Cultural Competence

Chan, Sheila

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Cultural Competence: Getting Started

How to Use This Guide
- Make sure you have a general awareness of different cultures and gain insight into cultural competence. Keep in mind that increasing knowledge, building skills and changing attitudes is communicated efficiently and appropriately with others is an ongoing engagement with many different aspects in society.
- Consider the role of culture in health and illness.
- Start with your own country or ethnic group, or a religion.
- Learn about the society, culture and customs of the region or country.
- Prepare for going abroad.

Technology

This subject of cultural awareness and competence includes a variety of items, such as International (interaction between at least two different cultures), intercultural (with the same culture), cross-cultural (comparing cultures), and multicultural (more than one culture). Curricula are not necessarily desired by educational boundaries, so intercultural communication is also distinct from international communication.

For more information, see the World Regional, Intercultural, Intercultural, and International Communication: What’s the Difference? article and SWDL 02’s Cultural Competence PDF.

Keep an Open Mind

Please note that the resources recommended within this guide may not reflect the University of Michigan or the University’s policy. Although they may appear to suggest a particular perspective, within Western, with savvy levels of sensitivity, they should help you understand and respect some aspects of another culture without challenging your own values. Nonetheless, these resources can generate generalizations, so it is important to keep in mind that every person (white or otherwise) is different. Keeping an open mind and adapting accordingly to specific circumstances may be helpful.

Interested in learning more about open resources? Take a look at How to Be Culturally Open-Minded: A Psychological and Social Analysis (online).

Why is Cultural Awareness Important?

The University of Michigan has a large international and diverse population, as demonstrated by the enrollment data below. You may encounter people with different customs and values that may affect communication and mutual understanding. Your cultural awareness can be enhanced through self-reflection and interaction. Careful attention paid in relationship to others is a cultural diversity competency within the U.S., or abroad. Knowing about the local culture of your destination may also help ease anxiety and shake, making your travels more enjoyable.

University of Michigan - Ann Arbor
Student Enrollment by Country and Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fall 2013 Total Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How to Increase Cultural Awareness

1. **Pacific Cultural Training**
   - Online training resource with units and sections for learning about the concept of culture and how skills, attitudes and behaviors adapt to change from one cultural environment.
   - Global Scholar Online Training.
     - Your instructor will outline courses that will be taught and expected for a class that is offered in your international experience.
     - World Studies Guides (resources).

2. **World Reference Library**
   - Study abroad in Canada.
     - U-M Reference: Traveling.
     - U-M project website dedicated to helping students traveling abroad to learn how to cope with culture shock, stress, loneliness and more. Click on "Self-Assessments" to view online mental health screening.

3. **Ready to explore? Click on a tag below.**
   - Exploring new cultures
   - Food and drink
   - Travel and tourism
   - Work abroad
   - Language and communication
   - Diversity
   - International programs

This research project was completed by Stella Chen as part of the Michigan Library Scholars senior internship at the University of Michigan Library.
Cultural Competence: World Cultures

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

I want to browse by...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>People</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Global Road Warrior (database)
This database provides basic country facts and lengthier articles on business, security, health, utilities, communication, and entertainment. Addresses some stereotypes and demonstrates popular phrases in foreign languages. eBook versions available in Mirely.

CultureGrams (database)
Simple and easy to read overviews of over 200 countries, focusing on different populations' customs, lifestyles, and societies from an American perspective. Includes a Kids, USA, Canada, and World Edition.

Global Affairs Canada Country Insights (website)
The Canadian government's country profiles and guides to national cultures from Canadian and local perspectives. Includes resource links for additional information on culture, history, geography, etc.

Commisso Country Guides (website)
Country guides discuss language, culture, customs, and etiquette. This website also features additional blog posts regarding cultural awareness.

Countries and Their Cultures (2001 ebook)
National entries include information on history, ethnic relations, urbanism, government, society, economy, religion, health, arts, food, etc.

Images, Videos & Graphs

CalPhotos: People & Culture (website)
Photo bank of people and places.

Ethnographic Video Online (database)
Videos of family, cultural identity, gender roles, arts, religion, etc.

Hofstede Country Cultural Dimensions Ratings (website)
Graphical representation of countries' ratings of power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation & indulgence.
Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Click on a region on the map or select a link below

- USA & Canada
- Latin America & the Caribbean
- Europe
- Middle East & Northern Africa
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Asia & Oceania
Cultural Competence: USA & Canada

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Adjusting to the U.S.

- U-M SNRE Cultural Adjustment (website)
  Guide and videos for culture shock, greetings and academic adjustment with a focus on the U.S.

- U-M International Center: Adjusting to the U.S. (website)

- Questions for international students to think about when adjusting to the U.S. and Ann Arbor

- International Student Guide to the U.S. (website)
  Guide for international students adjusting to college and American life.

National Cultures

- Culture Shock! ebook series (USA & Canada)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, touristic activities, language, work and fact facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

- Culture Smart! book series (USA & Canada)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

- Global Affairs Canada - Country Information Canada (website)
  Canadian government's country insight and cultural information for Canada from local perspective. Covers communication, dress, social institutions, entertainment, stereotypes, etc.

- Kids.gov Cultures & Ethnic Groups (website)
  U.S. government's recommended links to resources related to African, Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans, and Women.

- Interchange Learn About the U.S. (website)
  Recommendations for American books, TV/movies, music, sports, food, touristic attractions, as well as cultural activities in individual states.

Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups

- Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America (2000 ebook)
  Entries by American ethnic group. Covers history, food, language, customs, greetings, social and gender dynamics, arts, media, etc.

- Multicultural America (2011 ebook)
  Entries by immigrant groups in the U.S. Covers background, migration and assimilation, demographic profile, impact on the U.S., later generations, notable people, etc. Includes timeline, map and statistics.

- Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples (1999 book)
  Entries by Canadian ethnic group. Covers origins, migration, community, family, culture, religion, politics, etc.

- A Native American Encyclopedia (2015 book)
  Entries organized by region and ethnic group. Includes overview, history, religion, government, customs, economy, dress, war and contemporary issues.

Images, Videos & Graphs

- American Indian History Online (database)
  Summaries, videos, slideshows, biographies, primary sources, maps and graphs on American Indian groups.

Can't find what you're looking for? Try these resources:

- CultureGrams
- Global Road Warrior
- GoinGlobal
- Encyclopedia of World Cultures
- MyWorldAbroad
### National & Regional Cultures

#### All Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop Culture Latin America: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle (2005 book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of contemporary Latin American popular culture. Covers music, social movements, sports, performances, tourism, literature, icons, language, media, cinema, religion and arts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Endangered Peoples of Latin America: Struggles to Survive and Thrive (2001 book) |
| Chapters sorted by region and communities. Provides information on traditional economy, social and political organization, religion, and threats to survival. |

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Culture Shock! ebook series (Latin America &amp; the Caribbean)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, touristic activities, language, work and facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Culture and Customs of Latin America and the Caribbean series |
| Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth. |

| Culture Smart! book series (Latin America & the Caribbean) |
| Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication. |

#### References by Subject

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>History &amp; Culture</th>
<th>Arts &amp; Literature</th>
<th>Beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entries by concept. Covers Portuguese-speaking regions and includes people, places, works, policies, languages, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| The Oxford Encyclopedia of Mexican American Cultures (2001 book) |
| Entries by concept. Includes people, arts, religion, major civilizations' geography, cultural ecology, language and history. |

| Entries by concept. Includes arts, literature, media, political and social institutions, biographies, etc. |

| Historical Dictionaries of Latin America & The Caribbean book series |
| Encyclopedia titles by country. Brief entries on concepts, major historical and recent events, places and people. |

#### Images, Videos & Graphs

**Videos**

- **Latin America in Video (database)**
  - Spanish video database for a variety of fields browsable by country.

- **Americas (1993 video)**
  - English & Spanish video on issues that prevail in Latin America.

**Graphs**

- **Glencoe World Geography textbook - Ch.8: The Cultural Geography of Latin America (PDF)**
  - Simple overview of Latin American people, history and culture. Includes graphs and maps for ethnic groups, languages, migration and urbanization, historical empires and religions.
Cultural Competence: Europe

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Regional & National Cultures

- All Resources
- Print Only

Regional

  Entries by ethnic group. Includes flag, map, descriptions of the people, their homeland, history, language, religion, etc.
  Entries by ethnic group. Overview discusses history, demography, language, etc.

Eastern Europe: An Introduction to the People, Lands, and Culture (2005 book)
Volumes organized by region, entries by country. Covers geography and demography, minorities, language, political systems, cultural development, etc.

Encyclopedia of Eastern Europe: From the Congress of Vienna to the Fall of Communism (2000 book)
Entries by concept. However, there are country-specific entries on geography, art, culture, language, literature, etc.

Southeast Europe: People and Culture (website)
Select a country to view introductory text and additional articles related to art, dance & theater, film, gastronomy, literature, music and sports.

National

- Culture Shock! ebook series (Europe)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, tourist activities, language, work and fact facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.
- Customs and Customs of Europe book series
  Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.
- Culture Smart! book series (Europe)
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.
- Pop Culture Germany! (2006 book)
  Overview of contemporary German popular culture. Covers music, social movements, sports, performances, tourism, literature, icon, language, media, cinema, religion and arts.

Images & Videos

- Europeana Collections (website)
  Database of artworks, artifacts, books, videos and sounds from museums, libraries and universities across Europe.
- Sputnik Images (website)
  Photo bank of historical images and coverage of current Russian and international events. Website viewable in English and Russian.

Can't find what you're looking for? Try these resources:
CultureGrams  Global Road Warrior  GoIngGlobal  Encyclopedia of World Cultures  MyWorldAbroad
Regional & National Cultures

### Regional

- Encyclopaedic Ethnography of Middle-East and Central Asia (2005 book)
  - Entries by ethnic group. Includes overview of geography and population, language, history, society, family, ethnic conflict, economy, religion, culture, etc.

- Pop Culture Arab World: Media, Arts, and Lifestyle (2005 book)
  - Overview of contemporary Middle Eastern popular culture. Covers music, social movements, sports, performances, tourism, literature, icons, language, media, cinema, religion and arts.

- Endangered Peoples of Africa and the Middle East: Struggles to Survive and Thrive (2002 ebook)
  - Chapters sorted by region and communities. Provides information on traditional economy, social and political organization, religion, and threats to survival.

- Global Connections: Middle East Culture (website)
  - Basic introduction to culture, language, religion of the Middle East in general, with timeline (up to 2002) and links to additional information.

### National

- Culture Shock! ebook series (Middle East & Northern Africa)
  - Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, touristic activities, language, work and fast facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

- Cultures and Customs book series (Northern Africa) & Cultures and Customs of the Palestinians (2004 book)
  - Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.

- Culture Smart! book series (Middle East & Northern Africa)
  - Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

Images & Videos

- Creative Dissent: Arts of the Arab World Uprisings (website)
  - The Arab American Museum's online exhibit of photos, graffiti images, videos and songs about the uprisings in the Arab World from 2010 to 2013. Curated by U-M associate professor & PhD student.

- Yousef Jameel Centre for Islamic and Asian Art (website)
  - The University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum's online collection of art from the Islamic Middle East, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, India and the Himalayas.
Cultural Competence: Sub-Saharan Africa

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Regional & National Cultures

- **Regional**
    - Entries by ethnic group. Visual guide to history, language, ways of life, social structure, culture & religion.
    - Entries by region, country and major civilizations. Visual guide to history and peoples of countries.
    - Brief introductory entries on African language families, languages by country, and peoples and nations by country.
    - Broad introduction to African cultural diversity, gender dynamics, geomorphology, climate, history, population, economies, resources, current development and issues, etc.
  - Into Africa: A Guide to Sub-Saharan Culture and Diversity (2009 ebook)
    - General introduction to African communities, communication, customs, business etiquette, travel tips and regional differences.

- **National**
  - Culture Shock! ebook series (Africa)
    - Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, tourist activities, language, work and last facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.
  - Cultures and Customs of Africa book series
    - Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.
  - Culture Smart! book series (Africa)
    - Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.
  - Society and Culture Complete Report ebook series
    - Entries by country. Information on gift-giving, greetings, holidays, life cycles, religion, sports, stereotypes, folklore, women, etc. Identical report and additional information on Global Road Warrior.
  - Historical Dictionaries of Africa series
    - Encyclopedia titles by country. Brief entries on concepts, major historical and recent events, places and people.

U-M Library Research Guides

- African and Diaspora Art and Visual Culture
- African Studies
- Lusophone Africa

Websites

- Art & Life in Africa
  - Visual galleries and topic essays on art in and related to everyday life, education, ancient times, medicine, cultural exchange, etc. Country pages display key facts and figures, historical summary and local artworks.
- Our Africa
  - Country specific facts and figures, videos, images and descriptions of poverty, healthcare, food, daily life, people, culture, geography, nature, music, family, economy, education, jobs, history, politics, tourism, etc.
- African Writing Online
  - Short texts from African writers and articles about African literary works and authors.
- AfricaGuide
  - General African arts and culture, food, tribe, music, festivals information, basic country overviews, photo library and articles related to touristic travels in Africa.
- Africa: The Art of a Continent
  - The Guggenheim Museum's introductory online exhibit to artifacts, films and photographs from Africa. Use the clickable map to view by region.

Can't find what you're looking for? Try these resources:

- CultureGrams
- Global Road Warrior
- GoInGlobal
- Encyclopedia of World Cultures
- MyWorldAbroad
Cultural Competence: Asia & Oceania

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Regional & National Cultures

### National

- **Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Asia and Oceania (2009 book)**
  Entries by ethnic group. Includes an overview of location, time period, ancestry and language, followed by a timeline and details about history, cultural identity, etc.

  Encyclopedic entries by ethnic group. Overview describes population and history.

- **Encyclopedia of Modern Asia (2003 ebook)**
  Entries by concept. Includes people, festivals, themes, and subject entries on architecture, cuisine, cinema, literature, etc.

- **Chanting the Pacific (website)**
  Discover stories of lives in the Pacific and explore maps, country profiles, and regional statistics and issues.

- **Culture Shock! ebook series (Asia & Oceania)**
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers land and history, society, customs, local views, lifestyle, food, tourist activities, language, work and fast facts. Commentary can be blunt and colloquial.

- **Cultures and Customs book series (Asia)**
  Titles by country. Introduces country and its history, then covers religion, customs, media, cinema, literature, and arts in more depth.

- **Culture Smart! book series (Asia & Oceania)**
  Travel guide titles by country. Covers country overview, various ethnic groups, values and attitudes, customs and traditions, etiquette, local lifestyle, entertainment, transportation, business and communication.

- **Etiquette Guides ebook series (China, Korea & the Philippines)**
  Titles by country. Includes information on character and values of the people, social etiquette, business etiquette and useful expressions.

- **The Encyclopedia of New Zealand (website)**
  New Zealand government's online encyclopedia with entries on different ethnic groups, regions, creative and daily life, government, social concepts, nature, etc.

### Regional

- **Oceania (book)**
  Volume 1 provides a collective overview of the region, activities, Ho cycle, maps; Volume 2 is region-specific and discusses social relations, languages, politics, beliefs, etc.

- **Popular Culture Co-production and Collaborations in East and Southeast Asia (ebook)**
  Essays on popular culture and cinema in East and Southeast Asia.

- **Everyday Life in Southeast Asia (ebook)**
  Anthology of essays on the identities, livelihoods, traditions, religions and popular cultures of various people in Southeast Asia.

Images, Videos & Documents

- **ECAI Pacific Language Mapping (website)**
  Language atlas of the Pacific area, Southeast Asia, and Madagascar.

- **Yousef Jameel Centre for Islamic and Asian Art (website)**
  The University of Oxford Ashmolean Museum’s online collection of art from the Islamic Middle East, China, Japan, Southeast Asia, India and the Himalayas.

- **Trove (website)**
  The National Library of Australia’s digital collection of Australian books, images, newspapers, maps, music, websites, etc.

- **Coconet TV (website)**
  Interactive timeline, games, photos, blogs, videos about and from people in the Pacific.

- **Tribal Asia (2004 book)**
  A photobook of tribes in ancient Arabia, India, mountains, Central Asia and Malay archipelago.
Cultural Competence: Study/Work Abroad

Increase intercultural awareness and competencies for traveling abroad and living among culturally diverse populations.

Getting Started  Diversity  World Cultures  Regional Cultures  Study/Work Abroad

Things to keep in mind when preparing to go abroad...

U-Pacific Cultural Training

Online training resource with units and sections for learning about the concept of culture and how skills, attitudes and behaviors affect adaptation to a new and unfamiliar environment.

Global Scholar Online Learning

This interactive online course outlines what to do and expect before, during and after going abroad with many videos. Upon completion of the course, you can receive a 'Global Scholar Certificate.' Registration required.

World Citizens Guide (brochures)

Visually appealing, short PDFs with simple suggestions for Americans traveling or working abroad.

U-M Resilient Traveling

U-M's project website dedicated to helping students traveling abroad to learn how to cope with culture shock, stress, loneliness and more. Click on 'Self-Assessment' to take an online mental health screening.

Business-Specific Webpages

GoinGlobal
Country guides & USA/Canada City Career Guides provide business-focused cultural advice. Includes employer profiles, visa regulations, job application guidelines and trends, and jobs/internships listing.

World Business Culture
Business culture and etiquette guide to countries.

Business Insider Country Communication Chart
Diagrams of how different nationals negotiate business.

Passport to Trade European Business Culture
Select a country to read more about its business culture (communication, etiquette, etc.). Also includes information about the country, its history, cultural taboos, education, transport, being a foreigner in the country, and additional resource links.

How to speak and act?

Etiquette 101: Listen Up! (article)
How to say hello, good-bye, please, thank you and help in various languages, and country-specific greeting tips.

Journey/Woman What Should I Wear & Where (website)
*What to wear* tips for women traveling to select countries.

CultureCrossing Etiquette Guide (website)
Community-built and basic work and study etiquette guides by country.

Eating Abroad: The Cultural Resonance of Food (article)
An article that shares food tips for travelers.