



对外经济贸易大学
远程教育系列教材

美国文化

American Cultural Heritage

范悦编著

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内 容 简 介

本书按专题分十二章,通过美国历史发展的脉络,介绍美国社会和文化的不同层面,有助于读者在学习英语的同时,获得对美国社会全景式的认知,从而更好地了解美国这个文化多元的国家。

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总 序

中国远程教育的发展经历了三代：第一代是函授教育；第二代是广播电视教育；20世纪90年代，随着现代信息技术的发展，以网络为基础的第三代现代远程教育应运而生。到目前为止，教育部批准开展现代远程教育试点的高校共67所。对外经济贸易大学远程教育学院（简称“贸大远程”）是在中国加入WTO后的第一年，于2002年3月正式成立的。

现代远程教育作为新生事物，对传统的教学模式、学习习惯、获取新知的途径等产生了巨大的冲击。如何在网络时代打造学习型社会，构筑终身教育体系，是当今时代的重大课题，现代远程教育试点高校为此进行了许多卓有成效的探索。在网络教育的具体实践中，贸大远程始终坚持依托学校的整体优势和特色，坚持知识的内在逻辑性与职业、行业的市场需求的统一，坚持开展面向广大在职人员的现代远程教育，逐步形成了独具我校特色的“7+1”学习模式（即网络课堂、网上答疑、课程光盘、教材资料、适量面授、网上串讲、成绩检测，以及第二课堂活动），为学生个性化学习提供了广阔的空间。自2003年起，贸大远程连续3年蝉联新浪网、择校网、搜狐网和《中国电脑教育报》联合评出的全国“十佳网络教育学院（机构）”称号。值得一提的是，“国际贸易实务”课程荣获国家级奖项，“商务英语”等7门课程荣获北京市优秀教材一等奖和精品课程称号，另有10余门课程在全国性的远程教育课程展示会上获得大奖。

几年来丰富的现代远程教育实践和教学经验积累，为我们出版成龙配套的贸大远程系列教材奠定了厚实的基础。目前，普通高等学校的现有教材并不完全适合远程教学，市面上真正

用于现代远程教育的成规模的网络教材还不多见，与网络课件相配套的系列教材更是寥寥无几，因此为接受远程教育的广大莘莘学子专门设计符合他们需要的教材已成为现代远程教育发展的迫切需求。

基于以上原因，贸大远程按照学校一级教学管理体制，本着为社会、为学生服务的宗旨，致力于教学质量的保证和提高，特组织了国际经济与贸易学院、金融学院、国际商学院、英语学院、公共管理学院等学院的优秀教师，以目前开设的两个学历层次的7个专业为依据，以现有的导学课件为基础，编写了这套远程教育系列教材。本套教材共分为外语、经济贸易、工商管理、法律、金融与会计、行政管理、综合7大系列，全面覆盖两个学历层次7个专业的上百门课程。为了打造贸大远程优质教材品牌，我们与清华大学出版社和对外经济贸易大学出版社达成协议，计划3年之内全部出齐。

本套教材在策划编写过程中，严格遵循现代远程教育人才培养的模式与教学客观规律，充分考虑到远程学生在职和成人继续教育业余学习的实际情况，专门为远程学生量身定制而成，具有较强的针对性、实用性和可操作性。本套教材的编写具有如下特点：

一、在教材体系和章节的安排上，严格遵循循序渐进、由浅入深的教学规律；在对内容深度的把握上，考虑远程教育教学对象的培养要求和接受基础，其专业深度比本科有所降低，基础面相对拓宽，不是盲目将内容加深、加多，而是做到深浅适中、难易适度。

二、在每章开篇给出明确的学习目标与重点难点提示，涵盖了教学大纲的重点或主要内容。相对于传统的学校教育，远程教育更倚重于学生的自学能力和自控能力。明确的教学目标有利于学生带着任务有目的地学习。同时，教材中充分考虑到了学生学习时可能遇到的问题，给他们以提示和建议。由于本套教材的作者都是经过挑选的具有长期教学经验的优秀教师，且大多数作者都来自远程教学的第一线，是远程网络课件的主讲老师，能够为学生提供比较丰富的、切中要害的问题解答，从而使远程学生在学习时少走弯路。

三、在章后和书后分别设置“同步测练与解析”和“综合测练与解析”栏目，涵盖了本章及本书的重要知识点，并给出了详尽的参考答案，对难题还进行分析点评，列出解题思路与要点，更加方便学生自学。测验是检验教学目标是否达到的有效手段。由于远程学生是在虚拟的网络课堂上课，远离教师，处于相对独立的学习环境；教师不能通过直接交流，了解学生对学习内容的掌握情况；学生也由于与教师、同学之间的分离，无法判断自己的学习状况。针对这种情况，我们在教材中设置了大量自测自练题目。旨在通过这种自测自练方式，积极引导学生及时消化和吸收所学知识，不断加深对教材内容的理解，阶段性检查学习效果，全面复习和掌握所学知识，综合评判自己对知识的掌握程度，巩固最终学习成果。

四、考虑到有些专业课程具有较强的社会实践性，在教材的编写上也力争做到理论联系实际，注重案例的引入。尽可能安排一个或多个案例，并进行详细的分析讲解。旨在通过案例教学，对课程重点难点进行深化分析和实操训练，加强学生对知识点的理解和记忆，强化学生分析问题、解决问题的能力以及动手操作能力。

在本套教材的编写与出版过程中，我们得到了众多业界专家学者的真诚理解与支持，得到了清华大学出版社与对外经济贸易大学出版社的通力合作，在此向他们一并致以衷心的感谢。在前所未有的战略机遇期和“十一五”期间，相信本套教材的出版，必将是全国远程教育界一件很有意义的事情。衷心祝愿现代远程教育在建立学习型社会、构筑终身教育体系的进程中，在推动中国教育事业向现代化大教育形态的历史转变中，迈出更大更坚实的脚步。

对外经济贸易大学远程教育学院院长

谢毅斌

2006年7月于北京

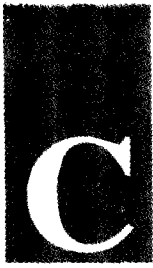


前 言

二十世纪末，随着冷战的结束，美国成为世界上惟一的超级大国。进入二十一世纪，美国在政治、经济、文化、科技、军事等方面依然遥遥领先于世界。美国的成长历程、社会发展变迁和各种文化现象一直为世界各国研究者所关注。为了帮助对美国社会和文化感兴趣的广大读者深入了解这个世界第一强国崛起的过程，深刻认识美国社会中各种问题和多元文化现象，本书按专题分十二章介绍美国社会和文化的不同层面。读者通过阅读本书，将能理清美国历史发展的脉络，获得对美国社会全景式的认知，从而更好地了解美国这个文化多元的国家。

本书按专题编写，每章都配有相关专题的简介，并精选数篇补充阅读文章，介绍美国历史上的重大事件及政治、经济和文化热点，深入探讨每一专题涉及的具体问题。为方便读者理解和掌握文章内容，每单元中课文后都列有生词表以及语言难点和文化背景注释。另外，各单元还编有练习题和思考题，并附参考答案。在本书最后，根据本课程的教学大纲要求，紧扣教学要点，编有五套综合测练，以帮助读者巩固所学知识。本书所选部分材料和文章反映西方学者对美国的认识，希望读者阅读时持客观和公正的批判态度。

书中的疏漏或错误，恳请专家、读者批评指正。



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Unit

1

Introduction to the Course

America is so vast that almost everything said about it is likely to be true, and the opposite is probably equally true. *James T. Farrell*

Section I Introduction

The United States of America, with its enormous political, economic and military power, occupies a *unique* position in the modern world. Its particular culture and distinctive social institutions have been fascinating to people outside the country. In fact the very subject of America invites opinions and judgments as no other country does.

As for the people in China, many of them frequently are confused or even mystified about the American values, attitudes, and cultural patterns that have permeated the modern life. Even those business people, government officials and students who have mastered enough English may find that they have not quite understood the cultural rules that are a must in order to be successful in their stay or study in America. Many of these rules can be understood only within the broader context of American cultural patterns.

Thus, an introduction to the American culture is given here to help them understand America more deeply and make their work and study in the country more satisfying. This course examines the historical and cultural development of the American society and tries to provide the readers with a concise but systematic overview of the United States. At the same time various social, economic and political issues of the country are explored in this book.

Section II Text

1. The Diverse American Culture

In trying to understand the American culture, we must above all note the following *themes* underlying the course. First, the United States is a vast and complex nation marked by immense cultural *diversity* and constant change. The variety of ethnic identities, immigration experiences, and cultural choices that have gone into making Americans is so complex that describing the “average American” (see *Supplementary Reading 1*) is very difficult. The “average American” might be white, but Americans are not “normally” white. Most Americans are Christians, but America cannot be called “a Christian country.” And a majority of Americans might claim European ancestry, but this description also does not define Americans in general. So we must be *cautious* about generalizations in our study of American culture.

The second thing we must remember is that there is usually a gap between idealism and reality. Many Americans hold values such as equality of opportunity and freedom. However, these are ideals that may not necessarily describe the reality of American life. Equality of opportunity, for example, is an ideal that is not always put into practice. In reality, some people have a better chance for success than others. Those who are born into rich families have more opportunities than those who are born into poorer families. Inheriting money does give a person a *decided* advantage. Many black Americans have fewer opportunities than the average white American, and many women have fewer opportunities than men, in spite of laws designed to promote equality of opportunity for all individuals. And many immigrants today have fewer opportunities than those who came before them, when there were more high-paying factory jobs, and the economy was growing more rapidly.

Another idea we have to keep in mind is that many political and social issues are

controversial and for which there is no absolute right and wrong. Different, sometimes conflicting, points of view about the same topic are presented in the course. The learners are expected to make independent judgments and draw their own conclusions.

The fourth important theme throughout the course is that the various aspects of American culture are analyzed from the historical and comparative *perspectives*. Various aspects of American culture are examined within a broader social and historical context. Furthermore, when we study about American culture, we will naturally compare it with our own. The comparisons will help us see our own culture more clearly and become more sensitive to cultural differences and more accepting of them. Perhaps this is the real goal of a culture course.

2. Basic American Values

To learn a culture is to learn people's values. Values are broad cultural principles embodying ideas about what most people in a society consider to be *desirable*. They are the standards by which people define good and bad, beautiful and ugly. To uncover people's values is to learn a great deal about them, for values underlie their preferences, guide their choices, and indicate what they hold worthwhile in life.

When we examine the system of basic values that underlie Americans' entire way of life, we must *take into account* the enormous religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the country. Because America has so many diverse groups and the country is constantly changing, any one set of values is unlikely to receive *unanimous* support. Some values may be widely shared. Others may be hotly disputed by various groups of people.

Despite these problems, sociologist Robin Williams has identified fifteen major values guiding the daily lives of most Americans. Whether or not his classification is complete, it provides a picture of many of the major values that exert a particularly strong influence on the American culture. These values include achievement and success, activity and work, *humanitarianism*, efficiency and practicality, progress, material comfort, equality, freedom, democracy, individuality, science and rationality, external *conformity*, group (racial, ethnic, religious) superiority, morality, and patriotism. (see *Supplementary Reading 2 & 3*)

These values clearly are interrelated. The values of achievement and success and activity and work are related to the values of efficiency and practicality. Equally obvious is the conflict among some values: Americans value group superiority while stressing equality and democracy.

3. Subculture & Counterculture

American society contains thousands of subcultures and countercultures. Subcultures are groups that share many elements of mainstream culture but maintain their own distinctive customs, values, and lifestyles. One of the clearest illustrations of a subculture is an ethnic minority concentrated in one location, such as San Francisco's Chinatown. Early Chinese immigrants brought much of their native culture with them to America and have attempted to retain it by passing it from generation to generation. Although Chinese residents of Chinatown have been greatly affected by American culture, they have retained many cultural patterns of their own, such as language and family structure.

Some other subcultures in America are adolescents, cabdrivers, artists, police, construction workers, and so on. Each subculture, a world within the larger world of the dominant culture, has a distinctive way of looking at life.

Countercultures are groups whose values place them in opposition to the dominant culture. They reject the *conventional* wisdom and standards of behavior of the majority and provide alternatives to mainstream culture. For example, *skinheads* who challenge non-white immigration, and racial harmony with calls for a return to white domination and "racial purity" form part of a counterculture.

4. Globalization & Cultural Convergence

During the second half of the 20th century, expanded global trade, advances in telecommunications, tourism, and large-scale emigration from one end of the earth to the other have introduced virtually everyone to the extraordinary *array* of customs, values, beliefs, and lifestyles worldwide. One result of this globalization is cultural convergence — a process in which cultures become similar to one another as expanding industrialization brings not only technology but also Western culture to the rest of the world. Japan, for example, is no longer a purely Eastern culture. It has adopted not only Western economic production but also Western forms of dress, music, and so on. These changes, *superimposed* on Japanese culture, have turned Japan into a blend of Western and Eastern cultures.

Today, in most American large cities and even many small towns, peoples' values, beliefs, food, and clothing may have much more in common with people who live thousands of miles away than with their neighbors who live only a few blocks away (see *Supplementary Reading 4*). In this sense, contemporary American culture is a complex mosaic, with