Intro Sociology
Exam 2 Review Sheet

The exam will consist of materials covered in the text book and Classics reader
(approximately 35%), class lectures (approximately 50%), and guest lectures and video
clips. The exam will be worth 75 points broken down this way: 40 pts multiple choice
(20 Qs 2 pts each); 20 pts short answer (2 Q’s 10 pts each); 15 pts essay (1 Q 15 pts). For
the short answer and essay questions, you will have a choice of questions in each
category. 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 7-10, 12, 13
  Classics Reader:
    Durkheim
    Gans
    Dubois
  Guest Lectures:
    Restorative Justice (Steve Larson)
    Race/Ethnicity in Kenya (Korir Sing’Oei)
    Interracial Families (Hiromi Ishizawa)
  Videos (or clips):
    People Like Us: Social Class in America
    RACE: The Power of an Illusion

Lecture material to be covered on this exam:
  Monday, Feb 25 – Friday, April 4 (see syllabus for topics)

Some key issues:
  Deviance
  Crime
  Social Control
  Sanctions (positive, negative, formal, informal)
  Labeling Theory
  Structural Strain Theory
  Differential Association Theory (Interactionist)
  Conflict Theory
  Functionalist Theory
  Restorative justice
  Stratification
  Ascribed/Achieved characteristics
  World Systems Theory of Global Stratification
  Caste and Class systems
  Social mobility
  Theories of stratification (functionalist, Marx/Conflict, Weber)
Dimensions of class
Poverty (measurement, criticisms of measurement)
Functions of poverty
Underclass
Race
Ethnicity
Current U.S. classification system
Trends in size of racial/ethnic groups
Minority groups (voluntary, involuntary)
Assimilation (absorption, melting pot, multiculturalism)
Prejudice
Discrimination (individual, institutional)
Stigma
Immigration (types, waves, policies, effects)
Sex and Gender
Gender polarization
Masculinity
Femininity
Gender socialization
Structural constraints (ex. Gender wage gap)
Theoretical perspectives on gender
History of sexuality
Contemporary attitudes about sex
Teen Sex
Same-sex marriage
Intersectionality
Family
Theoretical perspectives on family
Productive work, reproductive work
Exogamy
Endogamy
Changes in family structure (parental authority, increased life expectancy, etc)
Aging population
Caregiver burden
Interracial families (via marriage, adoption)
Education (formal, informal)
Theoretical perspectives on education
Curriculum (formal, hidden)
Characteristics of U.S. Education System
Educational inequalities (between & within schools)
Tracking
1. What is deviance? How is it related to conformity and social control?

Deviance is any behavior or physical appearance that is challenged by society because it departs from group norms or expectations. Deviance is the opposite of conformity which sociologists define as behavior and appearances that follow and maintain group standards. Mechanisms of social control are the methods societies use to teach, persuade, or force their members to conform and not deviate from shared norms and expectations.

2. What are the major mechanisms of social control? Why do all societies have such mechanisms in place?

Sanctions--reactions of approval and disapproval to behavior and appearances--are the principal mechanisms of social control. Positive sanctions are rewards for conforming to an expected norm--for example, applause, a smile, a letter of congratulations. Negative sanctions are penalties for violating a social norm--for example, ridicule, physical harm, imprisonment. Informal sanctions include unofficial pressure to conform to certain appearances or behavior. Formal sanctions are embodied in systematic laws, rules, and policies such as medals, fines, or prison sentences. Because socialization is not adequate to ensure conformity to society's norms, mechanisms of control are in effect to teach, persuade, or force individuals to conform.

3. Labeling theorists believe that rules are socially constructed and that members of social groups do not enforce them in uniform or consistent ways. Explain.

Labeling theorists emphasize the relativity of deviance. They also stress that deviant labels are socially constructed—that is, they are assigned by people themselves in the course of social interaction. In the language of labeling theory, violating a "rule" does not in itself make someone deviant. Whether an act is deviant depends on whether people notice it, and if they do notice it, whether they react to it and subsequently apply sanctions.

4. What is structural strain? What are the sources of structural strain in the United States?

Structural strain is any situation where (a) The valued cultural goals have unclear limits, leaving people unsure about whether they have achieved them. (b) There is uncertainty whether the legitimate means that society provides will lead to the valued goals. (c) The legitimate opportunities for meeting these goals (e.g., education, a well-paying job) are closed to a significant portion of people. The rate of deviance is likely to be high under any one of these conditions. The high value that American society places on the goal of monetary success and social advancement is a major source of structural strain in the United States. The poor in American society are especially vulnerable to strain because the cultural assumption is not only that monetary success is possible for all but also that poverty is a disadvantage that can be overcome through personal effort. According to Robert Merton, the originator of the structural strain theory, this culturally valued goal of economic affluence has no clear limits: the measure of "monetary success' is conveniently indefinite and relative." Moreover, the legitimate means to the goal are not entirely clear. It is up to the individual to choose a path that leads to success.

5. What are the responses to structural strain?

Merton devised a typology of potential responses to structural strain. Each response involves some combination of acceptance and rejection of the culturally valued goals and legitimate means. In Merton's typology, conformity is the only nondeviant response. It is the acceptance of the valued goals and the pursuit of these goals through legitimate means. The other three
responses--innovation, ritualism, and retreatism--are all deviant to some degree. Innovators are deviant because they accept the goals but reject the legitimate means to attain them. Ritualists abandon the goals but adhere rigidly to the accepted means. Retreatists are the people who reject both the goals and the means and thus "resign" from society.

6. Summarize the major assumptions underlying the theory of differential association.

The theory of differential association provides insights into how people come to engage in deviant behavior. The theory assumes that deviance is learned in the same way as conforming, acceptable behavior is learned--through interaction with others. A person associates with deviant subcultures whose members approve of criminal behaviors and adhere to norms that favor violation of the larger society's norms. The theory of differential association does not explain how a person makes contact with deviant subcultures in the first place. But once contact is made, the individual learns the subculture's rules for behavior in the same way all behavior is learned.

7. 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).

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. What are the shortcomings 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.

12. 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.”

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. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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."

18. 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.

19. Why is Japan the focus of a chapter on family and aging? How does the U.S. compare to Japan on indicators related to family well-being and stability?
On many indicators associated with family well-being and stability, Japan seems to do better than the United States. The country has lower infant mortality, cohabitation, and divorce rates. Japan has a low teen birth rate and very small percentage of single parent households. A relatively high percentage of Japanese elderly live with their children. In comparison to the number of reported domestic and child abuse cases in the United States, Japan’s reported cases are miniscule. On the other hand, people in the United States seem more optimistic about marriage and children. Relative to Japan, the United States has a higher marriage rate, a smaller percentage of single women and men and a higher fertility rate. Both the United States and Japan have aging populations. This means that the percentage of the population 65 and older is increasing relative to other age groups. Currently 12.6 percent of the U.S. and 17.4 percent of Japan’s population is 65 years or older. In 2010 over 20 percent of Japan’s population will be 65 and older compared to 13 percent in the United States.

20. How does the family contribute to order and stability in society? What are some problems with defining family in terms of social functions?

Family and marriage systems perform at least five functions. They regulate sexual behavior, replace the members of society who die, socialize the young, provide care and emotional support, and confer a social status. While everyone would agree that families should fulfill the functions listed above, we must acknowledge that families often fail to achieve one of more of these functions as illustrated the following facts.

21. How would a conflict theorist respond to a functionalist’s assessment of the family?

Conflict theorists argue that while it is true that family members often support one another and have common interests, it is also true that family members have competing interests and, depending on their position and status in the family group, have the power to exercise their will over other members. It is also true that actions some members take on behalf of the family do not always benefit everyone in the family or the society at large. As examples, conflict theorists argue that marriage and family systems are structured to devalue reproductive work, maintain and perpetuate social inequalities within the larger society, and foster racial divisions and boundaries.

22. Distinguish between productive and reproductive work. Which type of work is more valued?

Productive work involves the production of the means of existence, of food, clothing, and shelter and the tools necessary for that production. Reproductive work involves not only bearing children, but care giving, managing households, and educating children. Both activities—production and reproduction—are work and are equally important to human survival. Yet in spite of the fact that both forms of work are necessary for human survival, productive work is seen as essential, and reproductive work is [usually] relegated to a subsidiary and contingent position.

23. How has family created racial divisions and boundaries?

In the U.S. ethnic, and especially racial, categories have persisted because most people “choose” partners they believe belong to their own racial category. At one time in the United States there were laws to enforce this choice. The legacy of these “forced” choices can be found in the small percentage of couples—2 percent—that the U.S. Census Bureau classified as “mixed marriages.”

24. How did the Industrial Revolution destroy the household-based economy and lead to the breadwinner system?
The Industrial Revolution separated the workplace from the home and altered the division of labor between men and women. It destroyed the household economy by removing economic production from the home and taking it out of women's hands. Davis asks, "Why did the separation of home and workplace lead to the breadwinner system in most mechanized rich countries?" The major reason, he believes, is that women had too many children to engage in work outside the home. Thus the husband assumed the role of the breadwinner while his wife stayed home.

25. How do increases in life expectancy alter the composition of the family?

Sociologist Holger R. Stub describes at least four ways that increases in life expectancy have altered the composition of the family since 1900. First, the chances that children will lose one or both parents before they reach 16 years of age has decreased sharply. At the same time, parents can expect that their children will survive infancy and early childhood. Second, the potential length of marriages has increased. In 1900, newly married couples could expect their marriage to last an average of 23 years before one partner died (if we assume they did not divorce). Today, assuming no divorce, newly married couples can expect to be married for 53 years before one partner dies. This structural change may be one of several factors underlying the high divorce rates today. Third, people now have more time to choose and get to know a partner, settle on an occupation, attend school, and decide whether they want children. Moreover, an initial decision made in any one of these areas is not final. Finally, the number of people living a long life has increased to a level without historical precedent.

26. What is “caregiver burden”? Is caregiving only a burden?

Caregiver burden is the extent to which caregivers believe that their emotional balance, physical health, social life, and financial status suffer because of the caregiver role. However keep in mind family care giving is a complex activity that goes beyond time commitments and perceived burdens. Care giving also satisfied (1) the need to pay back recipients for the sacrifices they made raising and caring for the caregiver or her husband; (2) the emotional bond between the caregiver and the recipient; (3) a desire to live a life free of regret—the belief that failure to fulfill the caregiver role would lead to a life of regret; (4) a feeling of accomplishment for a job well-done especially when recipient expresses appreciation and satisfaction; and (5) personal growth derived from the care giving experience.

27. What are some of the major differences between the elderly-caregiver relationship in Japan and the US?

In the United States one in four households provide some assistance to elderly family members. In Japan elderly family members are more likely to co-reside with caretakers. It is also interesting that in Japan (as in the U.S.) females are more likely to be caregivers. However, the most likely ethnic/racial group in the United States to involve males in care giving of elderly family members is Asian.