Cultural Anthropology:
some big names

Howard Culbertson
Southern Nazarene University
Lewis Henry Morgan 1818-1881

• A 19th century scholar who developed the evolutionary approach
• Pioneered the comparative study of culture
Sir Edward B. Tylor
1832-1917

• His definition of culture is still valid:
  – “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”

• Key theorist in the anthropology of religion
Bronislaw Malinowski
1884-1942

• Outlined the biological and psychological needs of people fulfilled by culture
• Pioneered the participant observation method
Ruth Fulton Benedict 1887-1948

- Wrote “Patterns of Culture”
- Viewed cultures as coherent patterns
Franz Boas 1858-1942

- Set high standard for excellence in fieldwork
- Developed the idea of cultural relativity
- Discredited then-dominant theories of racial superiority
A.R. Radcliff-Brown 1881-1955

Developed the structural-functional approach to look at how each aspect of society contributes to the maintenance of the whole.
A “Photographic” vs. a “Functional” Description of Culture

“photographic”

“functional”
Ralph Linton, 1893–1953

- Insights into process of acculturation
- Influenced development of the culture-and-personality school of anthropology
- Introduced terms "status" and "role"
- The Tree of Culture (1955)
Julian H. Steward 1902-1972

Founder of the cultural ecology approach that focuses on the interactions of cultures with their environments
Leslie White 1900-1975

Developed the cultural materialist approach with focus on how the techno-economic aspects of culture determine the social and ideological spheres.
George Murdock 1897-1985

• Empiricist – senses are primary knowledge source
• Came up 70 or so “cultural universals”
Margaret Mead 1901-1978

- A “founding mother” of anthropology
- Pioneered the cross-cultural study of personality