

Study Questions, Week 1

Topic for the Week: Introduction to Sociology

Readings for the Week: *Society: The Basics*, Chapter 1

Questions:

(1) Identify the following sociologists and their contributions to the discipline:

Auguste Comte
Herbert Spencer
Karl Marx
Emile Durkheim
Max Weber

Harriet Martineau
Jane Addams
W.E.B. DuBois
C. Wright Mills
Robert Merton

(2) Peter Berger says that the sociological perspective allows us to see the general in the particular. What does Berger's statement tell us about the subject matter sociologists study? What are some of the benefits of viewing the world through the sociological perspective?

(3) Is sociology a science? Why or why not? What elements distinguish scientific knowledge from other forms of knowing?

(4) What is a theory? How does a theory differ from a theoretical paradigm? What role does theory play in sociology? What is the difference between a theory and a stereotype?

(5) Identify three theoretical paradigms in sociology. What characteristics distinguish the structural-functional, social-conflict, and symbolic-interaction approaches? What is the difference between a micro- and a macro-level orientation?

(6) What did Max Weber mean when he suggested sociological research should be value free? What role do values play in sociological research? Distinguish objective, interpretive and critical approaches to the study of society.

(7) Explain the logic of the following research methods used by sociologists:

Experiments
Surveys

Participant Observation
Existing Sources

Under what circumstances would a researcher choose one of these methods over another? What are some advantages and disadvantages of each approach?

(8) What steps do sociologists follow in conducting a study? Do these steps apply to all types of research?