Study Guide for First Exam

The first exam will be on Monday, April 20. The test will consist of a combination of essay questions and short answer questions. The exam will cover the lectures, chapter 2 of *Sociological Theory*, and the readings by Marx and Engels. To prepare for the exam, be sure you are familiar with the following concepts.

**Important: Please bring an examination booklet with you to class.**

Karl Marx: Key Concepts

Hegelian idealism: key ideas of the Young Hegelians; Feuerbach's critique of religion; Marx's rejection of the Young Hegelians.

Marx's concept of human nature: how humans are distinct from other animals; the role that labor plays in human history.

Alienated labor: four aspects (alienation from product of labor, alienation from process of labor, alienation from human nature [human "species being"], alienation from other humans). Be prepared to apply the concept of alienation to concrete forms of labor in the modern American economy. Discuss the similarities and differences between the alienation of workers in the factory and the alienation of students in the process of education.

Historical materialism: role of economic forces in history; different modes of production (slave, feudal, capitalist); forces and relations of production (how these differ, relationship between them); base and superstructure (define these terms, explain their relationship, give examples of each). How does Marx use “functional” explanations in discussing the relationship between base and superstructure?

Ideology: religion as an example of ideology; forms of ideological mystification (e.g., disguising oppression, justifying oppression, defining oppression as inevitable, offering false solutions); how and why ideologies are (re)produced; control of the ruling class over the means of intellectual production; commodity fetishism as a distinctively capitalist form of ideological consciousness.

Capitalist mode of production: distinguishing institutions of capitalism (private ownership of the means of production, wage labor, universal market exchange, hierarchical division of labor); developmental tendencies of capitalism (drive to expand the market, intensified exploitation of labor; mechanization of production, concentration and centralization of capital, periodic economic crises); contradictions of capitalism as a mode of production. Specifically, explain Marx’s idea of the tendency toward economic crises of overproduction/underconsumption within capitalism, their cause, and examples of actions that have been taken to mitigate or postpone crises of overproduction.
Theory of surplus value: labor theory of value; labor-power as a commodity; necessary and surplus labor; the "reserve army of labor"; factors affecting the rate of surplus value (rate of profit).

Class struggle: the definition of classes; class relations as relations of "exploitation" (surplus extraction); the role of class struggle in human history; define the two major classes of capitalism (proletariat and bourgeoisie) and explain the reasons for conflict between them; other (middle) classes in capitalist society; the "primacy" of class struggle over other forms of struggle; socialism as the goal of working-class politics (abolition of capitalist property and wage labor; democratic control of the economy).

Marx's legacy in sociology. What general guidelines for sociological inquiry are suggested by Marx's writings? Give examples of possible applications of these guidelines.