

"HI, HOW ARE YOU?":

Socializing with
Americans (And why
that's not really the
question)

Presenter:
Erik Ellis, EAP Post-doc

Wednesday, October 30
116 O'Shaughnessy
12:00-1:15pm





English Language Table

1st & 3rd Thursdays
CSLC (334 Bond Hall)
5:00 - 6:00pm



The Center for the Study of
**Languages
and Cultures**

EAP Tutoring



Rezwan Shihab, M.A.

Tuesdays, 10:00-11:45am

Thursdays, 2:30-3:45pm





UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

STEPHEN COLBERT



I AM AMERICA
(AND SO CAN YOU!)



Ten surprising things about Americans

They are very patriotic.

Americans are very religious.

Only 48% have left the country at least once.

Very few native-born Americans speak a second language fluently.

Americans love driving.

Americans like things to be big.

Americans like food.

Americans generally prefer natural to manmade beauty.

Americans like American football.

America is extremely diverse, and Americans generally like it that way. (patchwork vs. mosaic)

Are Americans friendlier?

General American Greetings:

“Hi, how are you?”

“Call me Jim.”

“What’s your name/where are you from/what do you do”

+Mid-west/South:

“Where do you go to church/how many kids do you have”



Things to talk about

Sports

- American Football!

News

- pick your bias!

Television

- sitcoms
- miniseries



Things to avoid talking about

Politics (especially national politics; no one really cares about state, local, or international politics...)

Religion*

Finances



Are Americans superficial?

Maybe...

A tale of two academic cultures:

- North America vs. Central/Eastern Europe
- What about your academic culture?

It is impossible to generalize or say one is better or worse than another. It is possible to appreciate differences and navigate them effectively.



What are some of the challenges you have faced so far?

When?

Where?

With whom?

About what?

How?



Knowing the Script: Mastering Semantic Domains

Airport/Restaurant/Movie Theatre

Library/Classroom/Football Stadium

Registrar/Consulate/Maintenance Office

An example: “Rico at the grocery store”



ACTFL Standards

1. “What’s a party?” (CEFRL A1/A2)
2. “Get me to the party!” (CEFRL B1)
3. “What happened at the party last night?” (CEFRL B2)
4. “What if parties were illegal?” (CEFRL C1/C2)



Why is it hard to get better?

Do you surround yourself with international students?

Do you make special, daily effort to improve your English?

Do you know what your goals are?

Do you know how to accomplish your goals?

Are you sympathetic/integrative or adversarial/utilitarian?



Culture shock!

1. Honeymoon
2. Negotiation
3. Acculturation
4. Reverse Culture Shock?



Contributing factors:

Language

Food

Clothing

Weather

Experience and Personal History



How to negotiate:

How have you encountered and worked through each of these factors?

How do you remain connected to your home culture while learning to be a part of your new community?

Any questions???



Culture, morals, mores, and values

What do these words mean?



Key American Values:

Extroversion

Self-confidence

Individuality

Egalitarianism

The Rule of Law



Theory and Practice:

Extroversion: leadership, initiative, risk-taking, positivity
-probably the most important quality
-also the one that makes Americans seem superficial to
non-Americans
-most of us are NOT extroverts...

MAKE THE FIRST MOVE!



Theory and Practice:

Self-confidence: eye contact, smooth talking, projection
-may seem arrogant

HOW TO SHAKE HANDS



Theory and Practice:

Individuality: innovation, ambition, projection

-Cowboy Ethos

-Horatio Alger/The Wolf of Wall Street

-Suburbia: early marriage, lots of debt, cars, etc...

-Work addiction

-Volunteerism and Subsidiarity

-Disruption!

HOW TO EAT LUNCH



Theory and Practice:

Egalitarianism:

- Anti-elitism
- Anti-tradition
- Informality
- Social Mobility ("The American Dream")

HOW TO EAT AT A RESTAURANT



Theory and Practice:

The Rule of Law:

-Rules are for everyone, so everyone follows the rules

ERIK AT THE STOPLIGHT



The Secular Faith of America:

The Declaration of Independence (1776)

The Preamble to the Constitution (1789)

The Pledge of Allegiance (1906-1954)



The Declaration of Independence

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of happiness.



The Preamble to the Constitution

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.”



The Pledge of Allegiance

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."



Questions?



Fall 2019
EAP
Workshops

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US Classroom
Culture

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Plagiarism

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Pronunciation

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Socializing with
Americans

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Surviving Winter

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Punctuation



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