**Study Guide for Midterm Exam**

What is Sociology

1. The scope of sociological study is extremely wide, but in general, sociologists ask themselves certain questions that help to focus the sociological imagination. These questions that orient the discipline include: - How are the things that we take to be natural actually socially constructed? – How is social order possible? – Does the individual matter? – How are the times in which we are living different than before? Discuss in some detail some of sociology’s basic concepts while also providing some examples: a) social construction, b) social order, c) agency and structure, d) social change.

2. “Sociology is a martial art” as Pierre Bourdieu says in the film documenting some of his most influential ideas. Discuss how culture is used to perpetuate inequalities among different classes or genders while explaining some key concepts such as ‘cultural capital,’ social capital’, ‘symbolic violence.’ What is the role of the intellectuals and sociologists in social reproduction?

1. What is the sociological imagination, according to C. Wright Mills? Why is it important that we are able to draw connections between the personal and the social, between biography and history?

Culture and Society

 4. What is culture? What are its most important characteristics? How does it inform our lives? Explain, while also illustrating with some good examples, what ‘subculture’ and ‘counterculture’ are. How multiculturalism and ethnocentrism differ. Furthermore, in an increasingly globalized world are we rapidly turning into a single global culture?

5. In the documentary “Orientalism” Edward Said explains the processes of systematic knowledge development about the Middle East by the West. Today the term is used to refer to a general patronizing Western attitude toward the Muslim world in general and a set of stereotypes and false representations. Discuss the film and explain in some detail European and American Orientalism.

Ethnicity and Race

6. How is race defined, according to Desmond and Emyrbayer and what are some of its most important characteristics? Most importantly, how racism and racial domination work. Explain in some detail *institutional racism, interpersonal racism* and the importance of *symbolic violence* in the perseverance of racial domination. Provide some examples.

7. Racism is much broader than violence and epithets. It also comes in much quieter, everyday-ordinary and often very shuttle forms. Racism is often habitual, unintentional, commonplace, polite, implicit and well-meaning and not surprising is fraught with a number of misconceptions and misunderstandings. Identify and carefully explain the five the most popular fallacies surrounding racism and racial domination.

1. Define ethnicity and nationality and explain the relation between the two. What role have immigration laws played in the hierarchical understanding of the various ethnicities in the United States?