Aspects of U.S. Mainstream Culture

1. History: Mainstream culture in the United States derives from Anglo-core culture of the English who colonized America.

2. Social Group Interaction Patterns
   - Intra-group: English immigrants institutionalized English culture in the United States.
   - Inter-group: Starting in colonial times, white members of U.S. national culture display "nativism" toward groups perceived as different (anti-foreign, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, anti-black).

3. Social Status: Middle class culture is the norm, yet there are a range of classes—poverty, working, middle, and upper class. Since the 1970s the upper and poor classes have been growing, with the middle class declining.

4. Value Orientations
   - emphasis on patriarchal nuclear family
   - emphasis on doing, "getting things done" (keeping busy)
   - emphasis on measurable and visible accomplishments
   - emphasis on individual choice, responsibility, and achievement
   - emphasis on self-reliance and self-motivation
   - emphasis on pragmatism: "if an idea works, use it"
   - emphasis on "the new" (and change)
   - emphasis of causal agent; things do not just happen
   - emphasis on equality, informality, and fair play simultaneously with widespread nativism and micro and macro institutional discrimination
   - emphasis on competition
• emphasis on direct communication
• emphasis on controlling nature; nature "should" serve humans
• emphasis on materialism, machines and technology, and progress
• emphasis on private property (is valued more than human rights)
• emphasis on precise reckoning of time which is perceived as lineal

5. Language and Communication
• verbal: English language spoken; most do not speak second language, nor is it valued
• low context communication style: direct, explicit, and informal
• nonverbal: not recognized as important as verbal communication

6. Family Life Processes: Traditionally, patriarchal nuclear family structure. Currently much variation in family structure due to economic change impacting families. Two-paycheck families are the norm.
• gender roles: traditionally male job holder, female homemaker, but changing gender roles since 1960s
• occupations: varies with socioeconomic status (with less industrial jobs and more service jobs since 1970s economic restructuring)
• education: varies with socioeconomic status
• marriage customs: changing; marriage in later 20s increasing
• divorce practice: high rate of divorce and serial monogamy common
• parenting beliefs and practices: emphasize individualism, self-reliance, and competition

7. Healing Beliefs and Practices: biomedical model promoted

8. Religion: Protestant religions, biblical tradition emphasized

9. Art and Expressive Forms: music and visual art emphasized, not verbal arts, for example

10. Diet: hamburger, hot dogs, but diets vary by regions

11. Recreation: sports, TV, and many other options (much variation)

12. Clothes: styles change in time and place (region)

by Mikel Hogan-Garcia 1991
Adapted from: Dan Rose, Patterns of American Culture, University of Pennsylvania Press (1989).
John Hodge et al., The Cultural Basis of Racism (1975).