**Chapter 3: Society And Culture: Hardware and Software of Our Social World**

**This American Life**

**Recommended Readings**

Andy Bennett, Cultures of Popular MusicIn this book, Bennett details various genres of music and their associated youth subcultures. Genres detailed include rock, pop, heavy metal, and rap.

Jonathan Epstein, Youth Culture: Identity in a Postmodern WorldEpstein uses examples of everyday life (such as being at the mall or "hanging out" in one's bedroom) to explain how youth create a culture that is separate from that of their parents.

Herbert Gans, Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of TasteIn this classic piece, Gans examines the differences between an elitist high culture and a pop culture that appeals to "the masses".

Barry Glassner, The Culture of Fear: Why Americans are Afraid of the Wrong ThingsGlassner examines the way that the mass media has led to a culture of fear among Americans, leading us to be afraid of issues that we are statistically incredibly unlikely to ever encounter and to ignore the scientific evidence surrounding the "real" issues in the United States.

Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell, Middletown: A Study in Modern American CultureIn this classic book, the daily social rhythms of small-town Muncie, Indiana are examined.

George Ritzer, The McDonaldization of SocietyRitzer scrutinizes the ways that the principles of predictability, calculability, controlling, and efficiency employed by the McDonald's chain of restaurants have spread to other industries, including health care and banking. He argues that the impacts on American culture have been immeasurable.

Eric Schlosser, Fast Food NationSchlosser argues that, in their pursuit of speed and profits, fast food companies engage in questionable and potentially dangerous practices. Still, the idea of fast food has become incorporated into American culture.

Robert Wood, Straightedge Youth: Complexity And Contradictions of a Subculture   
In this book, Wood uses interviews and content analysis to describe the punk-rock subculture of "straightedge youth" (those who have militant oppositions to casual sex, drinking, and drug use.)

John de Graaf, David Wann, Thomas H. Naylor, and Viki Robinson, Affluenza: The All-Consuming EpidemicThis campy book looks at the American addiction to our stuff and the lengths we will go to attain it.

Ariel Levy, Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch CultureLevy explores the myth of female empowerment through the exploitation of women's bodies and sexuality.

Watson, James, Golden Arches East: McDonalds in East AsiaWatson explores cultural difference by examining the differences between the McDonald's fast-food experience in North America and Asia.

Rebecca Mead, *One Perfect Day*

In this book, Mead examines the wedding industry in the United States and discusses how modern cultural changes lead to the reformation of the American wedding in the name of tradition.

John Ogbu, *Black Students in an Affluent Suburb: A Study of Academic Disengagement*

This book details an ethnography Ogbu conducted in a middle-class suburban school. He details the difference between White and Black students in this suburban school system and offers a cultural explanation for the difference in their performances.

Grazian, David. *Mix It Up, Popular Culture, Mass Media, and Society*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc

This book focuses on the role of media and popular culture in everyday life, with a particular emphasis on the organization and functioning of the mass media industry; the increasingly blurry relationship between cultural consumption and production; and the social significance of leisure activities, from sports to shopping.

Berkowitz, Daniel A. *Cultural Meaning of News*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications, Inc.

This book provides a fresh examination of news production from a cultural perspective, moving beyond what was once called "sociology of news" and toward the globally-broader, culturally-based concept of "journalism studies."

Cowen, Tyler. *Creative Destruction: How Globalization Is Changing the World’s Cultures*.

This book takes a different tack on the question of cultural influence, asking not how American culture has been globally influential, but how outside cultures have influenced the U.S.

Zellner, William M. *Countercultures: A Sociological Analysis*. An overview of six countercultures found in the United States: the Unification Church, the Church of Scientology, Satanists, Skinheads, survivalists, and the Ku Klux Klan.