

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?