Beliefs and Physical Objects

- The **nonmaterial culture** involves beliefs, ideas, and knowledge.
- The **material culture** is about how we relate to physical objects. It consists of the concrete, tangible objects within a culture.

Beliefs and Physical Objects (cont.)

- **Beliefs** are ideas about the nature of reality.
- People base their behavior on what they believe, even if their belief might not be true.
- The uses and meanings of physical objects can vary among societies depending on the beliefs, norms and values people hold with regard to the object.

Ideal and Real Culture

- A gap exists between cultural guidelines and actual behavior, captured by the following two concepts:
  - **Ideal culture** refers to cultural guidelines publicly embraced by members of a society.
  - **Real culture** refers to actual behavior patterns, which often conflict with these guidelines.

Cultural Change

- Culture changes for three reasons:
  - Discovery
  - Invention
  - Diffusion
Cultural Diversity

- Cultural diversity exists in all societies.
- **Social categories** are groups that share a social characteristic.
- **Subculture** is part of the dominant culture but differs from it in some important respects.
- **Counterculture** is a subculture deliberately and consciously opposed to certain beliefs or attitudes of the dominant culture.

Ethnocentrism

- **Ethnocentrism** is the practice of judging others in terms of one’s own cultural standards.
- **Advantages:**
  - People feel good about themselves and others.
  - Stability is promoted.
- **Disadvantage:**
  - Inflexibility

Cultural Universals

- **Cultural universals** are traits that exist in all cultures.
- **Cultural particulars** are the ways that each culture expresses the universals.

Cultural Universals (cont.)

- Cultural universals exist for three main reasons:
  - The biological similarity shared by all human beings.
  - The physical environment affecting all human beings.
  - Many countries face the same social problems.