Study Questions, Week 4

(1) What is meant by the term social change? Identify several examples of social change in U.S. history.

(2) What does George Ritzer mean by McDonaldization? How do fast food restaurants introduce efficiency into eating a meal? Where else do we see efficiency introduced into our ordinary activities in the same way?

(3) What are the products of McDonalds-type efficiency in terms of social organization? What are some of the negative consequences of McDonaldization?

(4) What is the difference between interpreting an action and reacting to an action? What role do norms and values play in the way we interpret actions?

(5) Schaefer says "an important aspect of the process of social change involves redefining or reconstructing social reality" (p. 105).

(6) How does social action affect social change? What role does negotiation play in this process?

(7) Explain the theories of social change developed by Durkheim, Tonnies and Lenski. What are the primary concepts in each theory? How are the concepts related?

(8) What is a social movement? Do social movements always lead to social change?

(9) Explain how social movements provoke social change. That is, what are the processes that create social change, according to different social movement theories (e.g. relative deprivation, resource mobilization, feminism, new social movements? 

(10) Using the environmental movement as an example, explain the differences between the way functionalists and conflict theorists understand social movements and processes of social change.