Sociology Project Essentials 1st edition NYU Sociology Department Test Bank

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Chapter 2 Social Theory

Multiple-Choice Questions

Social theories are analytical frameworks for understanding the relationship between _____ and _____.
a. universes; individuals
b. individuals; societies
c. social classes; social norms
d. nations; countries
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.1.1: Define social theory and describe the range of different social theories.
Topic: What Is Social Theory?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Sociology is different from some of the other social sciences because it has _____ and _____ social theories.
a. similar; consistent
b. singular; dominant
c. multiple; competing
d. abundant; unified
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.1.1: Define social theory and describe the range of different social theories.
Topic: What Is Social Theory?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

One of the three common themes of social theory is *social order*. This theme is chiefly concerned with _____.
a. what holds society together
b. what is the nature of the individual
c. how societies change
d. how we use social theory
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.1.2: Identify the three common themes that all of the major sociological theories have sought to address.
Topic: What Is Social Theory?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

The basis of social order, the nature of the individual, and the circumstances of social change are three themes associated with _____.
a. social perspectives
b. social approaches
c. social institutions

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d. social theories
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.1.2: Identify the three common themes that all of the major sociological theories have sought to address.
Topic: What Is Social Theory?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Karl Marx argued that _____.
a. human history is best understood through the history of a society's economic system
b. society does not change as a result of how societies produce goods
c. the socialist movement is what allows society to change
d. social classes ease tension in society
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.1: Discuss why Marx believed that societies were so heavily shaped by their economic systems.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

According to Marx, an automated welding machine used to assemble automobile bodies would be an example of _____.
a. capital production
b. forces of production
c. social relations of production
d. modules of production
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.1: Discuss why Marx believed that societies were so heavily shaped by their economic systems.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Marx argued that the _____ would overthrow capitalism in favor of _____.
a. proletariat; socialism
b. proletariat; communism
c. bourgeoisie; socialism
d. bourgeoisie; communism
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.1: Discuss why Marx believed that societies were so heavily shaped by their economic systems.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Marx argued that groups of people who were treated differently by the economic system would inevitably be in conflict with each other. This is called the theory of _____.
a. the bourgeoisie and the proletariat

b. capital
c. class struggle
d. economic struggle
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.1: Discuss why Marx believed that societies were so heavily shaped by their economic systems.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Emile Durkheim claimed that any regularity or rule of everyday life in human communities is a _____.
a. social fact
b. social law
c. social pattern
d. socialization
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Unwritten rules of society, such as social norms, are an example of _____.
a. social theories
b. social perspectives
c. community forces
d. social facts
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

When Bill started talking on his cellphone during class he knew he violated a social norm when _____.
a. the person on the phone told him
b. he understood the social order
c. the class reacted negatively
d. the instructor allowed him to talk
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Organic solidarity describes a(n) _____ society that is characterized by _____.
a. modern; an extensive division of labor
b. modern; a dominant form of solidarity

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c. undeveloped; a minimal division of labor
d. undeveloped; extended families linked horizontally
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Durkheim argues that individuals in modern societies have the freedom to express their own unique preferences, tastes, and beliefs and that this freedom, also referred to as _____, is the basis of social solidarity in modern society.
a. "the sacred and the profane"
b. "mechanical solidarity"
c. "organic solidarity"
d. "the cult of the individual"
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Max Weber focused primarily on individual action as a foundation of _____.
a. social order
b. material conditions
c. morality
d. social forces
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

According to Max Weber, *interpretative sociology* is a method for understanding society by focusing on _____.
a. interpreting the economic system
b. understanding the religious system
c. understanding the motivations of social action
d. interpreting the spirit of capitalism
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Each year millions of people watch, and many attend, NFL games. A sociologist, observing how the team logos, colors, the field, and the rivalries bring people together in ritual behavior, would label

these things as _____.

a. sacred
b. profane
c. intersectional
d. charismatic

Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of the World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

According to Weber the mechanisms that make individuals respect hierarchies and obey orders in society are _____ and _____.

a. the sacred; the profane
b. the individual; behavior
c. charisma; power
d. power; authority

Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

While driving on the highway, David was pulled over to the side of the road by the police. David accepts that the police are his superiors. Weber would say David obeyed the police as a result of _____.

a. power
b. respect
c. authority
d. conformity

Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

People, more often than not, obey firefighters in emergency situations because they believe it is the "right thing to do." Weber would refer to this as an example of _____.

a. legitimacy
b. charisma
c. power
d. morality

Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?

Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Weber's concept of _____ have similar kinds of attributes and identities. These may be based on a wide variety of attributes such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or social class.
a. social groups
b. economic groups
c. reference groups
d. status groups
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Susan worked tirelessly as an activist trying to stop the use of children in sweatshop labor. She organized protests, started a boycott campaign of major clothing brands, and founded her own charitable organization to fight against the use of children in sweatshops. How would Weber describe Susan's identity as an activist?
a. this is her charisma
b. this is her status group membership
c. this is her form of legitimacy
d. this is her spirit of capitalism
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

A(n) _____ is when groups have inequality that persists over time and can result in conflict between those groups.
a. moral system
b. economic system
c. group status system
d. stratification system
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

According to Bourdieu, what differentiates "social" from "symbolic" capital?
a. Symbolic capital is how much capital you want whereas social capital is how much capital you have.
b. Social capital can be earned whereas symbolic capital is inherited.

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c. Social capital is your support system whereas symbolic capital is your reputation.
d. Symbolic capital is more powerful than social capital.
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.4: Discuss how Bourdieu redefined classes and the nature of class differences.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

The rigorous training and licensing of doctors controlled by the American Medical Association is an example of Weber's concept of _____.
a. social closure
b. social solidarity
c. social stratification
d. social distance
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.3: Discuss Max Weber's contributions to our understanding of motivations for behavior, legitimacy and authority, and status groups and social closure.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Simmel argued that group membership in society was a series of _____.
a. social systems
b. horizontally aligned groups
c. overlapping social circles
d. structures of social order
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.4: Explain how Georg Simmel's insights on social circles and social distance help us understand how individuals and groups relate to each other.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Christine works at the high school, is a deacon at her church, a den mother for the Girl Scouts, a Sergeant in the National Guard, and a kickboxing instructor at her gym. The connection of Christine to other individuals in these groups are her _____.
a. social networks
b. social solidarity
c. social cohesion
d. social class
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.4: Explain how Georg Simmel's insights on social circles and social distance help us understand how individuals and groups relate to each other.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Luthor has been part of the football team for two years, but he still feels like an outsider with many of

the players. His teammates never asked him to hang out after practices or get together at any other time separate from team functions. Simmel would describe Luthor's experience as being a result of his _____.

a. social circles
b. social distance
c. status group membership
d. social closure

Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.4: Explain how Georg Simmel's insights on social circles and social distance help us understand how individuals and groups relate to each other.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Simmel's concept of social distance can be used as _____.

a. a way to describe how close or distant an individual feels from others within a group
b. a way to explain how group membership defines our identity
c. an explanation of the different social statuses we occupy simultaneously
d. a measure of the physical distance between individuals as a way of understanding group membership

Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.4: Explain how Georg Simmel's insights on social circles and social distance help us understand how individuals and groups relate to each other.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

A number of popular celebrities, such as Morgan Freeman, have fallen victim to rumors of their death spread on the Internet. Whether the news is passed through electronic messages or face-to-face, insights gleaned from _____ could help to explain how this misinformation is passed through social circles.

a. class fractions
b. stratification
c. symbolic interaction
d. network analysis

Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.4: Explain how Georg Simmel's insights on social circles and social distance help us understand how individuals and groups relate to each other.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

By carefully researching the lives of African Americans in a predominantly black neighborhood of Philadelphia, W. E. B. Du Bois demonstrated that _____ shaped every aspect of the lives of African Americans.

a. class membership
b. limited opportunities
c. prejudice

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d. double consciousness
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.5: Explain W. E. B. Du Bois's views of the diverse ways in which racism influences the lives of African Americans and how racism produces a double consciousness.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Dominant theories of race during the time of W. E. B. Du Bois claimed that race _____.
a. was not important in daily life
b. was a socially created distinction
c. had deep cultural patterns that shaped individuals' lives
d. biologically determined different levels of intelligence in individuals
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.5: Explain W. E. B. Du Bois's views of the diverse ways in which racism influences the lives of African Americans and how racism produces a double consciousness.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

When Derek arrived at his new high school for the first day of school he noticed that there weren't any other black students in his classrooms. Derek had never felt so aware of his race before. Du Bois would argue that Derek is experiencing _____.
a. double consciousness
b. overt discrimination
c. institutional racism
d. limited opportunities
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.5: Explain W. E. B. Du Bois's views of the diverse ways in which racism influences the lives of African Americans and how racism produces a double consciousness.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Which of the following statements about social theorists is chronologically accurate?
a. Foucault wrote before Weber.
b. Marx wrote before Bourdieu.
c. Parsons wrote before Durkheim.
d. Du Bois wrote before Marx.
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.4: Discuss how Bourdieu redefined classes and the nature of class differences.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

By attempting to develop a unified theory for sociology, Talcott Parsons argued that the key elements of any society were _____.
a. inherently embroiled in constant conflict

b. constructed through the interactions of social actors
c. aspects of social control and constraint on the individual
d. organized around the broader and often hidden needs of society
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.1: Discuss the roles that norms, values, and institutions play in society, according to the theory of structural functionalism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

Parsons's theory of an overarching social system guiding the individuals, groups, and social institutions of society would become known as _____.
a. structural functionalism
b. conflict theory
c. symbolic interactionism
d. social constructionism
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.1: Discuss the roles that norms, values, and institutions play in society, according to the theory of structural functionalism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

According to structural functionalism, within a social system individuals take on particular roles and while in those roles_____.
a. behave as they please
b. focus on how to change
c. tend to act in a certain way
d. create conflict with others
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.1: Discuss the roles that norms, values, and institutions play in society, according to the theory of structural functionalism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

The structural functionalist view on social change is that society _____.
a. changes only after significant technological changes occur
b. changes gradually by norms and institutions adapting to new social challenges
c. only changes after deep divisions of inequality result in violent revolution that reestablishes institutions
d. only changes as governments create social policies and laws that redefine our relationship to society
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.1: Discuss the roles that norms, values, and institutions play in society, according to the theory of structural functionalism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Conflict theorists were critical of Parsons's structural functionalist theory because they argued it presented _____.
a. an unrealistic image of consensus and harmony in society
b. a biased view of the power of institutions
c. an overemphasis on the individual's role in creating social structure
d. an inaccurate view of revolutions in society
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.2: Discuss how conflict theory attempted to explain social inequalities.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

According to C. Wright Mills, President Donald Trump, Bill Gates, and a CEO of a large company are all members of the _____.
a. governing economy
b. power hierarchy
c. power elite
d. social order
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.2: Discuss how conflict theory attempted to explain social inequalities.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Conflict theory was developed primarily from the work of sociologists looking for new ways of thinking about _____ and _____.
a. society; individuals
b. social institutions; social structures
c. conflict; social order
d. inequality; social justice
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.2: Discuss how conflict theory attempted to explain social inequalities.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

For symbolic interactionists, social order _____.
a. starts from individuals and the meanings they give to objects
b. is the foundation of all institutions and has real consequences for social actors
c. is created through the struggle of opposing groups fighting for resources
d. is the basis for social inequality and needs careful guidance through social policy
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.3: Analyze how everyday social interaction lies at the heart of understanding society, according to symbolic interactionism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Moderate

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Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

_____ theory focuses on how everyday social interactions and the meaning people give to objects, relationships, and events are the beginning of understanding social order.
a. Conflict
b. Symbolic interactionist
c. Structural functionalist
d. Feminist
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.3: Analyze how everyday social interaction lies at the heart of understanding society, according to symbolic interactionism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Imagine you are sitting at a table thinking about love. How would Herbert Blumer distinguish the three types of objects that could be subject to interpretation in your situation?
a. the table (physical), the person (abstract), and the idea (social)
b. the table (social), the person (physical), and the idea (abstract)
c. the table (physical), the person (social), and the idea (abstract)
d. the table (abstract), the person (physical), and the idea (social)
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.3: Analyze how everyday social interaction lies at the heart of understanding society, according to symbolic interactionism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman compares social life to _____ and claims that we are _____.
a. the theater; actors playing roles
b. the government; officials making rules
c. the corporation; workers with the same goals
d. the church; players in the ritual of social life
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.3: Analyze how everyday social interaction lies at the heart of understanding society, according to symbolic interactionism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

According to _____, social programs such as food stamps and “Obamacare” are concessions made to the working class to make capitalism easier to accept for poor people.
a. symbolic interactionists
b. globalists
c. neo-Marxists
d. structural functionalists
Answer: c

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Learning Objective: LO 2.4.1: Discuss neo-Marxist ideas about the capitalist state, social classes, and globalization.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

The capitalist world system is a theory of globalization that argues _____.
a. capitalism is an economic system that has consequences between countries and not just within them
b. the economic systems of other nations have no influence on the U.S. economy
c. each nation has an economy that is independent of all other economies in the world
d. capitalism is an economic system that only has consequences within nations
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.1: Discuss neo-Marxist ideas about the capitalist state, social classes, and globalization.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

The interlocking nature of social inequality and how different inequalities are experienced together is also known as _____.
a. patriarchy
b. social construction
c. gender assignment
d. intersectionality
Answer: d
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.2: Analyze the role of intersectionality in theories of gender inequality.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Easy
Skill Level: Remember the Facts

The NSA's ability to tap phone lines and review our email is a form of surveillance that Foucault would argue is part of _____.
a. the modern-day Panopticon
b. the process of globalization
c. intersectionality
d. a modern form of punishment
Answer: a
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.3: Explain Foucault's theory of how power operates in society.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Sandy and John recently went to an art museum together. While they were there, Sandy discovered that John was very knowledgeable about art history and contemporary art. Bourdieu would argue that John has high _____.
a. economic capital
b. habitus

c. cultural capital
d. social capital
Answer: c
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.4: Discuss how Bourdieu redefined classes and the nature of class differences.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Structural individualism is a theory of analytical sociology that argues that society is based on the choices and actions that individuals and groups make while _____.
a. their choices only influence other social actors immediately around them
b. the actions that follow from these choices are constrained by society
c. other groups and individuals make their own choices
d. their choices are actually meaningless compared to the power of social institutions
Answer: b
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.5: Discuss the role of structural individualism in analytical sociology.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Moderate
Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

Essay Questions

According to Marx's theory of society, what social classes are in constant competition? What characterizes each of these social classes and overall class conflict in society? Finally, how can you apply this theory to contemporary social life?

Answer: Karl Marx identifies the two classes of society under capitalism as the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The basis of the conflict between these two classes is the bourgeoisie's greater access to special resources that Marx refers to as capital. Capital allows the bourgeoisie to make investments, own property, and hire workers. The proletariat, or working class, must seek employment and sell their labor to make ends meet. This social arrangement has a polarizing effect on these two groups, resulting in inequality. The owners and executive of large corporations that control the production and distributions of goods, services, and cultural ideas are modern-day examples of the bourgeoisie; everyone else in society would be equivalent to the proletariat.
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.1: Discuss why Marx believed that societies where so heavily shaped by their economic systems.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of the World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

Emile Durkheim's definition of religion is centered on those parts of society that are considered sacred. How does Durkheim explain the sacred in society? In your answer describe at least three examples of sacred elements in contemporary society.

Answer: Durkheim believed that particular parts of society were treated with exceptional deference and held in higher regard by members of society than everyday objects. In Durkheim's estimation, objects, places, beliefs and behaviors can all be considered sacred to particular groups. For example, a place such

as the baseball stadium in Boston called Fenway Park might be considered sacred by a dedicated Red Sox fan, the American flag is also considered to be a sacred object with no real direct connection to religion, and finally, the ritual of marriage can be enacted in a church or at the town hall, but it is still seen as a sacred ritual despite its location. Examples will vary.
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.2: Analyze Emile Durkheim's explanation of what holds societies together.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of the World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Apply What You Know

Georg Simmel discusses social circles and social distance to demonstrate how individuals are connected to the rest of society. Explain what a social circle is using two that you are a member of. Include in your explanation how the idea of social distance applies to your two example social circles.

Answer: A social circle describes the network of connections an individual develops through the people they regularly interact with. Two examples of social circles are the family and Facebook friends. Social distance describes how strong or weak our connections to others are in our social circles. In the case of the family connections should be strong, resulting in close social distance. Facebook friends would likely have weaker connections and as a result have greater social distance. Simmel uses these ideas to explain the power of social relationships over the individual.
Learning Objective: LO 2.2.4: Explain how Georg Simmel's insights on social circles and social distance help us understand how individuals and groups relate to one another.
Topic: How Did the Early Social Theorists Make Sense of the World?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

The "dramaturgical" approach to social life outlined by Erving Goffman uses the stage as a metaphor for understanding how individuals behave in society. He argues that social actors use "impression management" to present themselves to others in all social situations. Explain "impression management" and present an example of how you have used this in your own life.

Answer: Impression management describes how we manipulate the ways we present ourselves to others to create the best possible impression as we understand it. In other words, we consider the social situation we are in and we act accordingly to satisfy how we want to be seen by others as well as how we can achieve particular goals. For example, a person who dresses up for a job interview and presents their most professional behavior is engaging in impression management. Also, a person going on a first date is likely to carefully present whom they are based on whether or not they wish to have a second date.
Learning Objective: LO 2.3.3: Analyze how everyday social interaction lies at the heart of understanding society, according to symbolic interactionism.
Topic: What Innovations in Social Theory Emerged in the Mid-Twentieth Century?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It

One perspective from feminist theory points to the interlocking nature of inequality. This perspective is referred to as intersectionality. Using yourself as an example, apply the concept of intersectionality to

three aspects of your identity.

Answer: Intersectionality, by focusing on the connections between disadvantaged groups, looks at the way inequalities or experienced together. For example, if I were to consider my gender, as a woman of color from the working class, my experience with gender inequality will be significantly different from a white woman in the middle class, or even a black woman in poverty. To truly understand the nuances of inequality we must look at how all these elements contribute to the inequality an individual or group experiences.
Learning Objective: LO 2.4.2: Analyze the role of intersectionality in theories of gender inequality.
Topic: How Has a New Generation of Social Theory Evolved?
Difficulty Level: Difficult
Skill Level: Analyze It