

## SC1101E MAKING SENSE OF SOCIETY

### TUTORIAL FOUR: The Objects and Objectives of Institutions

#### Assigned Readings

1. Antolihao, *Other Societies*, Chapter 10 (Family)
2. Bowen, Elliott, and Brenton, *The Joy of Cooking*.
3. Antolihao, *Other Societies*, Chapter 11 (Religion).
4. Cadge and Bender, *Yoga and Rebirth in America*.
5. Antolihao, *Other Societies*, Chapter 12 (The Nation-State).
6. Chi, *Consuming Rice, Branding the Nation*.

#### Class Exercise

Apart from expanding our knowledge of institutions, this class activity also aims to introduce an analytical and writing technique that utilizes **material culture**, which many of you might find useful in getting a tighter grasp of the key concepts in this course or in completing a future writing assignment. Generally, material culture consists of the tangible objects that people create use, and share (Antolihao 2022: 107). They are not only important for their practical purpose but are also full of meanings that influence how we think, do things, and interact with others.

Each student should analyze an everyday item that they usually bring along with them in their bag or wallet (e.g., photo, lucky charm, ID card) that belongs to a specific institution (family, religion, economics, politics, or others). Follow the discussion guide questions below in putting together your tutorial notes and prepare to show your chosen item in class as well as share your analysis with your classmates.

#### Discussion Guide Questions

1. What is the social significance of your chosen object? Discuss its utility in achieving specific institutional objectives.
2. Beyond its practical purpose, what are the meanings that people have bestowed on it? Does it promote “alternative and complementary techniques” (Cadge and Bender 2003) on how family, religious, economic, political and other institutional objectives can be achieved?
3. What does the object tell us about the social or cultural influence of that particular social institution? Explore how it can be espousing a “moralistic or elitist vision” (Bowen, et. al. 2014) or is focusing on projecting a specific image through branding (Chi 2014).