Final Review Sheet

Arendt.

Chapter I.

- What are the three elements of the Vita Activa that Arendt discusses? (extra point for the fourth that she doesn't focus on...).
- What is Plurality? What are the important implications of plurality for action?
- What does it mean to say that we are all the same in such a way that nobody is every the same as anyone else who ever lived?"
- Why is the human condition not the same as human nature. Why does this matter?
- Explain the quote:
  "Politically speaking, if to die is the same as 'to cease to be among men,' experience of the eternal is a kind of death,..."
- What is the 'rectilinear' path of human life refer to? How is the fact of natality and mortality unique for people?
- What does it mean to say,
  "The distinction between man and animal runs right through the human species itself;..." 

Chapter II. The public and the Private.

- How does Arendt describe isolation? Why can't action be done alone? What is the difference between action and violence?
- What is the key distinction between the public and the private realm? (The notes have three elements, link them together.)
- Is it a contradiction to say that the space of equality is where distinction, difference, comes from. Why or why not?
- How would Bourdieu react to this?
- How is the modern SOCIAL different from EITHER the public or the private? How would you apply Durkheim here? What would Bourdieu say of this distinction?
- What is the difference between the kind of equality she wants to talk about in the Polis from the kind of "equality" we find in modern society?
- What are the key aspects of 'the common'
- Why are others needed to make the world 'real'? Be sure you understand the role of stories in Arendt - and, how would we compare Arendt and Leifer on the notion of stories.
- Relate the above to the notion so 'worldlessness'
- How does diversity function in Arendt?

Chapter 3. Action.

- Explain the first sentence of this chapter, "Human plurality, the basic condition of both action and speech, has the twofold character of equality and distinction." Use Bourdieu's notion of naming and Leifer's notion of local action.
- How does "The new always happens against the overwhelming odds of statistical probability." compare with Sewell's notion of structural change?
- What would Arendt say about Bourdieu's social space as a way of categorizing people. Relate this to stories.
- What does this say about how Arendt and Bourdieu differ in what they mean by 'distinction'?
- Why does human plurality require LANGUAGE (as opposed to grunts or simple gestures?)
- What is the 'web of human relations.'
- What does it mean to say that one is both an author and a coauthor of one's life story?
- "Action reveals itself only to the backward glance of the historian." - relate this to Leifer.
- What are the two key parts of action that make it problematic? How did the Greeks solve this set of problems?
- Why are human affairs 'frail'?
- What part of action is singular, what part is plural? Make sure you can relate Leifer, Bourdieu, and Arendt on the unpredictability of action.
• What where the 2 things the polis served to DO in relations to the problems of action? Are these functions that any society which wants to have action needs? Do our current institutions provide these elements?

Power and the space of appearance.
• What is Power for Arendt?
• What is an absolute requirement for power?
• What is Strength? how is it different from Power.
• Can force destroy power? Can power destroy Strength? Why?
• When is power dangerous?
• What does it mean to say that we substitute MAKING for action? and why do we do it (Or do we?)
• What function do promises serve in Arendt? How is this related to what Leifer says about action? Are promises compatible with local action? What function does forgiveness play?

Chapter 6. The Vita Activa and the Modern Age.
• What does the Archemedian point refer to? How is it referred to differently in Bourdieu?
• Why does Arendt single out the discovery of the telescope as key to world alienation?
• How does the reformation fit into her story of the history of philosophy and the resulting alienation of us from our given world?
• From what point of view do we moderns see the world?
• Why is Descartes important?
• What is 'Radical Doubt'?
• What does ARENDT mean by 'common sense' why has it been lost? (compare to Durkheim, or even Bourdieu).
• explain the quote:

"It is quite conceivable that the modern age - which began with such an unprecedented and promising outburst of human activity may end in the deadliest, most sterile passivity history has ever known." [p.322]

Bauman: Modernity and the Holocaust
• Bauman argues that the holocaust is the ‘hidden face’ of modernity. What does this mean?
• Bauman says that there is a myth in society: that civilization means the removal of violence in life. He argues instead that violence is simply segregated. Why is this important for his explanation of the holocaust?
• Throughout the reading, Bauman argues that bureaucracy played a very significant role in the Holocaust. Identify two important elements of bureaucracy for the holocaust, and show how they made the holocaust possible.
• What are the three conditions needed to erode moral inhibitions?
• What is “Moral invisibility”? How are people made morally invisible?
• What are two aspects of anti-semitism that makes it different from many other forms of inter-group hatred? Explain each aspect.
• Why does Bauman say racism is a modern thing? What are the elements of racism that make it particularly modern, for Bauman? What implication does this view of racism have for how racists act?
• Bauman concludes chapter three by saying that a market driven, pluralist society is less likely to generate a Holocaust than the situation in Germany. Compare this to Arendt’s vision of workers in the modern, market condition. Which view do you think is correct? Why?
• What are some of the features of the Holocaust that differ from previous genocides?
• Why does Bauman relate the Holocaust to a ‘garden society’?
• Why is Bauman troubled by the ‘rationalization’ of violence?
• What is a functional division of labor? How is this important for facilitating the Holocaust? What does it mean to substitute “technical for moral” responsibility?
• Describe the sequence of events (broadly), starting with a state-mandated definition of “Jewish” that resulted in the Holocaust. What are the guiding principles in these steps?
• What is the “Save what you can” game? How does this affect the way we view actions taken by Jewish leaders?
• Why was it important for the Germans that the Jewish elders pick people to be sent out? (give two reasons)
• Marx said that all men make choices, but not under the conditions of their own choosing. Apply this to the Jewish situation in WWII Germany.
• Bauman draws on the Milgram experiments to explain why German soldiers carried out the holocaust atrocities. Explain the setup and major findings of the Milgram experiments.
• Why is social distance important for moral action?
• What role does authority play? What happens when authority is divided? Why?
• Explain the concept of ‘free floating responsibility.’ When are we likely to see this happen?
• What is the root of moral action, according to Bauman? How does this relate to (1) proximity and (2) recognizing the human-ness of another?
• Be sure you can contrast / combine Arendt’s work with Bauman’s

Goffman: Exchange and Power in Everyday Life
• What is the “dramaturgical approach” to social life?
• What is the difference between signals we “give” and signals we “give off”? Why would this matter?
• What distinguishes a cynical from a sincere performance?
• Work through the 4-cells of sincere & cynical for self & others (from class, not in reading!)
• What is a front? What are the three main elements of a front?
• Dramatic realization refers (in part) to making the part obvious: why would this be needed? How do we signal status & importance?
• What is an idealized performance?
• How might we distinguish between reality and appearance?
• What does Goffman’s model suggest about the ability of one person to trust another?
• Expressive coherence refers to what? Why is this important?
• How does Goffman’s description of regular social life inform our understanding of con men?
• What does this say about the possibilities for genuine social interaction? Is Goffmann right? How would we know?
• <note the notes extend on to Teams & other work, which you can ignore>

• What are emergent properties? Why is sociology concerned with emergent properties?
• What does it mean to “exchange social rewards”? What is being exchanged?
• What differentiates economic exchange from social exchange?
• Why is ambiguity important for social exchange, according to Blau?
• What is “imbalanced reciprocity”?
• Blau says that there is an ‘apparent altruism’ in social life, but that under the surface people are more selfish. What does this mean?
• What is social attraction? What is the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic attraction?
• What is the principle of least interest? How does this relate to power?
• Why is power over another useful?
• What drives reciprocity for Blau?
• Blau speaks of balance in dyadic relations. We discussed balance in triadic relations, building on Newcomb and Heider. Illustrate a set of common cultural rules with signed triads.
• Make sure you can identify (1) balanced and imbalanced triads (2) understand how the theory predicts such triads would change, and (3) what the group-level outcome of the theory would be.

Foucault: Discipline & Punish / Truth & Power
• What new aspect of power does Foucault describe?
• How is “Geneology” different from other forms of historical scholarship?
• What does Foucault mean by “Discipline”?
• What are the 5 elements that truth rests on for Foucault? How would you relate this to Mannheim’s work? To what Arendt and Bauman describe for the Nazi regime?
• What is the Panopticon? What sorts of contemporary social features is Foucault making an analogy for?
Foucault spends a good deal of time talking about “regulating bodies” and the way that our existence is conditioned by rules and such. How does this relate to power?

- There are three key features of disciplinary power. Be sure you understand them!
- Historically, Foucault argues that “splendid” power is becoming more rare as disciplinary power takes over. Is this good? Why or why not?
- What is the implicit model of freedom that Foucault is proposing here? How attractive is that model? What are the tradeoffs?
- What is the contrast between equality and control he makes here?
- You might want to compare is discussion of the ability to punish with Durkheim’s (tho not required)
- The scientific moment of disciplinary power relates to how organizing and rationalizing knowledge increases the effectiveness of these control mechanisms. Relate this to Bauman’s notions of the bureaucratic foundations of the Holocaust.

**Bourdieu.**
Be able to explain social space: Define it both as a distribution of characteristics, and a set of distances (relations) between actors.

- Where does power come from for Bourdieu?
- What are the four types of capital that Bourdieu explores in this paper? Which do you think is most important? why?
- What is the difference between a class on paper and a 'real' class?
- What are the two different ways that people can see the world? How does this relate to the struggle for the authority to name?
- How would you explain lawyer jokes in a Bourdieu frame?
- What are 'homologous' social positions?
- Be sure to understand the logic of “habitus” & link that to “position taking”

**Sewell:**
- What are the three problems that Sewell points out with current definitions of Structure?
- Explain what it means to say structures are 'dual'.
- Explain what it means to say structures are 'virtual'.
- What must be 'added' to resources to incorporate it into a theory of social structure?
- How does Sewell explain social change? What is the relationship between he two dimensions of structure he highlights., and the probability for change?
- Be sure you know and can explain the 5 axioms of structure.
- I might give you a two-by-two like the plot we drew in class, and ask you to place a type of structure. You would need to make an argument for why it was put in the place you put it.

**Burt: Structural Holes**
- Be sure you know the basic elements of network analysis: position vs. connection, points & lies, etc.
- What are structural holes?
- What are the mechanisms that link structural holes to success?
- How (if at all?) is Burt’s model different from Simmel’s?

**General Comparison Questions:**
1) Compare two theorists we have read on the importance of ambiguity for social life. I.e. For each of two theorists, explain (a) what they mean by ambiguity and (b) how it compares to the other theorists notion of ambiguity. (c) Why or why aren't these two perspectives compatible?
2) What is "The problem of Order"? What is the "Problem of Action”? Explain one theorist's answer to each of these problems. Of the three theorists we ended with (Leifer, Bourdieu, or Sewell), explain how one of them combines a solution to the problem of order with a solution to the problem of action.
3) "Action reveals itself only to the backward glance of the historian, who always knows better what it was all about than the participants." This is a quote from Arendt. Apply it to Leifer.
4) How do we tell truth from false or right from wrong? Compare two theorists on the ability to detect honest behavior. What does this work imply for moral action?
5) Are equality and power contradictory? Use at least two theorists to describe the ways in which power informs, supports or competes with equality.