Assignment:

1. Read chapters 1 – 5 and 8 - 10! Annotate by asking questions in the margins or underlining things that stick out to you. We will be using the book to answer cultural questions concern society’s values and fears the first week or so and you will want to be able to skim through the book and look at your highlights and notes beforehand.

2. The following journal questions will be due on day 3 of class. Discuss these prompts as thoroughly as you can, giving examples from your life or previous knowledge. Feel free to wax philosophical. Your responses should be informal, but thoughtful and academic.
   a. In the Netherlands chapter, Eric talks about the World Database of Happiness. Do you think happiness can be quantified into numbers and data? In other words, can it be reduced to lists and measurable numbers? If not, why not? If you think it can, explain why.
   b. The Swiss have a real connection to their past and to their hometowns. Is that a prerequisite for happiness? Are Americans disconnected from their roots? If so, what can be done to reverse this trend?
   c. Bhutan has been isolated from the rest of the world for many centuries. Does this contribute to their happiness? Why do you think they are so happy?
   d. In Qatar, Eric explores the relationship between money and happiness and concludes that money erodes happiness by putting up barriers between people. Do you agree? Doesn’t money allow us to buy the “good things” in life, things that bring us joy?
   e. Eric meets an Icelander who tells him the key to happiness is to “embrace failure.” What does he mean by that? Is he right? Do American embrace, or even tolerate, failure?
   f. In England, Eric explores whether or not people can change psychologically. Do you think this is possible at all ages? Or do things get “fixed” after a certain age? Give some examples that you can think of.
   g. Eric decides that national culture has a lot to do with happiness. Is this true? Aren’t we individuals first and citizens of a nation second? Explore this idea. How much does being American contribute to your happiness? Give examples!
   h. What IS happiness? I’m just going to let you go crazy on this one.