

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.