Study Questions, Week 11

Topic for the Week: Social Institutions: Family and Religion

Readings for the Week: Macionis text, Chapter 13

Questions:

(1) What is a family? Describe ways that families vary in organization by culture and residence.

(2) What important functions do families fulfill in society? How do these functions vary by culture?

(3) Describe how the structural-functionalist, social-conflict, and symbolic interactionist perspectives on the family differ.

(4) How might a typical family change over time? What events generate these changes? What factors influence how these changes might vary?

(5) How do class, race, ethnicity and gender affect family structure? How do they affect family life for individuals?

(6) What are some of the causes of divorce? Who is most likely to divorce? Why? What are some important social problems produced by an increasing divorce rate?

(7) Suggest how the following trends have developed in the United States, and some problems associated with these trends: family violence, one-parent families, cohabitation, gay and lesbian families, postponing marriage/choosing to remain single.

(8) What is meant by religion? What are some important functions of religion?

(9) Contrast the structural-functionalist, social-conflict and symbolic interactionist perspectives on religion. Apply each to analyze a religion with which you are familiar.

(10) According to Weber, how are religion and capitalism connected? Explain the elements of his argument.

(11) Distinguish the following religious forms: church, state church, denomination, sect, and cult. Suggest examples of each type of organization. Explain how churches, sects and cults interact in “religious markets.”

(12) How has the institution of religion changed over time? What are some factors that affect religious change?

(13) Explain how class, ethnicity and race affect religious beliefs and institutions.

(14) How does religiosity and church membership vary across the United States? Where are you most likely to find members of the following churches: Baptist, Catholic, Latter Day Saints, Lutheran, Methodist?