Study Questions, Week 12

(1) What is religion from a sociological perspective? What is meant by sacred and profane? How do these concepts help us understand religion?

(2) Identify characteristics of the predominant faiths in the world today. What do these religions have in common?

(3) What are some of the important functions that religion plays in society? Describe the basis of social cohesion in each function.

(4) Distinguish religious beliefs, rituals, and experiences. How does each create social cohesion?

(5) Identify four distinct types of religious organizations. What are the criteria used to group various faiths and practices into these ideal types? Provide a dynamic theory of how these different types interact.

(6) What is meant by education, from a sociological perspective? What important functions does education serve in society? What are some of the hidden functions of education?

(7) How has gender affected one's educational opportunities in the past, and today? What has been done to address inequities by gender? Have these policies been successful? Explain.

(8) What issues arise when schools become formalized into bureaucratic organizations? How do these issues affect teachers and students? What other groups are affected by bureaucratic schools?

(9) How do conditions outside of a school affect what goes on in the classrooms? Consider, for example, how poverty and access to resources affects one's educational opportunities. Contrast the conditions found in impoverished schools and upper middle class schools, as discussed by Kozol.

(10) How will the life chances differ for those attending school in East St. Louis, IL and those in Rye, NY? In what ways do educational institutions open opportunities for some and constrain others?