The definition of interpersonal communication:

An ongoing process in which individuals exchange messages whose meanings are influenced by the history of the relationship and the experience of the participants.
How do we define culture? (p. 35)

- Traditionally:
  A learned system of knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, beliefs, values, and norms that is shared by a group of people.
Intercultural Communication

No more “subcultures”? 

• Different genders, gays, lesbians, African Americans, Jews, Amish, Mennonite, Asians, Latinos all comprise a co-culture? 

• “Co” alludes to equal or “partnered” cultures… Are these other cultures really equals?
Cultural Behaviors

- **Low context culture** - Language primarily expresses thoughts and ideas (U.S.) (p. 39)

- **High-context culture** - Relies heavily on subtle, nonverbal cues (Asia) (p. 39)

  - North Americans tend to talk about their attributes – I am short, tall, fat, etc.

  - Chinese, Filipinos, South Americans – I am father, employee, etc.
Cultural Behaviors

• **Individualistic culture** – primary responsibility is helping themselves (p. 40)

• **Collective culture** – team mentality; loyalties to extended family, communities (p. 40)

• **Power distance** (Hofstede) – degree in which society members accept unequal distribution of power. Ex. Rich and poor – each are all good people. (All on p. 42)

• **High power distance** cultures respects authority and is submissive.

• **Low power distance** cultures support the notion that challenging authority is acceptable.
Cultural Behaviors

- **Uncertainty avoidance** – degree to which members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous situations. (p. 43)

- **Achievement vs. nurturing** -- Material success versus relationships. (p. 44)

- Task/Social Roles (p. 60).
- Ethnocentrism (p. 56)
- Different communication cues
- Stereotyping/prejudice (p. 57)
- Assuming similarity
Linguistic Determinism – The worldview of a culture is shaped and reflected by the language of its members. (p. 48)

Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (p. 49): Language Shapes a Culture! Words within a culture can become a part of every day life.

How has language shaped our culture?
Improving Intercultural Competence—Realistic?

- Be knowledgeable, motivated, and skilled... BUT can these things erase intrinsic beliefs?
- Learn more about the culture/ask questions—does this matter?
- Develop a “third culture”—huh?
- Tolerate ambiguity (p. 55).
- Develop mindfulness—conscious awareness.
- Avoid negative judgments about another culture—is it that simple?