**Individual Group Assignment**

**CST 229 Intercultural Communication**

As we are learning through this class a culture can be defined as a system of knowledge and a way of looking at the world that is shared by a relatively large group of people.  [Cultural knowledge](http://education.qld.gov.au/public_media/reports/curriculum-framework/productive-pedagogies/html/rec-01.html) includes shared beliefs, values and attitudes that are developed over a period of time and communicated to other members of the culture through the significant symbols of the culture.  As Hofstede suggests, we learn our culture as a type of mental programming that works much like the way the underlying code of a computer program works.  The “code” of culture guides behavior and affects how we respond to people and situation.

The goal of this assignment is for you to research your culture and to develop a **paper** outlining what you have discovered.  You are to contact members of your culture and seek out additional resources (our textbook, other books, web sites, and the like) as needed. Upon completion of this analysis you will present me with an individual paper which answers, in detail (providing examples to support your answers when appropriate), to the following questions below:

[Defining Culture as a Part of Identity](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/publications/looking/pdf/LookingPart1Intro.pdf)

1. How do you define your culture?

Please Note: in answering this question consider the following:  Usually we think of defining our culture in terms of nationality or a country of origin.  One may say, for instance, I am Polish, or Polish-American.  Groups of people may also define themselves in light of ethnic or racial characteristics.  A person’s sense of identity may also be rooted in a religious heritage or any other demographic aspect such as gender, sexual orientation, social class or in light of membership in an age cohort.  Sometimes, an organizational structure such as being affiliated with the military or a particular type of community such as a rural community or a vacation spot can also serve as a way of defining our culture.

2. Are there particular values that are especially meaningful to your culture?

Please note: Examine how Hofstede has contrasted two types of cultural orientations:  Individualistic cultures emphasize the independence and autonomy of an individual.  In individualistic cultures a person is self-directed and pursues individual goals or strives to please oneself.  Collectivistic cultures emphasize the harmony of the group and the pursuit of group goals over individual endeavors.  This may mandate greater conformity and concerns about the security of the group as a whole.  Provide examples for your answer.

[Family Structure and Traditions](http://www.americanfamilytraditions.com/traditions_customs_rituals.htm)

3. What are ***some*** (list a couple) of the customs or family traditions that you have learned as a member of your culture?  Provide some examples.

4. How do the rules and traditions of your culture affect the way that family members relate to one another?  For instance, do people in the family have certain roles or particular levels of status based on cultural traditions? Provide some examples.

5. How do factors such as religion or a cultural philosophy of life affect family communication? Provide some examples.

6. How does your [family culture](http://cecp.air.org/wraparound/family.html) affect the formation of gender roles? Provide some examples.

[Culture and Speech Communities-Significant Symbols and Communication Norms](http://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/spd110td/interper/message/messagespeechcomm.html)

7. Is a language other then English used in your household?  If so-what language(s) are spoken?

8. What are some examples of nonverbal communication that you can trace to your culture?  For instance attitudes of what is required, expected or desirable nonverbal expressiveness, or rules that govern nonverbal behavior.

9. How does your family trace its roots?  Is there, for instance, a story about how members of your family came to the U.S. or are there important historical events that led your family’s decision to immigrate?  Are there specific places such as an ancestral home or particular hometown that members of the family relate to in order to find a sense of rootedness?

10. How does your culture teach you to relate to people in other communities?  For instance, are there rules or expectations about how to relate to people outside of your own community?

**Work and Leisure**,

11. What are some of the values and attitudes related to work in your culture?  What kind of work is meaningful?  How important is work or professional standing in the ways that members of your community develop a self-concept?

12. How important is leisure?  What are important games or leisure time activities that people in your culture enjoy?  Do these activities teach attitudes and values?

[Living in a Post-Modern World](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Postmodernism)

13. How much does your cultural community embrace technology?

14. How adaptive is your cultural community to social and cultural changes, especially in light of issues confronted by living in a fast-paced, transient world on the move?

15. Are members of your culture able to preserve a sense of distinctive cultural identity in a pluralistic (multi-cultural) environment?

**Summary**

16. Overall, what do you think you like best about your culture?  How is this a source of cultural pride?

17. What is the most important thing you learned about how your own culture affects your [self-concept](http://www.more-selfesteem.com/self_concept.htm) and how you communicate?

As stated above you are to answer these questions and present this to me as a paper. The format of this paper should follow the format above-with you writing out the questions and answering them (complete with your examples) below the question. Once completed this can be submitted to me by the due date (anytime before, but not after) and in accordannce with the instrcutions posted in our blackboard course.