**Week 3: Sociology of Culture; Cultural Diversity**

**STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS**

Focusing on sociology of culture, this week explores cultural signs and symbols and material culture; the role of language in shaping our human cognition; underlying norms and values, among other topics. As one of the key areas of study in sociology, this week lays foundations for understanding how racial/ethinc and gender inequalities are reproduced in everyday culture.

1. Explain the key sociological critiques of biological explanations of human behavior.
2. What is eugenics? Provide examples from history.
3. What is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis? Explain using examples related to race/ethnicity and gender.
4. What is contact theory? Why is it important in solving race/ethnic-related tensions?
5. What are norms? What is the difference between formal and informal norms? Provide examples.
6. What are the main function of rituals?
7. What is the difference between norms and values?
8. What are the key values in the US?
9. The second reading discusses individualism as one of the foundational values in the US. What are the positive and negative aspects of this value?
10. What is subculture? What is counterculture? How are they different?
11. What is cultural relativism? What are some of the issues with this perspective?
12. What is ethnocentrism? How does it relate to racism?

**General discussion questions:**

* + - 1. One branch of eugenics calls for sterilization of people with disabilities. Why do you think this idea was popular in the US and Europe historically? Explain how this relates to the history of racism in the US.
      2. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis suggests that our thinking is shaped by language. How do
      3. The second reading discusses how norms are changing in the US. Have you noticed any norms emerging, particularly in relation to dating? In your opinion, what social forces are driving these changes?
      4. The second reading discusses the work ethics as one of the foundational values in the US. Can you think of examples of how this value can negatively impact some people’s lives?