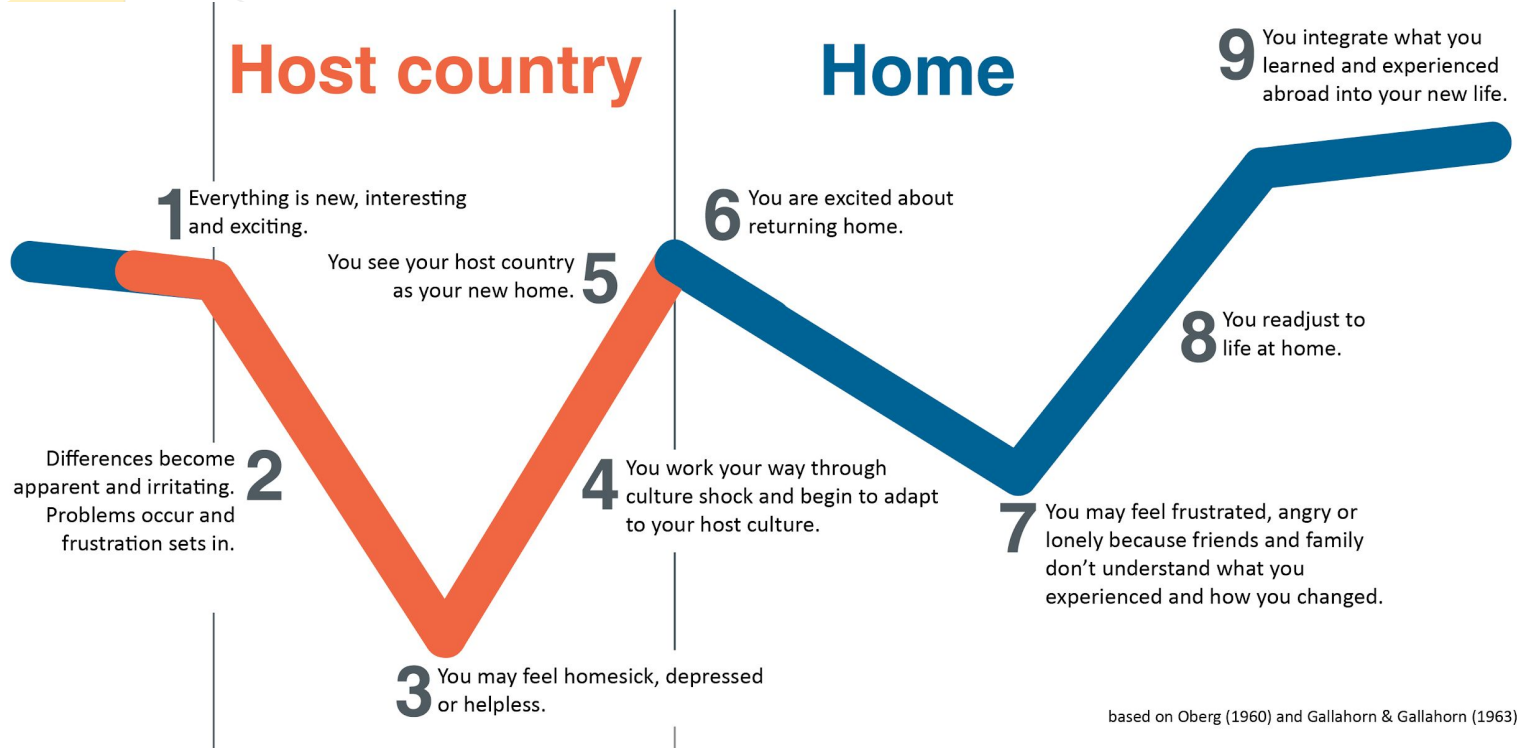
Primarily in awareness

Fine arts Literature
Drama Classical music Popular music
Folk-dancing Games Cooking Dress

Primarily out of awareness

Notions of modesty Conception of beauty
Ideals governing child raising Rules of descent Cosmology
Relationship to animals Patterns of superior/subordinate relations
Definition of sin Courtship practices Conception of justice Incentives to work
Notions of leadership Tempo of work Patterns of group decision-making
Conception of cleanliness Attitudes to the dependent Theory of disease
Approaches to problem solving Conception of status mobility Eye behaviour
Roles in relation to status by age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, etc. Definition of insanity
Nature of friendship Conception of “self” Patterns of visual perception Body language
Facial expressions Notions about logic and validity Patterns of handling emotions
Conversational patterns in various social contexts Conception of past and future Ordering of time
Preference for competition or co-operation Social interaction rate Notions of adolescence
Arrangement of physical space Etc.

Culture Shock



Symptoms of Culture Shock

- Easily angered
- Irritable
- Frustration with the unfamiliar
- Unexplainable stress or sadness
- Depression
- Stomach ache or headache
- Excessive sleepiness
- Boredom
- Unwarranted criticisms of host culture
- Feeling isolated or alone
- Lack of motivation
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Social withdrawal
- Extreme homesickness

Symptoms not going away or worsening?

Reach out to your support networks!

Overcoming Culture Shock


- Realize that what you're going through is **normal** and **temporary** and it is **okay to ask for help**
- **Gain a deeper understanding** of the host culture by reading, observing, and engaging
- Keep an **open mind**, **be flexible**, and focus on what you can **control**
- Write it down – record your thoughts and frustrations in a **journal or blog**
- **Take care of yourself** – eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep!





What would you do?

You have been abroad in France for 2 weeks. You will be staying for the whole summer and are starting to feel a bit lonely and homesick. You aren't getting along with your local roommate, are struggling to navigate the city transportation system, and have been having trouble with the Wi-Fi in your dorm.

- ❖ What stage of culture shock might you be experiencing?
 - ❖ What support systems can you access to help you through this time?
 - ❖ What actions can you take to help change your situation?
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Building Resilience

Resilient Traveling

Managing Stress & Enhancing Your Experience Abroad

Resilience is the ability to adapt or rebound quickly from change, illness, stress, adversity or bad fortune

Home

Stories

Skills

Resiliency

Resources

Self-Assessment

About this Project

Loneliness

You're not alone in feeling lonely- see how [Jaron](#) found connection

Related Skills

- ♦ Deep Breathing
- ♦ Cognitive Defusion
- ♦ Reflection

Culture Shock

Adapting to the unfamiliar and uncomfortable- see how [Sarah](#) adjusted while abroad

Related Skills

- ♦ Mindfulness
- ♦ Reflection
- ♦ Values-Based Action

Group Conflict

When your in-group is on the outs- see how [Janelle](#) navigated group differences

Related Skills

- ♦ Reflection
- ♦ Assertiveness
- ♦ Values-Based Action

Personal Struggles

Unexpected obstacles arise- see how [Meirav](#) endured a challenging experience

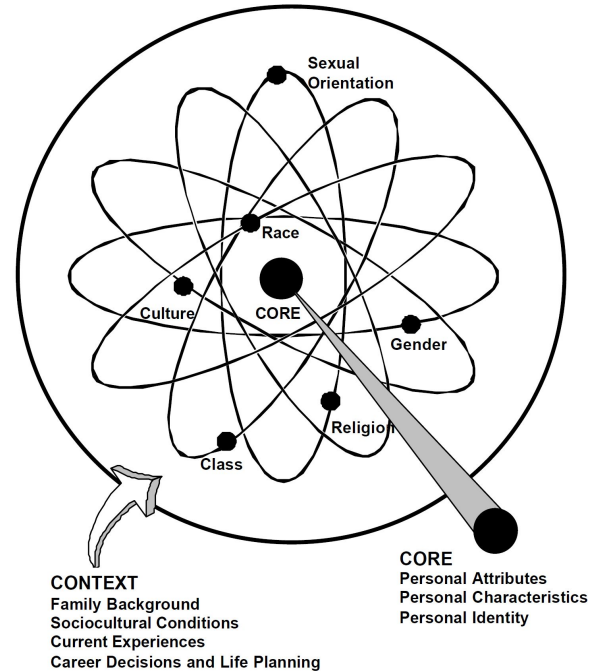
Related Skills

- ♦ Mindfulness
- ♦ Cognitive Defusion
- ♦ Reflection



Social Identity and Your International Experience

- Defining “social identities”
 - ◀ [Link to worksheet](#)
- Your social identities are a big factor in the way you experience the world, interpret different cultures, and interact with other people.
- How might the salience of your social identities shift when you travel abroad this summer?



Social identities: Resources

- [Identities Abroad](#) (Global Michigan website)
- The [Spectrum Center](#) has resources for students on being LGBTQ abroad, including websites such as [Equaldex](#), that have information about local norms and laws.
- [Diversity Abroad](#) is a great resource for students who come from underrepresented backgrounds.
- The International Center is always here to talk through specific questions or concerns you might have about traveling to a specific region.



M **Heritage Seekers**
GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT *Abroad*

The University of Michigan is committed to international education and encourages **ALL** Wolverines to travel abroad. Because social identities can have a powerful impact on your time abroad, this resource can help you think critically about cultural attitudes and perceptions surrounding your social identity in a global context. U-M recognizes that students can hold multiple identities and welcomes you to visit global.umich.edu to learn more about other identities.

Creating your own experience

Students who are seeking international experiences as a way to explore their own roots are considered heritage seekers. Your experience with a certain culture gives you a unique perspective and can serve as an advantage in your immersion experience.

Considering cultural context

Most heritage seekers are invested emotionally and intellectually in their host country/homeland, but may neglect to consider the negative impacts of their perceived familiarity with the culture. Some of the common challenges heritage seekers face include feeling the pressure to be "experts" of that culture, speaking the language like a native, and fitting in visually. Additionally, your host culture/homeland may have higher expectations of you compared to other visitors. It is important to keep in mind that you are there to learn and observe the living culture that you have most likely learned through another lens (i.e. parents, grandparents, extended family, etc.).

You may have familiarity with the culture, but keep in mind that you are not expected to speak the language, look the part, or know the history. On the other hand, heritage seekers may be coming into this experience with their own preconceived notions. While you may be familiar with a particular culture, thinking you are the expert may also prevent you from fully immersing yourself into your host country/homeland and breaking down any misconceptions you may have.

While an international experience as a heritage seeker can help deepen an understanding of your

identities, you should also consider some challenges that your multi-cultural identity may present in your host-country/homeland. Some heritage seekers return from programs feeling more connected to their ancestral land and culture, while others return feeling more associated and appreciative of their American roots (Diversity Abroad).

Owning your identities

Your position as a heritage seeker can have a powerful impact on your time abroad. This experience will allow you to gain insight into your host country/homeland and redefine your identities and how you can implement these identities back in the U.S. Your success is dependent upon how open you are to new discoveries of your host country/homeland culture, so set yourself up for success abroad by taking ownership of your experience and planning as much as you can before you depart. Research your host country/homeland, connect with on-campus resources, and plan how you will stay in touch with your support system while away from home.

Explore Education Abroad Opportunities at global.umich.edu!

Perceptions of Nationality Abroad

- You might be faced with lots of questions while you're abroad regarding your country's current political situation and/or foreign policy with your host nation.
- Always emphasize that your opinions are just that...yours! Do not try to convince people to see things differently or strongly insert your opinion unless you have built a relationship with that person/group.
- Be aware that sometimes things might get a little heated. If you feel uncomfortable, end the conversation as nicely as possible and leave the area - remember that your safety is the most important thing!



U.S. Politics Abroad

- If you're not someone who closely follows politics, take time before you go to catch-up and continue to keep track of current events while you're abroad. Also, review U.S. foreign policy and history as it pertains to your host country/countries.
- Rather not talk about politics? Pivot the conversation - you have the right to say you don't want to talk about something.
- Remember challenging yourself can be very positive and engaging in political discussions while abroad could be very enlightening and educational!



Community Engagement Basics

- ◀ Know Before You Go
 - ◀ Learn about politics, history, religion, communication, etc.
- ◀ Practice Cultural Humility
 - ◀ “Cultural humility is a humble and respectful attitude toward individuals of other cultures that pushes one to challenge their own cultural biases, realize they cannot possibly know everything about other cultures, and approach learning about other cultures as a lifelong goal and process.” - Karin Gonzalez (2018)
- ◀ The White Savior Complex



What is the “White Savior Complex?”

“White saviorism can be thought of as the belief that white people are here to save, help, teach, and protect their non-white counterparts.”


Definition from
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2022/09/30/what-is-white-saviorism-and-how-does-it-show-up-in-your-workplace/?sh=34508c27126d>



- [Barbie Savior Instagram Account](#)




Avoiding the “White Savior Complex”

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1. **What are your motives?** Avoid traveling abroad because you think you can “save” people from something.
 2. Always commit to learning and **understanding you don’t know everything.**
 3. If you are going to work abroad or pursue an international career, do not center yourself. Collaborate and **amplify the voices and people who have been doing the work long before you arrived.**
 4. Take some time to **understand the history** of the place you are going to visit.
 5. Ask yourself if you **are really hurting or helping the destination.** And if you think you are helping, how do you know? What is the source?


Tips from:

<https://sojournies.com/how-to-avoid-white-savior-complex/>





Tips for Relationship Building in Your Host Community

1. Spend time getting to know your local classmates or project counterparts - outside of the classroom or workplace!
 2. Attend local community events to learn more about the host culture
 3. If you will be staying with a host family or local students, make it a point to regularly spend time with them.
 4. Don't let your language skills (or lack thereof!) stop you from striking up a conversation
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Ethical Photography & Social Media

Ethical photography is a conscientious way of taking pictures that:

- **DOES NOT** exploit or misrepresent people, places, or cultures
- **DOES NOT** violate privacy or human rights of subjects
- **DOES NOT** degrade, dishonor, or rob people of their dignity
- **DOES** exhibit respect and sensitivity for people and “otherness”
- **DOES** obtain the consent and input from those being photographed
- **DOES** seek to tell the true stories of real people, places, and culture

checklist

before you post on social media:

- ✓ Ask yourself: “What is my intention with sharing this post?”
- ✓ Gain informed consent from the person in the picture and/or the caretaker. If you can’t explain why you are taking photo, find a translator
- ✓ Know the name and background of the people portrayed
- ✓ Offer the person in the photo a copy
- ✓ Avoid sweeping and simplified generalizations, include informative text with names, place, etc.
- ✓ Be respectful of different cultures and traditions
- ✓ Ask yourself: “Would I have appreciated to be portrayed in the same manner?”
- ✓ Avoid sensitive, vulnerable situations and locations such as hospitals and health clinics
- ✓ Don’t portray yourself as the hero in the story conveyed
- ✓ Challenge the perceptions, bring down stereotypes!

Additional Ethical Photography & Social Media Considerations

- Think before taking a selfie - an interesting Instagram photo is not worth putting yourself in a dangerous situation!
- Are you putting other people in danger by including them in photos at certain events (for example: political events)?
- Be mindful of your use of location-tagging - is it safe?
- Be mindful that your social media footprint will linger well beyond your trip.
- Limit time spent on your phone - experience rather than document!



<http://fortune.com/2015/09/30/selfies-banned-tourists/>

Community Engagement Online Course

- FREE to U-M students through [Michigan Online](#)

M MICHIGAN ONLINE

EXPLORE ▾



LOG IN

SIGN UP



Community Engagement: Collaborating for Change

ENROLL NOW

M FREE ACCESS

Description

Now more than ever, people are seeking ways to affect change in their communities — both locally and around the world. This course is for anyone — from novices to experienced practitioners — who wants to work more effectively with community members and organizations, including through, but not limited to:

- community-academic partnerships
- social change projects
- community service and learning
- education and work abroad
- traditional and community-based participatory research
- non-profit internships
- public scholarship
- civic performance

Prepare in advance or take this course simultaneously to get the most out of your experience by engaging with communities ethically, respectfully, and sustainably.

Subjects

ARTS & CULTURE

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Language

English

Duration


6 weeks

Status

Available



Other Resources

- ▶ [Ginsberg Center](#) - Entering & Exiting Communities Respectfully
 - ▶ [Intercultural Leadership Seminar](#) through the International Center
 - ▶ Slides from “[Survival Language & Culture](#)” presentation
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Thank you!

Questions?

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