**4)Lecture 1**

**Morphology of culture. Language of culture**

1. What is culture? Basic Theoretical approaches

2. Culture and civilization

3. Culturology definitions

**Morphology of culture** – structure, forms and typology of culture

**The language of culture** is signs, forms, symbols, texts that allow people to enter into communication with each other.

**What is culture? Basic Theoretical approaches**

The word **culture,** from the Latin root *colere* (to inhabit, to cultivate, or to honor), generally refers to patterns of human activity and the symbolic structures that give such activity significance.

The modern term "culture" is based on a term used by the [ancient Roman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome" \o "Ancient Rome) orator [Cicero](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cicero) in his *[Tusculanae Disputationes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tusculanae_Disputationes" \o "Tusculanae Disputationes)*, where he wrote of a cultivation of the soul or *"cultura animi,"* using an [agricultural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agriculture" \o "Agriculture) [metaphor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metaphor) for the development of a philosophical soul, understood [teleologically](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teleology" \o "Teleology) as the highest possible ideal for human development.

**Culture** is a complex of features held by a social group, which may be as small as a [family](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Family) or a [tribe](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Tribe), or as large as a racial or ethnic group, a [nation](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Nation), or in the age of [globalization](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Globalization), by people all over the world. Culture has been called "the way of life for an entire society." (D. Jary and J. Jary, *The HarperCollins Dictionary of Sociology* (1991), p. 101).

Culture is not fixed or static; rather, it involves a dynamic process as people respond to changing conditions and challenges.

Different definitions of culture reflect different theories for understanding, or criteria for valuing, human activity. [Edward Burnett Tylor](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Edward_Burnett_Tylor" \o "Edward Burnett Tylor) wrote, in 1871, that "culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes [knowledge](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Knowledge" \o "Knowledge), [belief](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Belief), art, [morals](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Morality), law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." ([*Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Culture#cite_note-2)*)*

The [United Nations](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/United_Nations) agency [UNESCO](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/UNESCO) (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has defined culture as the "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses (охватывает, включает в себе), in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs." (UNESCO, [Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.](http://www.unesco.org/education/imld_2002/unversal_decla.shtml) Retrieved October 14, 2007).

Another common way of understanding culture sees it as consisting of three elements: Values, norms, and artifacts (*Dictionary of Modern Sociology,* [Culture.](https://www.info.gov.hk/coy/eng/report/doc/Youth_Statistical/2002/app/Chp6_Cultural_Capital.pdf) Retrieved October 14, 2007). Values comprise ideas about what in life seems important. Norms consist of expectations of how people will behave in different situations. Artifacts—things, or material culture—derive from the culture's values and norms.

The **symbolic view** of culture, the legacy of [Clifford Geertz](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Clifford_Geertz) and [Victor Turner](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Victor_Turner), holds symbols to be both the practices of social actors and the context that gives such practices meaning. Anthony P. Cohen wrote of the "symbolic gloss" which allows social actors to use common symbols to communicate and understand each other while still imbuing these symbols with personal significance and meanings (*The Symbolic Construction of Community)*. Symbols provide the limits of cultured thought. Members of a culture rely on these symbols to frame their thoughts and expressions in intelligible terms. In short, symbols make culture possible, reproducible, and readable. They are the "webs of significance" in [Weber](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Max_Weber)'s sense that, to quote [Pierre Bourdieu](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Pierre_Bourdieu), "give regularity, unity and systematicity to the practices of a group." *(Outline of a Theory of Practice*).

**Sociobiological theory** argues that observers can best understand many aspects of culture in the light of the concept of the *meme,* first introduced by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book, *The Selfish Gene*. Dawkins likened the process by which memes survive and change through the [evolution of culture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_evolution) to the natural selection of genes in biological [evolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evolution).Dawkins defined the *meme* as a unit of [cultural transmission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Transmission), or a unit of imitation and replication, but later definitions would vary.

In 1952, [Alfred L. Kroeber](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Alfred_L._Kroeber) and [Clyde Kluckhohn](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Clyde_Kluckhohn) compiled a list of more than 200 different definitions of culture in their book, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. They organized these diverse concepts of culture into eight categories:

* Topical: A list of topics such as [social structure](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Social_structure), [religion](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Religion), economic system, and so forth
* Historical: Social [heritage](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Heritage), or tradition, passed from generation to generation
* Behavioral: Shared, learned human behavior, a way of life
* Normative: Ideals, values, norms, or standards for life
* Functional: The way people solve problems and adapt to their environment
* Mental: Complex of ideas, or learned habits, that distinguish people from [animals](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Animal)
* Structural: Patterned and interrelated ideas, symbols, or behaviors
* Symbolic: Arbitrarily assigned meanings that are shared by a society

**Culture and civilization**

The term "[civilization](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Civilization)" has been used almost synonymously with culture. Civilization can be viewed as the external manifestation, and culture as the internal character of a society. Culture, on the other hand, refers to the social standards and norms of behavior, the traditions, values, [ethics](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Ethics), [morality](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Morality), and [religious](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Religion) beliefs and practices that are held in common by members of the society.

Many people today use a conception of "culture" that developed in Europe during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This view of culture reflected inequalities within European societies, and between European powers and their colonies around the world. It identifies "culture" with "[civilization](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Civilization)." According to this thinking, one can classify some countries as more "civilized" than others, and some people as more "cultured" than others. Theorists like [Matthew Arnold](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Matthew_Arnold) and [Frank R. Leavis](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/F.R._Leavis) have regarded culture as simply the result of "the best that has been thought and said in the world (Arnold, 1960, p. 6), thus labeling anything that doesn't fit into this category as uncivilized. On this account, culture links closely with social "cultivation"—the progressive refinement of human behavior.

From the eighteenth century onwards, some social critics have accepted this contrast between cultured and uncultured, but have stressed the interpretation of refinement and of sophistication as corrupting and unnatural developments which obscure and distort people's essential nature. On this account, folk music (as produced by working-class people) is seen as honestly expressing a natural way of life, and classical music is regarded as superficial and decadent. Equally, this view often portrays non-Western people as "noble savages," living authentic, unblemished lives, uncomplicated and uncorrupted by the highly-stratified capitalist systems of western culture.

**Culturology definition**

The term "cultural studies" to denote the science of culture **was introduced by an a**merican anthropologist **Leslie Alvin White**, best known for his theories of the evolution of [culture](https://www.britannica.com/topic/cultural-evolution) and as one of the founders of neo-evolutionism in cultural anthropology.

Two possible definitions of culturology are found alongside each other in the textbooks. The first one presents it as a group of disciplines including theories of literature, sociology of culture, religion or philosophy, philosophies of history, political science, aesthetics, semiotics, etc.

The second definition of culturology is noticeably more ideologically committed. The new subject is a meta-system or meta-science, at all events a new philosophy of culture that helps to explicate worldwide developments. The author of the Belarus textbook, I. A. Levâs, distinguishes between the two possible approaches in the following way: ‘If the science of culture (*kul’turovedenie*) is that group of disciplines that study the cosmos with no limit as regards cultures, culturology (*kul’turologiâ*) is the law of their world gravitation. It is a philosophy of culture as a totality.’ (Levâs, I. A. (2001), *Kul’turologiâ. Ucebnoe posobie dlâ studentov VUZov* [Culturology. Textbook for students in higher education establishments]) This second view – whether explicit or implied – is put over by the vast majority of textbooks and it is the one that gives rise to most questions since it depends on several philosophical and political assumptions (предположения, допущения) while refusing to unpack them.