Intro Sociology
Exam 2 Review Sheet

The exam will consist of materials covered in the text book (approximately 35%), class lectures (approximately 50%), and in the Footprints reader (approximately 15%). This review sheet is meant to help you study, however it is not a recipe for what will be on the exam. There may be some items on the exam that are not explicitly listed on this review sheet.

Reading material to be covered in this exam:
- Ferrante text book Chapters 8-11
- Course Packet Readings by:
  - Hacker
  - Gans
  - Merton
- Guest Lecture:
  - Poverty in Minnesota (Connie Greer and Francie Mathes)
- Videos:
  - People Like Us: Social Class in America
  - RACE: The Power of an Illusion
  - Pinks and the Blues

Lecture material to be covered on this exam:
- Monday, Oct. 18 – Monday, Nov. 8 (see syllabus for topics)

Some key issues:
- Stratification
- Ascribed/Achieved characteristics
- Caste and Class systems
- Social mobility
- Theories of stratification (functionalist, Marx, Weber)
- Class structure (upper, middle, working, lower, underclass)
- Dimensions of class
- Poverty (measurement, criticisms of measurement)
- Gap between rich and poor (explanations)
- Functions of poverty
- Social construction of race
- Ethnicity (voluntary, involuntary)
- Current classification system
- Trends in size of racial/ethnic groups
- Minority groups
- Assimilation
- Prejudice
- Stereotypes
- Discrimination
- Stigma
American Creed
Political power, authority
Forms of government
Theories of democracy
Immigration (types, waves, policies, effects)
Sex and Gender
Sexual development
Gender polarization
Masculinity
Femininity
Socialization
Structural constraints (ex. Gender wage gap)
Social construction of gender
1. Why was South Africa chosen to receive special attention in the chapter on social stratification?

South Africa is emphasized because this country is trying to dismantle a system of social stratification called apartheid. Apartheid was a system in which skin color overwhelmingly determined a person's life chances and in which approximately 16 percent of the population (the whites) systematically controlled the fate of the remaining 84 percent.

2. What is the connection between social stratification and life chances?

The status a person occupies in a system of social stratification has a profound impact on his or her life chances--"everything from the chance to stay alive during the first year after birth to the chance to view fine art, the chance to remain healthy and grow tall, and if sick to get well again quickly, the chance to avoid becoming a juvenile delinquent--and very crucially, the chance to complete an intermediary or higher educational grade" (Gerth and Mills 1954, p. 313).

3. What characteristics distinguish a caste from a class system of stratification?

Three characteristics distinguish a class from a caste system: (a) the rigidity of the system; (b) the relative importance of ascribed and achieved characteristics in determining a person's rank in a hierarchy of social strata; and (c) the extent to which there are restrictions on social interaction between people in higher and lower social strata. Caste systems are considered closed because they are rigid, rank is based on ascribed characteristics, and there are restrictions on social interaction with people from different strata. In comparison to caste systems, class systems are considered open because they are considerably less rigid, rank is based on achievements, and there are fewer barriers to social interaction with people from different social strata.

4. Explain the basic dynamics of apartheid.

Apartheid policies centered around one aim: maintaining separate black and white areas. The law stated that a nonwhite "should only be allowed to enter urban areas, which are essentially the white man's creation, when he is willing to enter and to minister to the needs of the white man and should depart there from when he ceases to minister." Other legislation--the Separate Amenities Act, the Group Areas Act, the Lands Act, and the Population Registration Act--supported the basic aim of this law.

5. How do functionalists (Davis and Moore) explain stratification? What are some of the shortcomings of their explanations?

Davis and Moore argue that society must offer extra incentives in order to induce the most talented individuals to undergo the long and arduous training that is needed to fill the most functionally important positions. They specify that the incentives must be large enough to prevent the best-qualified and most capable people from finding less functionally important positions as attractive as the most important positions. Tumin and Simpson, two critics of the functionalist perspective, do not believe that a position commands greater social rewards simply because it is functionally important or because the available personnel are scarce. Some positions command large salaries and bring other valued rewards even though their contribution to the...
society is questionable or comparable to that of other low-paying positions. In addition, both writers argue that it is very difficult to determine the functional importance of a position, especially in societies characterized by a complex division of labor. The specialization and interdependence that accompany a complex division of labor imply that every individual contributes to the whole operation. Finally, both Tumin and Simpson believe that the functional theory of stratification implies that a system of stratification evolves as it does in order to meet the needs of the society. In evaluating such a claim, one must question whose needs are being met by the system.

6. Summarize how Marx approached social class in his writings. Identify three ideas that Marx gave us for approaching social class.

In general Marx maintained that the reality of class is very complex. He viewed every historical period as characterized by a system of production that gave rise to specific types of confrontation between the exploiting and exploited classes in society. The number of social classes was somewhat arbitrary and that it depended on the reason why we wanted to define social class. Marx offered at least three important ideas about social class: (a) conflict between two distinct classes propels us from one historical epoch to another; (b) one useful way to approach social class is in terms of sources of income; and (c) the conditions that lead to a successful revolt by an exploited class against the exploiting class are multifaceted and complex.

7. What general structural changes in the American economy have created an underclass?

A number of structural changes in the United States economy helped to create an underclass. In particular a number of economic transformations have taken place including (a) the restructuring of the American economy from a manufacturing-based to a service and an information-based economy; (b) a labor surplus that began in the 1970s, marked by the entry of women and the large baby boom segment into the labor market; (c) a massive exodus of jobs from the central part of cities to the suburbs; and (d) the transfer of low-skilled manufacturing jobs out of the United States to offshore locations.

8. Explain how the peopling of the United States is a global story.

The peopling of the United States is a global story and “one of the great dramas of all human history.” It involved the conquest of Native peoples, the annexation of Mexican territory, along with many of its inhabitants (who lived in what is now New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, California and Texas), and an influx of voluntary and involuntary immigrants from practically every area of the world.

9. What are the shortcoming associated with assigning people to clear-cut racial categories?

Assigning people to one racial category has many shortcomings. First, many people do not fit clearly into a racial category because no sharp dividing line distinguishes characteristics such as black skin from white skin or tightly curled hair from wavy. A second problem with the idea of clear-cut racial categories is that boundaries between races can never be fixed and definite, if only because males and females of any alleged race can produce offspring. Millions of people in the world have mixed ancestry and possess physical traits that make it impossible to assign them to any one of the six narrow racial categories currently used by the U.S. government. A third shortcoming of racial classification is that racial categories and guidelines for placing people in them are often vague, contradictory, unevenly applied, and subject to change. While the U.S has addressed the problem of forcing people into clear-cut categories, it has not addressed other
shortcomings of racial classification. For one, there is a tremendous amount of variation among people designated as belonging to a particular race or combination of races. Another shortcoming associated with U.S. racial categories and classification rules is that they do not correspond to categories and rules other governments use.

10. How does the U.S. Census Bureau define Hispanic? Do those classified as Hispanic see themselves as “Hispanic”? Why or why not?

The government defines a Hispanic/Spanish person as “a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American culture or origin, regardless of race.” The term applies to people living in 21 Latin American countries, each consisting of peoples with distinct histories, cultures, and languages. However most of the people known in the U.S. as Hispanics do not define themselves as such. The label Hispanic is confusing because it forces people to identify with conquistadors and settlers from Spain who imposed their culture, language, and religion on indigenous people and on the African peoples they enslaved. “For Latin Americans, who, like North Americans, fought hard to win their independence from European rule, identity is derived from their native lands and from the heterogeneous cultures that thrive within their borders.”

11. Define chance, choice, and context. How is race a product of these factors?

**Chance** relates to those things not subject to human will, choice, or effort. We do not choose our biological parents nor can we control the physical characteristics we inherit from them. **Context** is the larger social setting in which racial and ethnic categories are recognized, constructed, and challenged. **Choice** involves the act of choosing from a range of possible behaviors or appearances. The choice one makes may emphasize or de-emphasize the behaviors and appearances that have come to be associated with a racial or ethnic group. In the United States, people have come to equate race with physical features. The preoccupation with physical features suggests that the biological facts of one’s ancestry do not matter. What matters is chance—the eye shape, hair color and texture, skin color, and nose structure one has inherited from parents over which they have no control. Individual choice about racial identity can not be separated from chance or context. Clearly, one’s physical characteristics affects his or her ability to choose a particular racial identity.

12. How is ethnicity a product of chance, choice, and context?

Many traits associated with ethnicity are acquired by chance. For example, we learn the language or languages of the society in which we are born. Having one or more traits associated with a specific ethnicity does not mean that the person claims membership in an ethnic group or that an ethnic group claims him or her as a member. People’s sense of identification with an ethnic group “can range from non existent to levels so high that the fate of the group is experienced as the fate of the self.” Likewise an ethnic group may not accept people that it feels are not authentic (someone who marries outside the group and does not speak the language). Context and choice have significant effects on people’s sense of ethnic identification. Many people simplify complex ethnic backgrounds through selective forgetting. That is, they choose to recognize only some of their ancestries and to forget or discount others. In addition self-identification is not simply a matter of individual choice but is affected by larger societal, historical, and political constraints. In the United States some people have more freedom than others to claim or “choose” an ethnic identity. For example people classified in racial terms as white have a great deal of freedom to identify with an ethnic identity. Those defined as non-white, especially those classified as black, have much less choice. Then there is the phenomenon of **involuntary ethnicity**. In this situation, a dominant group defines some subgroup of people in
racial and ethnic terms, thus forcing that subgroup to become, appear, and/or feel more ethnic than they might otherwise be.

13. Distinguish between absorption assimilation and melting pot assimilation.

Absorption assimilation is a process in which members of a minority ethnic or racial group adapt to the ways of the dominant group, which sets the standards to which they must adjust. Melting pot assimilation is a process by which groups involved accept many new behaviors and values from one another. The exchange produces a new cultural system, which is a blend.

14. What is a stereotype? How are the stereotypes perpetuated and reinforced?

Stereotypes are exaggerated and inaccurate generalizations about people who are members of an outgroup. Stereotypes are supported and reinforced in a number of ways. One way is through selective perception whereby people notice only those behaviors or events that reinforce their stereotypes about an outgroup. Stereotypes also persist when prejudiced people encounter a minority person who contradicts stereotypes and see that person as an "exception." The fact that they have encountered someone who is "different" only serves to reinforce stereotypes. In addition, prejudiced people use facts to support their stereotypes. A prejudiced person can point to the small number of black quarterbacks, pitchers, and baseball managers as evidence that blacks possess inferior qualities. Finally, prejudiced individuals keep stereotypes alive when they evaluate the same behavior differently at different times, depending on the person who exhibits that behavior.

15. What is a stigma? How is this concept relevant to issues of race and ethnicity?

A stigma is an attribute that is deeply discrediting--that is, it breaks the claims on all other attributes a person might possess. The important quality underlying all stigmas is that those who possess them are not seen by others as multidimensional, complex persons but as one-dimensional beings.

16. What is authority? How many types of authority did Weber identify? Give examples of each kind of authority.

Authority is legitimate power in which people believe that the differences in power are just and proper - that is, people see a leader as entitled to give orders. Max Weber identified three types of authority - traditional, charismatic and legal-rational. Traditional authority rests on the sanctity of time-honored norms that govern the selection of someone to a powerful position (chief, king, queen) and specify responsibilities and appropriate conduct for those selected. People comply because they believe they are accountable to the past and have an obligation to perpetuate it. Charismatic authority rests on the exceptional and exemplary qualities of the person issuing the commands. Charismatic leaders are obeyed because their followers believe in and are attracted irresistibly to the leaders' vision. Examples of charismatic leaders include Martin Luther King, Chico Mendes, and Ho Chi Minh. Legal-rational authority rests on a system of impersonal rules that formally specifies the qualifications for occupying a powerful position. The rules also regulate the scope of power and the conduct appropriate to someone holding a particular position. In cases of legal-rational authority, people comply with commands, decisions, and directives because they believe that those who have issued them have earned the right to rule The president of the United States power is legal-rational.

17. What are the essential characteristics of a democracy?
Democracy is a system of government in which power is vested in the citizen body, in which its members participate directly or indirectly in the decision-making process. The size of the citizen body usually makes direct participation possible. Decision-making is usually indirect through elected representatives. This indirect form is known as representative democracy. In representative democracies elections are free; every citizen has the right to vote. Candidates and parties are free to campaign in opposition to the party holding power and the choice of candidates is not limited to a single party. In addition when a majority votes the party in power out there is an orderly and peaceful change in government. Democratic forms of government extend basic rights to all its citizens (and legal residents). These rights include freedom of speech, movement, religion, press, and of assembly, the right to form and belong to parties and other associations; and freedom from "arbitrary arrest and imprisonment."

18. How do we distinguish between totalitarianism and authoritarian governments?

Totalitarianism is a system of government characterized by a single ruling party lead by a dictator, an unchallenged official ideology that defines a vision of the "perfect" society and the means to achieve that vision, a system of social control that suppresses dissent and opposition, and centralized control over the media and the economy. Ideological goals vary and may include overthrowing capitalist and foreign influences (China under Mao Tse Tung), creating the perfect race (Nazi Germany under Hitler), or meeting certain economic and development goals (the China's Great Leap Forward). Whatever the goals, the leaders, military, and secret police intimidate and mobilize masses to help the state meet them. Under authoritarian governments there is no separation of powers; a single person (dictator), group (family, military, single party) or social class holds all the power. Unlike communist governments no official ideology projects a vision of the "perfect" society or guides a government's political or economic policies. As a result leaders do not seek to mobilize masses to help realize a vision or meet ideological goals. The government functions to serve those in power who may or may not be interested in the general welfare of the people. Common to all authoritarian systems is the "leader's freedom to exercise power without restraint, unencumbered by a commitment to law, ideology, or values."

19. Why is American Samoa the focus for a chapter on gender?

We emphasize Samoa because in 1925 it was the place to which a 23-year old anthropologist named Margaret Mead traveled in search of answers to the questions "Are the disturbances which vex [U.S] female adolescents due to the nature of adolescence itself or to the civilization?" In Samoa does "adolescence present a different picture?" In answering these questions Mead helped us to see that if societies differ in what they define as natural differences between the sexes, in how they channel and express sexual drives, and in the ways they structure gender relations than we must look to culture and the social arrangements of a society for an explanation, not just biology.

20. Define gender. Why do sociologists find the concept of “gender” useful?

Sociologists define gender as social distinctions based on culturally conceived and learned ideas about appropriate behavior and appearance for males and females. Sociologists find gender a useful concept because a society's gender expectations are central to people's lives whether they rigidly conform or resist. For many people failure to conform to gender expectations, even if they fail deliberately or conform only reluctantly, is a source of intense confusion, pain, and/or pleasure.
21. Is male/female a clear-cut biological distinction? Why or why not?

Biological sex is not a clear-cut category, if only because a significant number of people are born intersexed (with a mixture of male and female biological characteristics). The issue of clarity becomes even more complicated when we consider that a person's primary sex characteristics may not match their sex chromosomes.

22. What is gender polarization? Give an example.

Gender polarization is "the organizing of social life around the male-female distinction," so that people's sex is connected to "virtually every other aspect of human experience, including modes of dress, social roles, and even ways of expressing emotion and experiencing sexual desire."

23. Give some examples showing how socialization operates to teach people society’s gender expectations.

Socialization theorists argue that a portion of male/female differences are products of the ways in which males and females are treated. One example can be found in the way preschool teachers respond to toddlers. According to Fagot one reason there are clear boy-girl differences in communication styles among toddlers is that teachers tend to ignore assertive acts by girls and to respond to assertive acts by boys. A second example can be found in the toys adults create and buy for children to play with. Some toys such as Ken and Barbie dolls are marketed as "aspirational," meaning that they are role models for the children who play with them.

24. How does one’s position in the social structure channel behavior in stereotypically male or female directions?

Expectations and the established and customary ways of doing things shape the way men and women make decisions about themselves and others. For example, in the area of careers, men and women limit their job search to positions that are considered sex-appropriate; even when women are in professional and management positions, they choose specialties and fields that handle children and young adults, that involve supervising other women, and/or that are otherwise considered feminine (a professor of social work versus a professor of mathematics or computer sciences); and employers steer males and females into different gender-appropriate assignments, offer different training opportunities and chances to move into better-paying jobs.