

Review Sheet for Soc 138: Theory & Society.

We've covered multiple topics so far in this course; Rousseau's model for the foundation of rights & community, Durkheim's conception of how to do sociology, Durkheim's vision of society and the division of Labor (Mechanical and Organic solidarity), Marx's theory of alienation and capitalism, Weber's conception of Social Class and Status and Simmel's work on how individuals fit into modern society. The review sheet focuses mainly on topics within each section, *but it is very likely* that you will be required to compare across these sections on the exam. (i.e., compare one author to another, or the ideas of one author about one thing to another part of his work).

General Background questions

- What is (a) the problem of Order, (b) the problem of Action, (c) the problem of Identity? How do they relate, and in what ways are they in conflict?
- Social theory emerged out of the Enlightenment. What are some of the key historical features that differentiates social theory from earlier social philosophy?
- What are some of the main ideas that distinguish enlightenment social theory from traditional social philosophy?

Rousseau: The Social Contract

- Explain "Man is born free, but everywhere is in chains"
- What is, ultimately, the single fundamental right Rousseau proposes, that is independent of a social contract?
- What is the *social* foundation for rights, according to JR? This ties directly to questions of "legitimate rights"
- Why doesn't "Might make right"? Do you believe this argument? Why/Why not?
- What, in general, is the meaning of a "social contract"?
- Why does the social contract make revolution possible?
- Is it a contradiction for Rousseau to say that under the social compact we have both complete equality and alienation? Why?
- What is the general will?
- Explain the notion that someone can be "forced to be free."
- What is the difference between natural liberty and civil liberty? What is the tradeoff involved here?
- Can we use anything from Rousseau to define *international human rights*? Are such rights real? If so, on what are they based?

Durkheim: Rules of sociological Method.

- What is a social fact (Define and provide examples)? How do you know if you've found one?
- What are the two types of social facts listed by Durkheim?
- In what way are social facts "external to the individual"? Provide an example.
- In what ways are social facts constraining? Provide an example.
- What does it mean to say a social fact is general?
- How do social facts change? Why are they different than physical/chemical facts?
- Why can't social facts be defined ONLY through their universal character?
- What problems does Durkheim's conception of Social Fact raise for individual freedom?
- How do we EXPLAIN a social fact? (what are the two principles for explaining a social fact?)
- What is 'Functionalism'? How does Durkheim approach the 'problem of functionalism'?
- Why are personal associations important when explaining social facts?
- What is the 'Social Milieu' that Durkheim refers to?

The division of Labor in Society

- Can you sketch the broad argument made in The Division of Labor? Starting with law and ending with social solidarity? (i.e. what is the question, why use law, how could that explain social solidarity?)
- What does solidarity mean?

- Why does ED use LAW as his object of Study when his interest is the division of labor? Are there problems with this approach? Defend your answer.
- What differentiates restitutive law from repressive law?
- What is mechanical solidarity?
- What is a crime? What is universal about crime. Why is this important?
- What is the common feature of all crimes punishable by repressive sanctions? Why is this important? What does it say about solidarity?
- Define the common collective consciousness. [Is this a social fact?]
- Explain the quote:
- "Punishment is, above all, intended to have its effect upon honest people."
- Can you sketch the process that this quote rests on?
- How does ED relate the individual consciousness to the group consciousness? How does this connect to types of solidarity?
- What is the historical argument that ED is making in the book? Do you believe it? Why or why not?
- What is a restitutory law?
- What is the key element of Organic Solidarity?
- Why does ED use the word 'Organic' to describe such societies?
- What is the relation between types of solidarity and the division of labor?
- Restitutory laws reflect organic solidarity. Why?
- ED claims that as individuality goes up, the social whole 'develops' more and increases solidarity. Does this hold? What level of MIX do we need to link organic and mechanical solidarity functions?
- Why are contracts so good for Durkheim's link between law and solidarity?
- If individuality goes up as society develops, is there a limit? Can we have a society that is too individualized? How might Durkheim explain the emergence of a society with too much individuality?
- How does Durkheim explain the rise of a Division of Labor?
- What are the "abnormal forms" of a division of labor?
- What is Anomie? How does it develop?
- Why is regulation important?
- Define *dynamic density*, explain how it relates to the division of labor
- What are the three factors that increase dynamic density?
- How does concentration relate to the division of labor?
- Explain the "Darwinian competition" model Durkheim uses to explain the rise of the division of labor
- Be sure you can compare Durkheim's theory of the division of labor to Marx's theory of how capitalism.

Durkheim: Suicide

- Why wouldn't Durkheim be interested in a collection of suicide notes to help explain the causes of suicide?
- What does Durkheim mean by "social integration" and "social regulation"?
- Durkheim notes that suicide rates are higher in Protestant areas than in Catholic areas (*in notes, not in your reading*). Why might this be so?
- Why does economic change (positive or negative) lead to suicide?
- We described four types of suicide. What are they, and how might they be related to a structural / network position?

Marx: Estranged labor

- What is 'alienation'?
- What does 'estranged labor' mean? Why does Marx start with this?
- Marx gives two broad reasons why people are alienated from their labor – what are they?
- What does it mean to say that a worker is a slave to his labor?
- What are the four elements that people under capitalist economies are alienated from?

- How do we draw together the steps in this alienation process> i.e. how do we get from one to the other. Are these valid steps? Why?
- Marx was writing at a time when capitalism was very brutal. Why don't these conditions exist in the US today? What might explain why Marx's view of labor isn't mirrored well here? Why is it better reflected in some 3rd world countries?
- What is a Species Being? Do you agree with how Marx defines the essential aspect of humans?
- Why is Free production different from Forced production? Is all work bad?
- How does alienation from labor lead to an estrangement of one class of people from another?
- Marx says that higher wages are not sufficient to stop alienation. Why? Is he right?
- Many in class argued that work need not be alienating. What are some features of contemporary work that may make it less alienating? How universal are these features? Why would they work?
- Explain: "What is animal becomes human, what is human becomes animal."

Marx: Wage, Labor, Capital

- What is Use-Value?
- What is Exchange-Value?
- What is Labor Value?
- What is the labor theory of value?
- What is a commodity?
- Marx talks alot about the difference between quality and quantity. Why is this distinction important?
- Why is Labor a commodity?
- What is labor worth? What is any commodity worth?
- How are wages determined?
- Under Marx, how are profits gained?
- What is Historical Materialism?
- How does the division of labor give rise to alienation for Marx, but solidarity for Durkheim? What accounts for this seeming contradiction?
- What role do crises play in Marx?
- What trends in capitalistic economies does Marx Predict? How accurate are they?
- Why is competition key to Marx's theory of the economy?
- If Marx is right, why is growth so important for capitalist economies?
- What are the three classes Marx describes?
- Is profit sustainable? In what ways might we get around the rapid loss of profit that Marx describes?
- Where do business cycles (booms and busts) come from for Marx?
- Be sure you can contrast Marx & Weber w. respect to class & class action.

Weber: Class, Status and Party.

- What is a social class?
- What is a status group?
- What is a party?
- How might we expect these three to be related?
- What, according to Weber, is power?
- Under what conditions will classes act together in *class action*, according to Weber?
- What role does 'honor' play in Weber's work?
- What is a 'pariah' group?
- Weber says that cast position affects how people view their place in the world. Describe the difference in how someone on the bottom of a class structure sees their position to that of a person on the top of the class structure.
- What does the phrase "The market knows nothing of honor." mean? How do economic power and status relate?
- How would you describe the current internet millionaires in Weber's terms of class and status?
- Is the status order unified? That is, class is reducible to an economic count (ultimately) for Weber, is such a reduction possible for Weber's notion of status groups?

- What are some of the modern markers of elite status in the US? How might these create ‘closed communities’?
- Weber notes a correlation between status and class, what is the mechanism that links status and class over time?
- Why is something that appears to be class action – like voting for a union – problematic according to Weber’s notion of class action? Why does this matter in his argument with Marx?

Weber: Bureaucracy

- What are the defining characteristics of a bureaucracy?
- Why is hierarchy important for bureaucracy?
- Why are written files important?
- Why are explicit qualifications important?
- Why make the position a career?
- What are the implications of bureaucracy for people who hold position? Weber lists 5.
 - What does esteem do? Does this still work today?
 - Why have appointments instead of elections? What, if anything, does this say about public office?
 - Why have tenure? Should the company be free to fire people at will?
 - Why fix salary? What happens if we don't?
 - Why have rigid, clear career ladders? Do we now?
- How does bureaucracy relate to meritocracy?
- Is bureaucracy good for social equality?
- Why is bureaucracy common in democracy, according to Weber?
- Why do bureaucracies last so long?
- Why do most structures tend toward bureaucracy?
- We described three organization types in class that link individual to firm performance. Where does Weber’s model of bureaucracy fit into this set?
- What is the distinction between substantive and procedural justice?
- Weber says: “Bureaucracy develops the more perfectly, the more it is 'dehumanized' the more completely it succeeds in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and all purely personal, irrational, and emotional elements which escape calculation.” (270) Is this true? What are the advantages and disadvantages to impersonal action?

Weber: The Protestant Ethic

- Be sure you can sketch the broad argument of how religious asceticism leads to the spirit of capitalism
- What is the spirit of capitalism?
- What is religious asceticism?
- Why does Weber think we need a “mental model” for worker activity? That is, why wouldn’t simple price / demand be enough to drive a working economy?
- What role does being in “a state of Grace” play in Weber’s argument?
- What effect would raising piece-rate price have for “traditional” workers, according to Weber? What effect would you predict from Weber’s model of contemporary capitalism?
- What is a calling? How is this important for his argument? How does this differ from other views of (a) why we work and (b) the relation of individual to collective consciousness
- In describing the effects of the SOC, Weber says: “The power of religious asceticism provided him [the capitalist] in addition with sober, conscientious, and unusually industrious workmen, who clung to their work as to a life purpose willed by God. <new par> Finally, it gave him the comforting assurance that the unequal distribution of the goods of this world was a special dispensation of Divine Providence” (p.243). Is this a convincing argument for the stability of inequality? Is there a secular version of it, that might be more appropriate now? [note I’m not asking if it’s really based on God, I’m asking if people’s understanding/ethical investment in the rules of the system can effectively justify economic inequality to the actors].
- Explain: “Today the spirit of religious asceticism ... has escaped from the cage. But victorious capitalism, since it rests on mechanical foundations, needs its support no longer.” (p.245).

- Be sure you can compare and contrast Marx, Durkheim and Weber on the stability & evolution of modern industrial capitalism.

Simmel: The Stranger & Individuality

<More on this topic after class on Thursday!>

You can also expect some comparison questions. For example, comparing Marx's to Durkheim's vision of the division of labor, evaluation of the value of bureaucracy, the relation between species being and common consciousness.