

# Cultural Studies in Europe: critical elements (I)

Research Methodologies in European Cultures and Society,  
Session 13

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# Course outline

- I. Approaches to culture. Limits and definitions
- II. “Self” and “Other”
- III. Culture and memory
- IV. Popular culture
- V. (...)

# I. Approaches to culture. Limits and definitions

- Introduction: All culture is intercultural/transcultural
- Culture and civilisation: terms and translations (Latin, French, English, German)
- High and low: culture as a mark of distinction
- Culture without the capital C
- Culture and “barbarism”

# Culture and cultural competence as *tools* (instrumental approach)

“Cultural competence is defined as the ability to work effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds. Cultural competence is comprised of four components or aspects:

- a diplomatic mindset,
- agile cultural learning,
- reasoning about other cultures, and
- a disciplined approach to intercultural interactions.

We go through each of these competency areas in more depth, below. Essentially, cultural competence is a set of skills and knowledge that can help you learn, reason, solve problems, and interact comfortably when you’re working with people from different cultures. Cultural competence can be improved through training, education, and experience.

In our increasingly connected world, it’s not surprising that we are encountering people from all manner of backgrounds in our workplaces. Whether you are leading a diverse team to develop a new product, treating patients from different walks of life, promoting stability in a conflict zone, or teaching in a multicultural classroom, cultural competence is critical to your success in the professional realm.”

<https://www.globalcognition.org/cultural-competence/>

# Questioning certain terms – a critical approach

- “critical”
- “culture” as a mark of distinction? (“cultural capital”, Bourdieu)
- The idea of co-cultural communication (e.g. Orbe, Mark (1996). Laying the foundation for co-cultural communication theory: An inductive approach to studying “non-dominant” communication strategies and the factors that influence them. *Communication Studies*. 47 (3), 157–176.)
- “multi-, pluri-, meta-, co- and trans-cultural” competence (e.g. Christian Puren 2011)

# A genealogy of “culture” (Latin as the first European “lingua franca”)

- “cultura” vs. “natura” (cultura: agriculture, taking care, hygiene, lavish way of life, education, cult/veneration, ...)
- “colere” > past participle “cultus”
- “civis” vs. “barbarus” / “alienus”

# “high” and “low”: culture vs. civilization



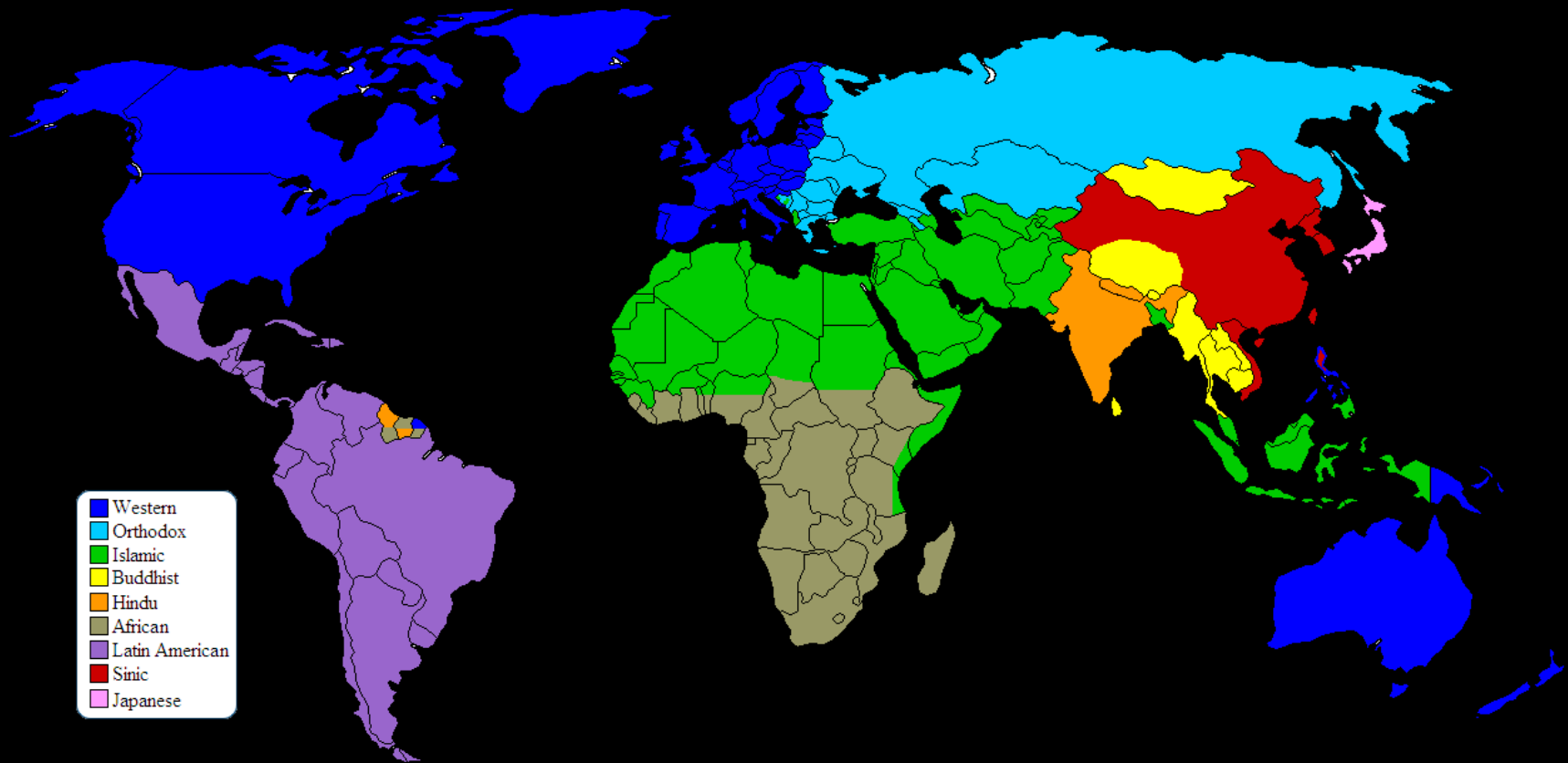
**THE  
CLASH OF  
CIVILIZATIONS  
AND THE REMAKING  
OF WORLD ORDER**

Samuel P. Huntington



# Major civilizations according to Huntington

See page 26-27 of Samuel P. Huntington's 1997 book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.



# Culture without the capital C

## CCCS, Birmingham

- « Culture is ordinary »
- « Culture is a whole way of life »

- Raymond Williams



# The “birth” of cultural studies?

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) was a research centre at the University of Birmingham, England. It was founded in 1964 by Stuart Hall and Richard Hoggart, its first director. From 1964 to 2002, it played a critical role in developing the field of cultural studies. Raymond Williams taught there as well.

# Landmark texts of the first years

Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957)

Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (1958).

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Long Revolution* (1961)

E. P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964)

# Cultural studies : Associated fields of knowledge

- (English) literary studies
- Sociology
- Anthropology/ethnology
- Religious studies
- History of art
- Media studies
- Economics
- Psychology
- (...)                      -> Social sciences? Humanities?

# The belated discovery of the European dimension of cultural studies

- German “Kulturwissenschaft”: Marxism and critical theory / Frankfurt school; Karl Lamprecht; Aby Warburg; Sigmund Freud (psychoanalysis)
- “French theory” of the 1960s-1980s: Roland Barthes, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, French Feminism
- Italy: Antonio Gramsci, but also Giambattista Vico (Enlightenment philosophy: *La Scienza Nuova*, 1725)
- (...)

PRINCIPJ  
D I  
SCIENZA NUOVA  
D I  
GIAMBATTISTA VICO  
D'INTORNO ALLA COMUNE NATURA  
DELLE NAZIONI

*IN QUESTA TERZA IMPRESSIONE*

Dal medesimo Autore in un gran numero di luoghi  
Corretta, Schiarita, e notabilmente Accresciuta.

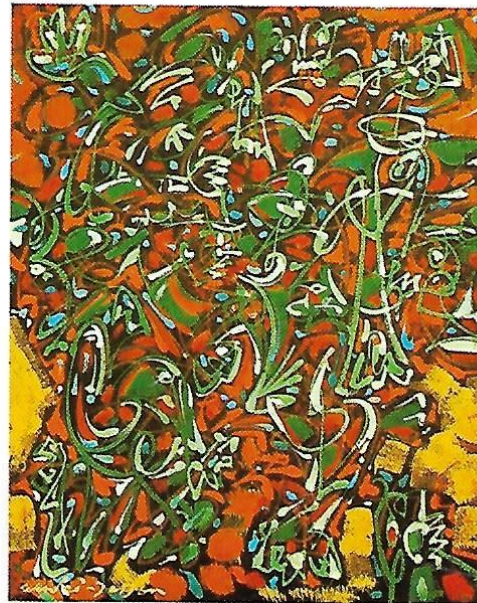
T O M O I.



IN NAPOLI MDCCXLIV.  
NELLA STAMPERIA MUZIANA  
A spese di Gaetano, e Stefano Elia.  
CON LICENZA DE' SUPERIORI.

1974

Michel de Certeau  
L'invention  
du quotidien  
1. arts de faire



folio essais

# The notion of culture Walter Benjamin, “On the concept of history” (1940), thesis VII

Source:

[http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/Theses\\_on\\_History.html](http://www.efn.org/~dredmond/Theses_on_History.html)

Translation by Dennis Redmond

- Original German: Gesammelte Schriften I:2. Suhrkamp Verlag. Frankfurt am Main, 1974.