



普通高等教育“十五”国家级规划教材

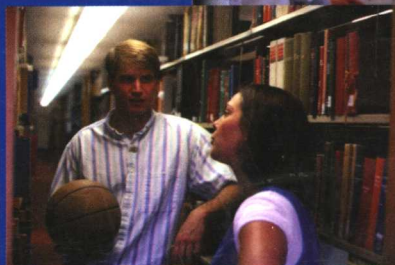
新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材

总主编 戴炜栋

# 美国文化与社会

## AMERICAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

王恩铭 编



上海外语教育出版社 外教社

SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

普通高等教育“十五”国家级规划教材

新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材

总主编 戴炜栋

# 美国文化与社会

AMERICAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

王恩铭 编

上海外语教育出版社  
SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS



## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

美国文化与社会 = American Culture and Society / 王恩铭编.

—上海:上海外语教育出版社,2003

英语专业本科生系列教材

ISBN 7-81080-698-X

I. 美… II. 王… III. ①英语-阅读教学-高等学校教材

②美国-概况-高等学校-教材 IV. H319.4②K971.2

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2002)第 092715 号

出版发行: 上海外语教育出版社

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 35051812 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@slep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.slep.com.cn> <http://www.slep.com>

责任编辑: 冯慧妍

---

印 刷: 上海长阳印刷厂  
经 销: 新华书店上海发行所  
开 本: 880×1230 1/32 印张 20.75 字数 651 千字  
版 次: 2003 年 6 月第 1 版 2003 年 6 月第 1 次印刷  
印 数: 5 000 册

---

书 号: ISBN 7-81080-698-X / H · 269

定 价: 26.50 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题,可向本社调换

## PREFACE

**A**merican Culture and Society, a textbook intended for juniors or seniors majoring in English in four-year colleges or universities in China, aims at expanding the vision of Chinese students in their acquisition of English language skills at college. Specifically speaking, it takes it as its goal to provide students with a fairly comprehensive coverage of cultural and social life in the United States.

Unlike many other survey textbooks on the United States in China, *American Culture and Society* does not merely touch upon the most important aspects of culture and society of the United States, it also offers a considerable amount of discussion about, and analysis of, the questions raised in each chapter. Historical in approach and extensive in scope, the textbook furnishes each topic with a historical dimension so as to help students achieve a broad perspective on the social and cultural issues in the United States.

Thematic-oriented in format, *American Culture and Society* is composed of eighteen chapters altogether, covering a wide range of subjects from immigration to cultural values, from marriage and family to political institutions, and from religion to women and minority people. By piecing together virtually every part of American life and culture in it, the textbook attempts to present to the readers a multi-dimensional image of the U.S. However, extensive as these topics are, each chapter is an entity in and of itself.

To facilitate the use of the textbook, new words and expressions as well as cultural notes are provided for each chapter. Additionally, to assist students in their understanding of the complexity of American culture and the diversity of American society, essay

questions are given for all the subjects discussed in the textbook. While neither all-embracing in coverage nor profound in depth, these questions are designed in part to help students consolidate their understanding, and in part to stimulate them to explore further the significance of the United States as a civilization.

In the process of producing this textbook, I have accumulated enormous intellectual debts to numerous scholars in the field of American Studies. To list all of them here is impossible, but my gratitude certainly goes to all of them. The list of authors, together with their books, at the back of the textbook, serves in part my acknowledgement of the sources from which the present textbook has partially derived. Needless to say, the responsibility for any mistake in the textbook, either in the form of quotations and paraphrasing, or in the form of interpretations and analyzing, rests squarely with me. With all this in mind, I sincerely invite all the users of this textbook to offer me their advice, comments, suggestions and criticism about it, for revision or otherwise.

Wang Enming  
*American Studies Center*  
*Shanghai International*  
*Studies University*  
*Shanghai*

## CONTENTS

PREFACE .....	i
CHAPTER 1 The American Land; A Panoramic View .....	1
CHAPTER 2 Human Resources; A Nation of Immigrants ...	21
CHAPTER 3 Human Resources ; Minority People in the United States .....	53
CHAPTER 4 American Politics and Government .....	92
CHAPTER 5 American Economy .....	134
CHAPTER 6 Education in the United States .....	168
CHAPTER 7 Law and Judicial System .....	201
CHAPTER 8 Cultural Regions of America .....	230
CHAPTER 9 American Cultural Values .....	279
CHAPTER 10 Mass Media .....	311
CHAPTER 11 Religion in America .....	340
CHAPTER 12 The Status of Labor in the United States .....	381
CHAPTER 13 American Women .....	414
CHAPTER 14 American Families .....	448
CHAPTER 15 Marriage and Divorce in the Umted States ...	481
CHAPTER 16 Mass Leisure in America .....	506
CHAPTER 17 American Sports .....	533
CHAPTER 18 American Thought .....	566
 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	 651

## CHAPTER 1

### **The American Land: A Panoramic View**

**T**he love of place was the earliest loyalty brought to the American shores. The settlers came from countries of their own where they had loved the familiar land, skies, rivers and hills. The American landscape in their eyes was strange, untidy and mysterious; the continent was wild, vast and grand with a luxuriance of plant and animal life that struck all the early explorers who brought with them "the eye of discovery". They liked the place and decided to stay and live there. Out of their extraordinary experience with the new environment, they created a nation called the United States of America.

It has been said that America is a nation with an abundance of geography but a shortage of history. There is some truth in the statement. After all, it took less than four hundred years for the national territory to expand from 865,000 square miles of the original thirteen states, with a population of 3.9 million, to 3,549,000 square miles, with about 275 million people living in today's fifty-state U. S. A. In fact, Americans took over the bulk of their national domain within the last century and a half. Even today, much of the United States remains only thinly populated and hardly tamed by civilization.

Every nation is in part a country and in part a people. The

country of the United States is one of great opportunity and one of considerable challenge as well. Opportunity consists of the favorable position of America, its spaciousness, and the wealth of natural resources. Challenge lies in overcoming the physical barriers of relief and distance, and the hazards of flood, drought and frost. In the process of conquering the continent, Americans have reshaped the face of their land, leaving a record of glorious achievements as well as dismal failures. Reversely, in their constant intimate encounters with that massive land, Americans themselves have been shaped and reshaped by the entirely new environment, molding and forging their national character in a unique fashion.

### **General Geographic Characteristics**

The United States is situated in North America between Canada and Mexico, bordering both the North Atlantic Ocean and the North Pacific Ocean. The position of America has always been one of its chief assets. Over 2,000 miles from Europe (or 3,000 miles from Britain) and 7,000 miles from Asia, it was long isolated from the conflicts of these troubled continents. It thus offered itself a haven for those who wished to seek a new life free of restrictions. Not surprisingly, many of the first settlers were Separatists, anxious to separate themselves out from the established churches of Western Europe. However, as the settlers moved further away, striking inland across the Appalachians, they isolated themselves even more, enjoying a still greater chance to create a different life. In this sense, isolation helped America to work out a character of its own.

Yet, as the world grew less land-based and more ocean-centered, the position of America received fresh value. With improvements in transportation and communication, America ceased to be a retreat and instead became a cross-roads; a cross-roads between East and West, facing the two most densely populated regions of the world in Western Europe and Eastern Asia. This shift has

given the United States vast scope, for instead of being gulfs of separation, the Atlantic and the Pacific have become the lifelines of a new world in which Americans have made their country the focus of the world connections.

Additionally, the geographical position has favored Americans in placing their country in the middle of latitudes. It thus is a warm-temperate land and only in northern Alaska is it under the permanent threat of frost. Moreover, as it faces two oceans, it is swept by humid and maritime airs and only in the extreme southwest does it experience chronic drought. No other country has such a favorable climatic disposition — comfortable, stimulating and productive. Two-thirds of Russia is in the cool-temperate and arctic zones, frustrated by frost and a large part of China is so continental as to be away from rain-bearing winds, debarred by droughts.

Another advantage of the United States is the sheer size of the country, which is over 4,000 miles broad and less than 2,000 miles deep. From the first, Americans were impressed by the spaciousness of their environment. This was seen by the way in which they often resolved their difficulties by founding new settlements and creating new territories and states. When the Massachusetts theocracy became unbearable, for example, people went out to establish their new sects in new colonies such as Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. Similarly, as the tidewater gentlemen of Virginia and the Carolinas grew too oppressive, people did not hesitate to march to the mountains to set up more independent settlements of their own. This tradition of packing up and moving to the west continued all the way to 1890, when the Census Bureau of the United States declared that the whole continent had been settled.

What struck the early American colonists more than the size of their new environment was its richness. So much of it could be used. The New England seas were thick with fish and a wealth of forest was found along the Atlantic coast and on the Appalachians. Even greater wealth lay in the Appalachian coal fields. The trans-

Appalachians had a super-abundance of coal and oil, together with iron, copper, lead and zinc and above all, of fertile productive soils. The Far West abounded with precious metals and with forested ranges going down to its irrigable basins. Indeed, so great was America's wealth that it was thought to be boundless and, consequently, it generated wasteful methods of production that were sadly to deplete the non-renewable resources of the land by the mid-twentieth century. To combat waste, extensive conservation projects have been undertaken, and America is now one of the most conservation-minded nations in the world.

America's resources, though plentiful, have never been easy to develop. Barriers of distance and relief and certain difficulties in the climate have all had to be overcome before the rich rewards could be won. So, there has been a strong element of challenge in each part of America, evident from the beginning to the present day. New England fisheries are set in a storm-swept sea where storm-tracks from the interior are carried well out over the ocean. Besides, New England soils are singularly stony, made up as they were from heavily glaciated land. Virginia and the Carolinas have their "dismal swamps" to put up with: poor drainage and an all but tropical summer often meant fever of one kind or another in the past. And once the interior is reached, new hazards are there to be dealt with. A truly continental climate with strong heating in summer and intense chilling in winter brings July thunderstorms and blizzards. Before the advent of science and technology, the killing of crops by severe winter frosts was quite common, and when spring came and snow melted, dangerous floods often rolled down the rivers and brought widespread ruin. Further west, in the Great Plains and the Pacific basins, rainfall is often unreliable and drought frequently hits the area.

In brief, then, the United States is a land rich in opportunity and full of challenges. While the abundant opportunity it provides has drawn an endless flow of immigrants from around the world,

the challenges it poses have eventually transformed the nation from a small and relatively young nation into a big and relatively mature superpower.

## The Face of the Land

On the topographic map of the United States, the mountains look like jagged masses, the plains like vast flat spaces, and the rivers like meandering threads. Mountains, plains and rivers, like in other countries, constitute the main features of the face of the United States. America's geologic and topographic framework is built around a huge interior lowland that has yielded some of America's greatest agricultural and mineral wealth. This huge interior lowland contains a large bulk of its population, and is the heart of what politicians like to call "middle America". The region is drained by the Mississippi River and its great tributaries, one of the largest navigable systems in the world. The Mississippi is not merely a useful river; it also serves as a potent geographic symbol — the traditional dividing line in America between "East" and "West". This great lowland rises toward the north, where it butts against the wild bulwark of the Canadian Shield. To the south, the lowland opens to a broad coastal plain that fringes the Gulf of Mexico. To east and west, the land rises gradually and then abruptly to mountain ranges that flank the lowland to either side and separate it from the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The mountain ranges differ substantially from each other. The Appalachians on the east stretch almost unbroken from Alabama to the Canadian border and beyond, running parallel to the east coast. They are old mountains (the highest elevation is less than seven thousand feet) with many coal-rich valleys between them, and are set back from the Atlantic by a broad belt of coastal lowland. While this coastal region contains no very remarkable scenery, not much in the way of mineral wealth, it was here that the American nation

was planted and took root in the seventeen century. The original thirteen colonies were all located in this narrow belt, and almost half of America's history has been played out here. It was not until the American Revolution that significant numbers of American settlers began to move westward across the Appalachians into the interior lowlands.

To the west of the interior basin lies the mighty system of mountains, the Rocky Mountains. The Rockies are often said to be "the backbone of the continent", and are considered young mountains: of the same age as the Alps in Europe, Himalayas in Asia, and the Andes in South America. Like these ranges, they are high, rough, and irregular. The western United States around the Rockies, unlike the east, has no coastal plain, and the mountains along the Pacific coast drop abruptly and often spectacularly into the sea. This western country is both complicated and varied, containing not only some of the highest mountains in North America, but also a vast expanse of intermountain basins, plateaus, and isolated ranges. It is a peculiar and wonderful place — a land of impressive scenery, considerable environmental variety, and great mineral wealth. Much of this western country was settled by adventurous folks in search of quick riches, when the "gold rush" swept across the United States from east to west in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It was also settled by people who sought freedom from the conventions and traditions of the crowded, long-settled east, when industrialization both opened up new opportunities in the West and made means of transport available for people to migrate there. Its picturesque scenery and thrilling history have captured the imagination of American artists for a long time, who, for whatever reasons, have painted the American West in bright, uncomplicated colors.

In sum, as far as geography is concerned, there are four definable topographic regions in the United States. Viewed from east to west in the order that European settlers found and took over them, they are (1) the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plain; (2) the Appalachi-

ans and their foothills; (3) the Interior Lowlands; and (4) the Cordillera, a Spanish word referring to all the high rough country of the western third of the United States, which includes both the main mountains and a variety of intermountain valleys, basins, and plateaus.

### The Regional Geography of the United States

A country as diverse and as large as the United States was almost bound to evolve different conditions of life, or traditions of living, in different areas. The contrast between New England and Virginia early became apparent. The former, due to its shorter growing season, was less dependent on agriculture and more reliant on trade and industry, owing to its easier access to, and greater use of water power. Additionally, as the area was largely settled by Puritans and Separatists, the middle-class democracy assumed dominant position early on. The latter, in contrast, has a much warmer and more productive climate and soil, and therefore from its inception, it placed great emphasis on agriculture, particularly on commercial and industrial crops. Because of the enormous importance people attached to the land, landed gentry class there enjoyed prestigious position and, for a long time, Virginia practiced the rule of squirearchy. It is quite obvious, then, that factors of the natural environment, combined with different economic interests and social backgrounds, can produce a very different geography. And, it is in this sense that special conditions in other areas influenced the development of their own regions, and distinct regions, as time went by, eventually emerged within the United States.

Of course, regions do not remain static; they change with time and technological progress. With the onrush of industrial revolution, regions in the United States have witnessed great changes over the past two centuries. They are less and less the direct result of nature and more and more the work of man. Consequently, the re-

gional geography of the United States is not simply its natural regions in human expression. Rather, man has increasingly come to put his own interpretation on nature, subordinating natural features and conditions to economic and social needs and aims. As man has been able to draw some natural regions together, or divide up others, and create new orientations to plain and mountain, river and coast, man has come to play an increasingly important role in the writing of geography of any country, not the least of which is the United States. In the 18<sup>th</sup>-century America, for example, geographical regions were smaller, based on sea and river transportation, and more involved in primary production. As roads and railways developed, as marketing became better organized, and as industries expanded, the regions became larger, with the absorption of smaller by greater ones, and with sharper contrasts between industrial and agricultural regions.

Over the past two hundred years or so, Americans have tried to divide their country into many different regions. In 1819, for example, Morse — “the father of American geography” — divided the country into four regions, namely: New England, the Mid-Atlantic States, the South, and the West. In 1910, less than a hundred years after Morse, the U. S. Census Bureau divided the country up into nine major sections. These were (1) New England; (2) the Mid-Atlantic States; (3) the East North-Central States (the Ohio-Wisconsin region); (4) the West North-Central Region (the Missouri-Red River Region); (5) the South Atlantic States; (6) The East South-Central States (lower Mississippi, east); (7) the West South-Central States (lower Mississippi, west, and Texas); (8) the Mountain States (Rockies and intermountain basins); and (9) the Pacific Coast States. At present, as a result of swifter transport, more effective mass communications, a wider web of commercial and financial interests, and, on top of all this, the extensive use of Internet, regions in the United States have become increasingly larger and more widespread, leading, in some cases, to the gradual ab-

olition of regional traits, and the emergence of a nearly homogeneous and perhaps uniform American landscape. Still, regardless of the tremendous impact technology has exerted on regional uniqueness in the United States, their differences are real enough and quite discernable. The following description of five distinct geographic regions is provided to shed some light on the way each particular region has evolved over time and the unique feature it has retained as part of regional identity.

### ***The Industrialized Northeast and North-Central Region***

This area has been the leading U. S. region in industrialization. It is preeminently the nation's manufacturing belt, and is characterized by very dense urban development along (a) the Atlantic Coast Plain from Boston to Baltimore; (b) the Lakeshore plain of the Lower Great Lakes and Lake Michigan, from Cleveland to Milwaukee; and (c) the connecting lowland through the Hudson-Mohawk Gap, from New York to Buffalo. These three great lines of huge industrial-commercial cities owe their association to certain natural linkages. Although they have grown up in the apparently different areas of coast plain, Appalachians, and interior lowlands, they have certain things in common; they lie in the main path of the storms generated between Polar continental and Tropical maritime air; they have been heavily glaciated and possess leached gray-brown soils developed from glacial till; they are in the oak-elm-maple-pine forest zone, replaced largely by pasture, hay, oats, winter wheat and forage crops as a basis mainly for dairy products; they have rich deposits of coal, are within easy access by lake or sea to iron ore, and have developed abundance of water power. Yet, the single thing that has enabled the diverse parts of this region stretching from New York to Chicago to be welded into one, has been the complex of postglacial lake terraces and coast plain linked by the great glacial melt-water channels of the Susquehanna and the Mohawk-Hudson. Transportation made the most of these links with road, canal,

railroad, and motorway, and industry made the most of this remarkable concentration of routes to open up a vast interior to the coast and keep the interior in touch with overseas. For these and many other reasons, this area has become the most densely populated region in the United States, characterized by the greatest admixture of races and cultures, the largest influx of immigrants, the best assemblage of skills, and the biggest consumer market.

### *The South*

At first glance, the South would also appear to be so diverse as to have little geographical reason for being counted as a region; it too begins on the Atlantic coast, straddles the Appalachian Mountains, and takes in part of what is, from the physical point of view, the Midwest. Consequently, there is some truth in the argument that the South is a state of mind rather than a natural region. Yet, given the overriding importance of mental attitudes and cultural traditions, there are common features in the environment that have helped them to take root in the South and keep it a separate region. For one thing, the South includes virtually the whole sweep of the Atlantic and Gulf coast plains from Chesapeake Bay to the Rio Grande. Expansion of the old way of life established in Virginia and the Carolinas was made easy throughout this plain because it could proceed without much change, always meeting the same landforms, weather regime, vegetation, and soils. This is the zone of the belted lowland, with limestone scarps and clay or sandy vale; this is the region of abandoned raised sea beaches. Indeed, the whole area is under the prime influence of the Tropical maritime air mass, and therefore it has a warm-temperate humid climate, characterized by oak-chestnut-walnut forests, the southern pineries, gumwoods and cypress swamps. Everywhere, it is marked by red or yellow lateritic soils. As a result, the same crops can be grown throughout the region, and the tobacco, cotton, and rice of the eastern coast plain have been carried successfully to the West.

Southern concentration of its efforts in agriculture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries meant that industry was slow growing there, although the region is rich in coal and iron, oil and natural gas, bauxite, and various kinds of salts and sulfur. It was only in the late nineteenth century that the "New South" started to "take off", driving itself toward the rapid industrialization of the region. Even though its population is comparatively low, it is seeing the rapid rise of great cities, especially in the so-called "rocket zone" from Florida to Texas, where many very modern, science-based high-tech industries are starting up. However, the main distinguishing features of southern population are the large number of African Americans in Deep South, the heavy concentration of Hispanics in Florida, New Mexico and Texas, and the relative homogeneity of Anglo-Americans across the region.

### *The Agricultural Midwest*

This region forms the core of the Central Lowlands not absorbed by the expansion of the Northeast and the South. It too has its internal differences between a northern glaciated part with grayish soils and a southern unglaciated part with reddish soils. But the downward sweep of Polar continental air to the Great Plains in winter and the northward surge of Tropical Gulf air to the Great Lakes in summer provide unity in its weather. More importantly, it is all brought together by the confluence of the Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi rivers. Navigation by these rivers still keeps many Midwest towns in touch with other, while the transcontinental routes, cutting across the region, far from disrupting it, have helped to keep it together by connecting each river with the other. Agriculture and trade have grown up as the chief occupations to make use of the fertile well-watered lowlands and the great natural routeways.

Taking in part of the dairy belt in the North, of the cotton belt in the South, and of the wheat belt in the West, but centering in the corn belt, the region has a considerable range of crops. With a