

# CHAPTER 1 Sociology and the Real World

## MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Sociologists observe society by
  - a. studying the various parts of a society and the ways they interact and influence one another.
  - b. studying society as if it were a concrete object, in the same way a geologist studies rocks.
  - c. comparing the past and present, with a focus on the past.
  - d. studying the relationship between individuals and society, specializing in internal states of mind.

ANS: A                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 9                      OBJ: 1.2 What Is Sociology?  
MSC: Applying

2. Even though we are not all trained academically as sociologists, we can all be considered “everyday actors” because
  - a. sociology is a part of human nature.
  - b. our parents taught us to be sociologists even before they sent us to school.
  - c. we are all members of society and have background knowledge about how society works.
  - d. sociologists are really just everyday observers of conventional wisdom.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 9  
OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge                      MSC: Remembering

3. Unlike sociologists, the knowledge that most people possess about the world can be described as
  - a. academic.
  - b. systemic, clear, and consistent.
  - c. practical.
  - d. scientific.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 9  
OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge                      MSC: Understanding

4. Sociology can be defined as the systematic and scientific study of human society and social behavior, from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. large-scale institutions; individual interactions
  - b. practical knowledge; scientific knowledge
  - c. individual interactions; small groups
  - d. economics; political science

ANS: A                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 9                      OBJ: 1.2 What Is Sociology?  
MSC: Remembering

5. Howard Becker said that sociology can best be understood as the study of people “doing things together.” This definition reminds us that
  - a. only large-scale interactions that involve many people can be understood by sociologists.
  - b. sociology is only interested in the way people act, not in the way they think.
  - c. neither society nor the individual exists in isolation; each is dependent on the other.
  - d. individuals exist independently of society and can be understood without considering social influence.

ANS: C                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 9                      OBJ: 1.2 What Is Sociology?  
MSC: Understanding

6. Sociology can be approached from both a microsociological and a macrosociological perspective. Which is more useful?
  - a. The macrosociological perspective is more useful because it explains how large-scale social institutions influence individuals.
  - b. The microsociological perspective is more useful because it explains how individuals shape and create large-scale social institutions.
  - c. Both are useful and any study that uses only one or the other will be unable to explain anything useful about society.

- d. Both are useful in different ways because they each provide different types of information about the same object of study.

ANS: D                    DIF: Difficult                    REF: Pages 14–16  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Applying

7. Which of the following statements best characterizes microsociology?
- It is an approach that examines interactions between individuals and how those interactions reflect larger societal patterns.
  - It is an approach that examines institutional interactions that occur over time.
  - It is an approach that quantifies data about social structures so they can be analyzed statistically.
  - It is an approach that focuses exclusively on gender and power as they manifest themselves socially.

ANS: A                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Page 14  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Understanding

8. Researcher Pam Fishman studied the conversations of heterosexual couples to determine how power is created and maintained through everyday, face-to-face interactions. How would you describe her approach?
- macrosociological
  - historical
  - microsociological
  - comparative

ANS: C                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Page 14  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Understanding

9. Sociologists assert that there is a close relationship between the individual and society. How does Pam Fishman’s research on gender and power in heterosexual couples characterize this relationship?
- Fishman’s data show how macro-level phenomena like gender and power manifest themselves in everyday interactions.
  - It doesn’t because Fishman’s data only show how individuals act.
  - Fishman’s data show that micro-level and macro-level phenomena are largely independent of each other.
  - Fishman’s research shows that there is no relationship between the individual and society.

ANS: A                    DIF: Difficult                    REF: Page 14  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Remembering

10. Which of the following statements best describes the approach taken by macrosociologists?
- Macrosociology concentrates on the way large social institutions are created through individual interactions.
  - Macrosociology examines large-scale social structure to see how it affects individual lives.
  - Macrosociology focuses on creating a beginner’s mind in contrast to microsociology, which uses an expert’s mind.
  - Unlike microsociology, macrosociology focuses on creating scientific knowledge of the world, rather than practical knowledge.

ANS: B                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Pages 15–16  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Understanding

11. Researcher Christine Williams looked at patterns of occupational sex segregation by examining the ways large-scale social structures create the constraints within which individuals live their lives. Her work would be characterized as what kind of sociology?
- microsociology
  - symbolic interactionist
  - Chicago School
  - macrosociology

ANS: D                    DIF: Difficult                    REF: Page 16  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Understanding

12. Macrosociology and microsociology approach the study of society from different perspectives. How does the discipline of sociology deal with these two very different approaches?
- Most sociologists are macrosociologists; microsociologists are only a small minority.
  - These two perspectives are on a continuum with each other and sociologists can adopt the perspective most useful for a particular problem.
  - Although the field is fairly evenly split between these two perspectives, almost every sociologist feels strongly that his or her perspective is the correct one.
  - Microsociology used to dominate the field, but more recently macrosociology has become the dominant perspective.

ANS: B                    DIF: Difficult                    REF: Pages 14–16  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                    MSC: Understanding

13. Regardless of their various approaches to social phenomena, what are all sociologists trying to do?
- illuminate the connection between the individual and society
  - explain why poverty and inequality still exist
  - compare the present with the past
  - understand how our society is different from other cultures and other times

ANS: A                    DIF: Difficult                    REF: Pages 10–13  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                    MSC: Understanding

14. According to C. Wright Mills, what one quality of mind do all great sociologists possess?
- open-mindedness
  - sociological imagination
  - praxis
  - attention to detail

ANS: B                    DIF: Easy                    REF: Page 13  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                    MSC: Applying

15. What is the sociological imagination?
- a characteristic of society that ensures people remain ignorant of the connections between their lives and social change
  - a particular way of understanding the criminal mind such as that of a serial killer
  - the ability to understand the connections between biography and history or the self and the world
  - the sociological approach that assumes individual decisions and interactions are independent of larger social institutions

ANS: C                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Page 13  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                    MSC: Remembering

16. Why did C. Wright Mills think that it is important for everyone, even people who will never take a sociology class, to develop a sociological imagination?
- It will help create more jobs for sociologists.
  - Many people are unaware of the connections between their own lives and the larger course of history.
  - The sociological perspective is innately understood by nearly everyone, but we rarely acknowledge it.
  - It will encourage growth in the field of microsociology.

ANS: B                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Page 13  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                    MSC: Analyzing

17. Why would culture shock be a useful state of mind for a sociologist?
- It makes us unable to function even in simple, everyday ways.
  - It requires us to travel, which helps us grow as human beings.
  - It shows us that people in foreign cultures have a way of life that seems strange to us.
  - It makes us realize we lack an understanding of our surroundings so we can perceive what is right in front of us.

ANS: D                    DIF: Easy                    REF: Page 12

OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective MSC: Understanding

18. In order to verify what the everyday actor might just accept or assume to be true, the social analyst must take the perspective of the
- social worker.
  - native.
  - stranger.
  - insider.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: Page 9  
OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge MSC: Remembering

19. Taking the sociological approach to everyday life has strengths and weaknesses. One of the weaknesses of this approach is that it
- accepts many things as true that cannot be verified or confirmed.
  - labors to grasp things that everyday actors understand implicitly.
  - is a practical approach, rather than a scientific approach.
  - requires one to travel in order to feel culture shock.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: Page 9  
OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge MSC: Understanding

20. When it comes to understanding everyday life, one of the weaknesses of being an everyday actor is that you
- are forced to see everything from the perspective of a stranger.
  - must labor to grasp even simple, common occurrences.
  - can only see things from a historical perspective.
  - make assumptions and fail to investigate or verify those assumptions.

ANS: D DIF: Easy REF: Page 9  
OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge MSC: Understanding

21. Many everyday cultural practices such as greeting a friend, giving someone flowers, or using the thumbs-up sign seem like natural ways of acting. Why does having an awareness of how these practices vary across cultures demonstrate a healthy sociological imagination?
- It reminds us that everyday interactions are connected to larger societies and norms.
  - It helps us economically when we do business in different countries.
  - It lets us understand how immigrants perceive America when they move here.
  - It shows us that cultures are not as different as we sometimes think they are.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: Pages 12–14  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective MSC: Understanding

22. Together and in groups, people organize their lives and social interactions to produce a real and meaningful world. Sociologists can study this because
- they are interested in all aspects of human psychology.
  - people organize their lives in patterned ways.
  - sociology understands the importance of human psychology.
  - we often assign characteristics to an entire group based on experience with a single group member.

ANS: B DIF: Difficult REF: Page 9 OBJ: 1.2 What Is Sociology?  
MSC: Remembering

23. Why are there disagreements among sociologists about how to define sociology?
- Society is always changing.
  - Sociologists are trained to be everyday actors.
  - There is no disagreement among sociologists about how to define the discipline.
  - Sociology encompasses a large intellectual territory.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: Pages 9–10 OBJ: 1.2 What Is Sociology?  
MSC: Applying

24. Metaphorically, what part of sociology is a zoom lens on a camera most like?

- a. qualitative research
- b. microsociology
- c. quantitative research
- d. macrosociology

ANS: B                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 14

OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                      MSC: Applying

25. Researcher Pam Fishman noticed that, within heterosexual couples, women are more likely than men to use questions in conversation. Why is this finding sociologically important?
- a. Questions are more likely used by the partner with less power, so Fishman's research connects social structures and individual behaviors.
  - b. Fishman's research on conversation styles shows a biological basis for larger social structures.
  - c. Asking questions is important in maintaining a healthy relationship, as demonstrated by Fishman's research.
  - d. Questions are more likely to be used by the partner who is kinder and emotional, so Fishman's research helps explain gender roles.

ANS: A                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 14

OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                      MSC: Analyzing

26. A reality television show called *Wife Swap* exchanged the mothers from two very different families and filmed the result as the participants are exposed to radically different ways of life. Although the television network was simply trying to be entertaining, the show also demonstrates the sociological principle of
- a. the sociological imagination.
  - b. globalization.
  - c. quantitative methods.
  - d. culture shock.

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 11–12

OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                      MSC: Applying

27. Which best describes the research goals of sociologists who use a macrosociological approach and the research goals of sociologists who use a microsociological approach?
- a. Sociologists using a microsociological approach focus only on local concerns.
  - b. Sociologists using a macrosociological approach are much more likely to be worried about globalization.
  - c. No matter what approach they take, all sociologists aim to illuminate the connection between the individual and society.
  - d. Regardless of which method they use, the research goal of all sociologists is to prove that individuals are ultimately in control of their own destinies.

ANS: C                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Pages 14–16

OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                      MSC: Understanding

28. Many Marxist sociologists assume that large-scale economic structures are the most important factors in shaping people's lives. This assumption is an example of
- a. microsociology.
  - b. macrosociology.
  - c. rationalization.
  - d. symbolic interactionism.

ANS: B                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Pages 15–16

OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                      MSC: Understanding

29. Where should you start if you possess a sociological imagination and you are asked to study unemployment rates in a city with fifty million people, of which, fifteen million are unemployed?
- a. You should consider the economic and political structures of the society.
  - b. You should consider the work ethic of the average citizen.
  - c. You should worry about the intelligence level of the workers who have lost their jobs.
  - d. You should ask the people who are unemployed how much they want to work.

ANS: A                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 13, 15  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                      MSC: Understanding

30. The divorce rate has steadily increased over time and now more than a quarter of all marriages end within the first four years. What sort of factors would C. Wright Mills suggest investigating to explain this increase?
- religious
  - personal
  - structural
  - psychological

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 12–15  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                      MSC: Applying

31. You are looking over the courses that are offered at your school and you see a class called “The Sociology of Media and Popular Culture.” You don’t think you need this course because you listen to lots of music, watch a wide variety of television, and often go to the movies. What would a sociologist tell you?
- You are a specialist in mass media.
  - You should try to watch media from other cultures to really understand popular culture.
  - You should take classes in film studies instead.
  - You only have “reciped,” or practical knowledge.

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 9  
OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge                      MSC: Applying

32. There is a close relationship between sociology and the other social sciences. Given how much overlap there is between these fields, why does sociology still exist as a separate discipline?
- All the other fields are more specialized, but sociology is a field that considers a huge intellectual territory.
  - Sociology does not use historical context, which other social sciences do.
  - Sociology departments are an academic tradition and would be difficult to disband.
  - Political science and economics are more politically conservative and sociology provides a liberal counterbalance.

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 10                      OBJ: 1.2 What Is Sociology?  
MSC: Applying

33. What could you determine about Pam Fishman if you didn’t know anything about her except that she studied conversation patterns?
- She is a conflict theorist.
  - She is a macrosociologist.
  - She is a structural functionalist.
  - She is a microsociologist.

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 14  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                      MSC: Applying

34. Why might Karl Marx and Émile Durkheim be placed far apart on sociology’s family tree?
- Marx’s work is no longer considered very important.
  - Durkheim was more of a psychologist than a sociologist.
  - The theoretical approaches they founded are very different.
  - Durkheim was French whereas Marx was German.

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 21–25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

35. Unlike earlier religious traditions that attempted to determine the ultimate cause or source of reality, Auguste Comte developed positivism in order to
- explain how class conflict drove social change.
  - argue that symbolic interactions between individuals were the basis for social life.
  - justify a particular kind of social system based on hierarchy and privilege.
  - identify laws that describe the behavior of a particular reality.

ANS: D                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Page 18                    OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree  
MSC: Remembering

36. What is a paradigm?
- an abstract proposition that explains the social world and makes predictions about the future
  - a set of assumptions, theories, and perspectives that makes up a way of understanding social reality
  - the theory that sense perceptions are the only valid source of knowledge
  - the application of the theory of evolution and the notion of "survival of the fittest" to the study of society

ANS: B                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Page 16                    OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree  
MSC: Remembering

37. What historical events convinced Auguste Comte that society needed to be guided by thinkers who understood social laws?
- the American Civil War and the battle over slavery
  - globalization and the rise of international trade and commerce
  - the French Revolution and the instability that followed it
  - the age of exploration and the expansion of European powers into Africa

ANS: C                    DIF: Easy                    REF: Page 18                    OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree  
MSC: Remembering

38. Harriet Martineau supported many ideas that were radical for her time including
- the liberation of French colonies in Africa.
  - international communism and socialism.
  - labor unions and the abolition of slavery.
  - the French Revolution and the abolition of the monarchy.

ANS: C                    DIF: Easy                    REF: Page 18                    OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree  
MSC: Remembering

39. What was probably Harriet Martineau's MOST important contribution to the development of sociology as a discipline?
- her theory of alienation
  - her translation of the work of Auguste Comte into English
  - her work on an early theory of symbolic interactionism
  - her struggle for women's rights

ANS: B                    DIF: Easy                    REF: Page 18                    OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree  
MSC: Remembering

40. Who coined the phrase "the survival of the fittest"?
- Charles Darwin
  - Karl Marx
  - Émile Durkheim
  - Herbert Spencer

ANS: D                    DIF: Moderate                    REF: Pages 18–19                    OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree  
MSC: Remembering

41. What economic system emerged during the Industrial Revolution?
- communism
  - humanitarianism
  - globalization
  - capitalism

ANS: D                    DIF: Easy                    REF: Page 22                    OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Remembering

42. Émile Durkheim suggested that in traditional societies, people were bound through mechanical solidarity. What was the basis of these sorts of bonds?



- a. interdependence and the division of labor
- b. shared traditions and similar experiences
- c. a strong ruler who exercised absolute control over the population
- d. anomie

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 19  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

43. On any given day, you probably depend on many strangers to provide electricity, water, natural gas, weather forecasts, and other services. According to Émile Durkheim, this interdependence gives rise to
- a. mechanical solidarity.
  - b. class consciousness.
  - c. organic solidarity.
  - d. pragmatism.

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 19  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

44. Émile Durkheim's study on suicide found that suicide rates went up when the economy slumped, but they also increased when the economy boomed. Which of Durkheim's concepts explains why both positive and negative economic conditions could increase suicide rates?
- a. alienation
  - b. anomie
  - c. mechanical solidarity
  - d. organic solidarity

ANS: B                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 20  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

45. According to Émile Durkheim, industrialized societies function via organic solidarity. What is the basis for organic solidarity?
- a. religion and tradition
  - b. shared experiences and similar beliefs
  - c. globalization, mass communications, and technology
  - d. difference, interdependence, and individual rights

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 19  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

46. Durkheim theorized that the rapidly changing conditions of modern life lead to anomie. What is anomie?
- a. normlessness or a loss of connections to the social world
  - b. anger and disillusionment with progress
  - c. the transfer of destructive urges to socially useful activities
  - d. a kind of social solidarity based on interdependence

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 20  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

47. In *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Émile Durkheim argued that religion was a powerful source of social solidarity because
- a. religion established authorities who had control over entire societies.
  - b. different religions were constantly appearing and disappearing.
  - c. there were many arguments about which religion represented the truth.
  - d. religion reinforced collective bonds and cultivated shared moral values.

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 20  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

48. According to the theoretical position developed by Karl Marx, what is the engine of social change?
- a. conflict between social groups
  - b. exploration beyond the boundaries of a given society
  - c. development of technology



d. shared moral values

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 22  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

49. According to Karl Marx, the most important factor in social life is a person's
- race or ethnicity.
  - religious beliefs.
  - relationship to the means of production.
  - level of education.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 22  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

50. What does Marx see as the primary tool for the oppression of the lower social classes in modern society?
- increasing power of the police state
  - religious authorities
  - aristocracy
  - industrial capitalism

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 22  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

51. What term did Karl Marx use to describe the fact that most of the population accepts inequality even when it does not benefit them personally?
- class consciousness
  - existentialism
  - ethnomethodology
  - false consciousness

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

52. The \_\_\_\_\_ of white supremacy in the United States was a system of beliefs and attitudes that maintained the status quo of racism.
- praxis
  - antithesis
  - false consciousness
  - ideology

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

53. What was Marx criticizing when he said that religion is "the opiate of the masses"?
- the way religion defines what is sacred and what is profane
  - the way religion increases anomie among the working class
  - the use of religion by the ruling class to oppress the working class
  - the way individuals use religion to support their actions

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

54. After studying the indigenous peoples of Australia, \_\_\_\_\_ concluded that any form of religion is united in its definition of what is considered to be \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Talcott Parsons; manifest functions; latent functions
  - Émile Durkheim; sacred; profane
  - Karl Max; manifest functions; latent functions
  - Robert Merton; sacred; profane

ANS: B                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 19  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

55. According to Karl Marx, how could a belief in heaven as a reward for earthly suffering serve the interests of the ruling class?
- by keeping the lower classes from demanding better treatment in this life
  - by distracting the lower classes with fantastic spectacles
  - by using the church as a means to extract economic resources from the poor
  - by keeping working classes busy with religious activities and with no time to organize

ANS: A                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

56. What did Karl Marx think the lower classes needed to develop in order to end their oppression?
- a critical theory of gender
  - a stronger sense of *verstehen*
  - class consciousness
  - false consciousness

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

57. According to Karl Marx, how is class consciousness, or revolutionary consciousness, developed?
- by a eurocentric party leading a violent revolution
  - through a religious awakening
  - by achieving perfect industrial production so that most workers are unemployed
  - by the lower classes recognizing how society works and challenging those in power

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

58. Karl Marx's thought intellectuals should engage in praxis, meaning that they should
- constantly practice and develop the craft of social analysis.
  - not just theorize about the world but change it.
  - evaluate ideas based on their usefulness in everyday life.
  - analyze and give meaning to every action.

ANS: B                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 24  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

59. In 2007, the richest 1 percent of the American population owned 35 percent of the country's wealth and the bottom 80 percent of the population owned 14 percent. Karl Marx would call this
- alienation.
  - bourgeoisie.
  - social inequality.
  - organic solidarity.

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 23–24  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

60. In eighteenth-century Great Britain, a series of Enclosure Acts were established by Parliament that broke up small farms, forced many small farmers to move to large cities in search of wage labor, and increased agricultural profits for landowners. Of what large-scale social system was this a part?
- socialism
  - agrarian utopianism
  - feudalism
  - capitalism

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

61. If someone has no way to make money but to sell his or her own labor, then he or she must be a member of what social group?
- bureaucrats
  - proletariat

- c. bourgeoisie
- d. capitalists

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 22  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

62. The Egg McMuffin is a vastly more efficient version of eggs Benedict. Egg McMuffins are cheaper, ready almost instantly at drive-through windows, and can be eaten with one hand while driving. However, they do not improve on the taste of or experience eating eggs Benedict. Max Weber might have described the Egg McMuffin as the \_\_\_\_\_ of breakfast.
- a. iron cage
  - b. alienation
  - c. praxis
  - d. rationalization

ANS: D                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

63. Max Weber believed that as the Industrial Revolution progressed, society became increasingly rationalized. How did he define rationalization?
- a. an increasing number of rules that limit personal freedom
  - b. an increasing emphasis on *verstehen*, or the attempt to understand others' experiences
  - c. the application of psychology to the economy to understand how to increase productivity
  - d. the application of economic logic to all aspects of social life

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

64. Max Weber believed that modern industrialized societies were characterized by which of the following institutions?
- a. churches
  - b. central governments
  - c. bureaucracies
  - d. prisons

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

65. What did Max Weber mean when he said that modern people are trapped in an "iron cage"?
- a. Most aspects of life are increasingly controlled by rigid rules and rationalization.
  - b. More and more people live under totalitarian dictators and therefore lose their basic rights and freedoms.
  - c. Increasingly, modern society has more laws and it uses them to put more people in prison.
  - d. The conditions of modern life create a psychic prison that leaves most people discontent with civilization.

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

66. Max Weber helped lay the groundwork for sociologists who would develop symbolic interactionism as a theory because he believed that a social scientist should approach the study of human action
- a. through a theoretical lens that emphasizes disenchantment and bureaucracy.
  - b. from a value-free point of view.
  - c. with *verstehen* (understanding), which emphasizes empathy with individuals' experiences.
  - d. through psychoanalysis and the work of Sigmund Freud.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

67. What did W. E. B. Du Bois have in common with Harriet Martineau?
- a. Both made careers of studying race and racism.
  - b. Both were from the American South.

- c. Both saw symbolic interactionism as the most promising aspect of social theory.
- d. Both were intrigued by America's democratic promise, but disappointed in its hypocritical injustices.

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 18, 28  
OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree | 1.7 Microsociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

68. Jane Addams was an early advocate of applied sociology. This means that she did not just do research but that she also
- a. reported illegal activities to the proper authorities.
  - b. examined the historical origins of the phenomena she researched.
  - c. addressed social problems through hands-on activity in the communities she researched.
  - d. compared the communities she studied to communities from other cultures.

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 28  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

69. What is the term used to describe sociological research that is intended to solve social problems, such as the research done by Jane Addams?
- a. practical sociology
  - b. postmodern sociology
  - c. moral sociology
  - d. applied sociology

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 28  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

70. Although she made contributions to sociology, Jane Addams is perhaps best remembered for her embrace of praxis, which means that she
- a. was a pragmatist.
  - b. acted on her intellectual convictions in practical ways.
  - c. applied dialectics to her understanding of history.
  - d. embraced conflict theory.

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 28  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

71. What school of social theory believes that society is a stable system of structures, which contribute to the equilibrium of the whole?
- a. symbolic interactionism
  - b. dramaturgy
  - c. structural functionalism
  - d. conflict theory

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 19–21  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

72. Critical race theory is associated with which of the major theoretical perspectives or schools of thought in sociology?
- a. structural functionalism
  - b. conflict theory
  - c. functional theory
  - d. symbolic interactionism

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 24  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

73. Structural functionalist theory is concerned with the ways in which structures contribute to the stability of society. What is a structure?
- a. a social institution that is stable over time and helps meet the needs of society
  - b. any aspect of society that generates conflict or change

- c. a class hierarchy
- d. an informal agreement between people over a wide geographical area

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 20  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

74. According to Robert Merton, which of these statements about manifest functions is true?
- a. Manifest functions usually have something to do with social conflict and change.
  - b. Manifest functions are intended and obvious.
  - c. Manifest functions are designed to alleviate inequality.
  - d. Manifest functions are designed to critique the social system that produced them.

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 21  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

75. Which of the following is a latent function of the educational system in the United States?
- a. teaching reading and writing
  - b. keeping children out of trouble while parents are at work
  - c. preparing a modern workforce to use technology
  - d. teaching new immigrants about American values and history

ANS: B                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 21  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

76. Which of the following is the most serious critique of structural functionalism?
- a. It tends to argue that intellectuals should act on what they believe.
  - b. It overemphasizes the importance of the economy.
  - c. It fails to provide a universal social theory.
  - d. It tends to argue that any social feature that exists must serve a function.

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 21  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

77. Which of the following theories views society as a whole unit made up of interrelated parts that work together?
- a. structural functionalism
  - b. conflict theory
  - c. symbolic interactionism
  - d. postmodernism

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 19  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

78. Some Marxists believe that conflict between small merchants and the nobility led to the creation of modern capitalism, which was distinct from either of the opposing forces. What would Marx call this model of historical change?
- a. a critical model
  - b. a dialectical model
  - c. a class consciousness model
  - d. a nihilist model

ANS: B                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 23  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

79. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Karl Marx argued that “the philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it.” What Marxist principle is defined by this quote?
- a. *verstehen*
  - b. rationalization
  - c. praxis
  - d. conflict

ANS: C                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 24–25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

80. Which of the following theories focuses on how our behaviors are dependent on the ways we interpret, make sense of, and define ourselves, others, and social situations?

- a. conflict theory
- b. symbolic interactionism
- c. pragmatism
- d. structural functionalism

ANS: B                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 25–29  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

81. Which social theory focuses on micro-level interactions?

- a. symbolic interactionism
- b. structural functionalism
- c. conflict theory
- d. pragmatism

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 29  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

82. According to symbolic interactionism, what is the relationship between the self and society?

- a. The development of a sense of self is guided by society.
- b. The self is shaped by society, but society is also shaped by the self.
- c. Both the self and society are created by the course of history.
- d. Both the self and society are shaped by larger external forces.

ANS: B                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 25–29  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Understanding

83. The theory of symbolic interactionism was developed by

- a. the Chicago School of sociology.
- b. the French positivists.
- c. structural functionalists.
- d. queer theorists.

ANS: A                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Page 28  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

84. Symbolic interactionism argues that people act toward things on the basis of their meaning. According to this perspective, how does meaning arise?

- a. Meaning is inherent in objects and actions.
- b. Meaning is learned through the study of philosophy and history.
- c. Meaning is negotiated through interaction with others.
- d. Meaning is learned through the study of science and nature.

ANS: C                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Pages 25–29  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

85. A dishonest judge must pretend to be an honest judge, but even an honest judge must play the role of “honest judge” for an audience in order to interact and work with others effectively. This performance is an example of what theoretical perspective?

- a. structural functionalism
- b. dramaturgy
- c. ethnomethodology
- d. conflict theory

ANS: B                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 30  
OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

86. What is the link between feminist theory and conflict theory?

- a. They both see the economy as central to the functioning of society.
- b. They both seek to not only understand inequality but also to remedy it.

- c. They both see gender as the most important aspect of social identity.
- d. They both were developed at about the same time.

ANS: B                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 21–22, 24–25  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

87. Why is the term “queer” used to describe queer theory?
- a. It emphasizes that some people are born with a fixed orientation and cannot change it.
  - b. It emphasizes the importance of difference and rejects a single gay or lesbian identity.
  - c. It is an easily definable category.
  - d. It has a long history of use within the gay and lesbian community.

ANS: B                      DIF: Difficult                      REF: Page 24  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Applying

88. What is a sociologist’s theoretical perspective if he or she argues we have seen the “dissolution of master narratives or metanarratives”?
- a. feminist theory
  - b. conflict theory
  - c. structural functionalism
  - d. postmodernism

ANS: D                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 23–24  
 OBJ: 1.8 New Theoretical Approaches                      MSC: Applying

89. The application of economic logic to human activity is known as
- a. Weberian theory.
  - b. critical theory.
  - c. class consciousness.
  - d. social Darwinism.

ANS: A                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 25  
 OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

90. Sarah believes that thanks to the ability of science and technology to create progress, problems will be solved and life will improve. Sarah would best be described as a
- a. Marxist.
  - b. positivist.
  - c. modernist.
  - d. postmodernist.

ANS: C                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 33  
 OBJ: 1.8 New Theoretical Approaches                      MSC: Applying

91. Postmodernists are interested in \_\_\_\_\_, or taking apart and examining stories and theories.
- a. dramaturgy
  - b. praxis
  - c. antitheses
  - d. deconstruction

ANS: D                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 33  
 OBJ: 1.8 New Theoretical Approaches                      MSC: Remembering

## TRUE/FALSE

1. C. Wright Mills described a process by which biography (individual lives) and history (larger social forces) are related. He argued that this process works in two ways: individual lives influence society, while society also influences individuals.

ANS: T                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 13  
 OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                      MSC: Remembering



2. A sociologist's responsibility is to question everything the everyday person would take for granted.

ANS: T                      DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 9–10  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective                      MSC: Remembering

3. There is only one correct theoretical explanation for any particular social phenomenon.

ANS: F                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 14–16  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology                      MSC: Remembering

4. The writings of Émile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber were deeply influenced by their life experiences.

ANS: T                      DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 19, 22, 24  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Remembering

## SHORT ANSWER

1. Émile Durkheim's pioneering study *Suicide* used statistical data to look for correlations between demographic variables and suicide. In what ways is his work compatible with Auguste Comte's ideas about how society should be studied?

ANS:

When he conducted his infamous suicide study in 1897, Durkheim used Comte's theory of positivism in the manner Comte intended. Positivism was a concrete form of social research that suggested social life could be studied in a manner comparable to the hard sciences.

DIF: Moderate                      REF: Pages 18–19  
OBJ: 1.5 Sociology's Family Tree | 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

2. In what ways does queer theory suggest that no category of sexual identity is fundamentally deviant or normal?

ANS:

According to queer theory, sexuality is a social construct. Therefore, it is fluid and is viewed differently according to the social structure of the time period. Because these views are constantly changing, conventional dichotomies of gay and straight are limited in defining human sexual preferences and sexual involvement.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Page 24                      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Remembering

3. How is hip-hop music an example of a postmodern art form?

ANS:

Hip-hop uses several genres of music, such as reggae and rock, and it overlays beats and words to create new sounds from old, established musical forms.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 33–34                      OBJ: 1.8 New Theoretical Approaches  
MSC: Applying

4. According to conflict theory, how do most major social institutions remain integrated into the economy and therefore reinforce the class structure?

ANS:

Conflict theorists believe that the capitalist system of for-profit businesses causes mass poverty and class division. Karl Marx argued that capitalism, which emerged during the Industrial Revolution, enabled the owners of the means of production (the bourgeoisie) to exploit the masses of workers (the proletariat), creating an inherently unequal system of social class. Also, false consciousness can lead oppressed people to accept inequality and not challenge their position in the class structure.

DIF: Moderate      REF: Pages 21–24      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

5. Why do structural functionalists argue that dysfunction tends to create social change?

ANS:

When one structure of society encounters a disruption, there is a ripple effect across all social structures. This leads to the need for social change so that social systems may restore balance. For example, if a country goes to war, there will be a deficit in the economy. As a result, money available for education decreases as tax dollars are given to the military; soldiers die, resulting in single-parent, single-income households; and people begin to struggle with their religious beliefs, reducing involvement in the volunteer structure of communities. The system will fight for equilibrium and will eventually function, albeit in a different manner than it did before the war.

DIF: Moderate      REF: Pages 20–21      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

6. How does taking the sociological perspective enable sociologists to understand human life in society?

ANS:

Taking the sociological perspective enables sociologists to view the world through a beginner's mind. By eliminating their personal experiences, opinions, and biases, they are able to learn about the familiar world in new ways.

DIF: Easy      REF: Page 10      OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective  
MSC: Remembering

7. What are we failing to see, according to C. Wright Mills, when we think of our personal problems as character flaws?

ANS:

Mills argued that we need to view our personal problems through the larger perspective of how they are related to the social structure in which we live and the historical context of our society.

DIF: Moderate      REF: Page 13      OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective  
MSC: Applying

8. What are the advantages of midrange theory?

ANS:

Midrange theory merges micro and macro levels of analysis. This approach to theorizing makes sociological research more feasible because it does not simply rely on the polarities of small- and large-scale analyses.

DIF: Easy      REF: Pages 33–34      OBJ: 1.8 New Theoretical Approaches  
MSC: Remembering

9. According to Erving Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, why might you dress differently for a date than you would for a sociology class?

ANS:

Goffman believed that the self is created through our interactions with other people and how we present ourselves changes depending on the social context. Because a sociology class is an informal social setting, you can wear casual attire without paying heed to your hair and/or makeup. On the other hand, your clothing and grooming choices for a date would be significantly different. In this case, you would want to make a good impression, so you would present yourself in a way that emphasizes your positive personal qualities.

DIF: Easy      REF: Page 29      OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

10. Describe the three main theoretical perspectives of macrosociology and name at least one theorist for each perspective.

ANS:

Conflict theory, which emphasizes social inequality as the basic characteristic of society, developed out of the work of Karl Marx. Structural functionalism looks at society as a unified whole that needs separate structures to function. Robert Merton, a well-known sociologist who developed strain theory, would be considered a structural functionalist. Weberian theory, which derives its name from Max Weber, studied the process of rationalization and bureaucracies.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 19–25      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Remembering

## ESSAY

1. The sociological perspective, as a way of thinking about the world, includes the concepts of sociological imagination from C. Wright Mills, beginner's mind from Bernard McGrane, and culture shock from anthropology. Define each concept in your own words and then explain what all three of these concepts have in common.

ANS:

Social imagination is about looking for connections between the personal and the social. Beginner's mind is a technique for ignoring old knowledge in order to find new ways of seeing the world. Culture shock is a way of seeing things as if we had never seen them before. All three concepts advocate ways of thinking that help us clear away preconceptions that may be blocking us from seeing and understanding things that are directly in front of us. They all help us achieve a sociological perspective.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 10–13      OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective  
MSC: Understanding

2. Consider the contrast between practical knowledge and scientific knowledge. Describe an activity or social phenomenon of which you have practical knowledge and then list the steps you might take to develop scientific knowledge of it. Describe how your knowledge might change as you develop this scientific approach to the subject and demonstrate that you understand the difference between the two types of knowledge.

ANS:

Any answer should demonstrate knowledge of some everyday activity the student can use in a functional way but about which he or she does not have completely coherent, excruciatingly clear, consistent, or complete knowledge. Examples of ways to develop scientific knowledge could include schools, bookstores, libraries, or some other source of learning.

DIF: Moderate              REF: Page 9              OBJ: 1.1 Practical vs. Scientific Knowledge  
MSC: Remembering

3. Sociologists often have to decide if they are going to adopt a microsociological or macrosociological approach in any given project. Explain how these perspectives differ, paying special attention to the different assumptions about how society works that are contained within each perspective. In other words, considering the starting point of each perspective, what do they seek to reveal?

ANS:

Microsociology focuses on the interactions between individuals, whereas macrosociology examines large-scale social structures. Microsociologists tend to think that individual-level interactions create the larger patterns, processes, and institutions of society. Macrosociologists tend to assume that large social structures create the context and conditions within which individuals act.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 14–16  
OBJ: 1.4 Levels of Analysis: Micro- and Macrosociology              MSC: Understanding

4. Compare and contrast conflict theory with structural functionalism. Pay special attention to the way each theory treats the origin of social change.

ANS:

Structural functionalism begins with the study of structures identified as social institutions. Any answer should emphasize that society is a stable, ordered system of interrelated parts or structures and that each structure has a function that contributes to the continued stability or equilibrium of the whole.

Conflict theory treats social conflict as the basis of society and suggests that disagreements over values and beliefs actually reflect struggles over resources and power. Conflict theory emphasizes a materialist view of society based on the economy, a critical stance toward the status quo, and a dynamic model of historical change. Conflict theorists see social change as the inevitable consequence of the struggle over resources.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 19–24      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Analyzing

5. Symbolic interactionism is a micro-level approach to sociology. It sees face-to-face interactions as the building blocks of larger social institutions. Describe how individuals interacting with each other can produce larger social institutions. Pick an example and describe how specific social acts can, when repeated by many people, create large-scale social structures.

ANS:

The textbook uses the example of the meaning of a tree to demonstrate the relationship between “meaning” and “interaction.” The key point is that society and the self are twinborn—social structures that only exist because they are created through individual action.

DIF: Moderate                REF: Pages 25–30      OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory  
MSC: Analyzing

6. According to symbolic interactionism, describe how meaningful reality is created.

ANS:

The textbook uses the example of how a tree can mean different things to different people in different social situations. We act toward things on the basis of their meaning, which is not inherent in the things themselves but is negotiated through interaction and can change or be modified over time. This demonstrates that meaningful reality is created through interaction.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 25–30      OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

7. Classical sociological theory arose in the nineteenth century in the aftermath of the American and French revolutions and during the Industrial Revolution. Summarize how the theories of Karl Marx, Émile Durkheim, and Max Weber all reflect a concern for the consequences of modern life.

ANS:

The textbook describes several concepts from each theorist that relate directly to the problems of modern life. Marx focused on the alienation and social inequality created by the rise of urban capitalism and on how false consciousness and ideology contributed to the oppression of the working classes. Weber was concerned about how the shift to a modern industrialized society resulted in disenchantment with the world as well as the “iron cage” of bureaucratic rules. Durkheim theorized that anomie, or normlessness resulting from social disconnection, was a consequence of the transition from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity.

DIF: Moderate                REF: Pages 19–20, 21–23, 24–25  
OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory                      MSC: Analyzing

8. Structural functionalism attempts to explain the social world by examining social structures, which perform functions that contribute to the stability of society as a whole. What are some of the types of functions that social structures can perform?

ANS:

The textbook examines two ways of categorizing functions. First, Talcott Parsons proposed that social structures can fulfill such functions as helping us adapt to our environment and providing us with opportunities to realize goals. They also contribute to the equilibrium of society by increasing social cohesion and maintaining cultural patterns. Second, Robert Merton theorized that functions performed by social structures can be either manifest (intended) or latent (unintended).

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 19–21      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Remembering

9. According to Karl Marx, what is the relationship between the economy and other parts of society including intellectual, religious, and political life?

ANS:

Marx argued that because the ruling class controls the economy, it controls the rest of society as well. Therefore, he argued that the dominant ideology justifies and benefits those who own the means of production, religion is used by the ruling class to create false consciousness and perpetuate oppression of the working class, and the prevailing ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. Answers might also explain the distinction between false consciousness (a denial of the truth about the real circumstances in which one lives) and class consciousness, which is an understanding of the economic exploitation inherent in capitalism.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 21–23      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Analyzing

10. Describe the sociological theories that developed from symbolic interactionism. What do they have in common and how do they further the perspective?

ANS:

There are three offshoots of symbolic interactionism described in the textbook: Erving Goffman's theory of dramaturgy, Harold Garfinkel's theory of ethnomethodology, and the theory of conversation analysis. Each theory emphasizes "social acts rather than social facts," demonstrating that larger social institutions are constantly made and remade through individual actions and interactions. They expand on the original ideas of symbolic interactionists by reinforcing specific aspects of culture as meaningful and important in the formation of society.

DIF: Moderate              REF: Page 29              OBJ: 1.7 Microsociological Theory  
MSC: Remembering

11. Describe the main features of postmodern social theory and explain both positive and negative reactions to postmodernism.

ANS:

In postmodern theory, social reality is diverse, pluralistic, and constantly in flux. In postmodernism, there are no absolutes—no claims to truth, reason, right, order, or stability. Everything is therefore relative—fragmented, temporary, situational, provisional, and contingent. Postmodernists believe that certainty is illusory and they prefer to explore the possibilities created by fluidity, complexity, multidimensionality, and even nonsense. They propose that there is no constant or universal human truth from which we can know or interpret the meaning of existence.

For proponents, postmodernism can be celebrated as a liberating influence that can rescue us from the stifling effects of rationality, essentialism, and tradition. For opponents, it can be condemned as a detrimental influence that can imprison us in a world of relativity, nihilism, and chaos.

DIF: Easy                      REF: Pages 33–34      OBJ: 1.8 New Theoretical Approaches  
MSC: Understanding

12. If you were feeling very generous to shoe manufacturers, you might argue that the manifest function of the production of newer and more expensive athletic shoes is to increase athletic performance. For a moment, let's not be generous. Explain another manifest function of the appearance of new athletic shoes and at least two latent functions.

ANS:

A manifest function is the obvious, intended function of a social structure, whereas a latent function is the less obvious and sometimes unintentional function. In this case, the obvious manifest function would be to increase revenue for makers of athletic apparel. The latent functions might include increased jealousy and competition among teenagers, violence and muggings in order to obtain shoes, teenage boys showing increased fashion consciousness, and the creation of a subculture that bonds over its interest in shoes.

DIF: Difficult      REF: Page 21      OBJ: 1.6 Macrosociological Theory  
MSC: Applying

13. Identify and describe the most essential elements of the theories of the classical sociological thinkers—Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. How do their visions of modernity differ?

ANS:

Marx's conflict theory centers on alienation (the sense of dissatisfaction workers feel when they are producing goods that are controlled by someone else). Durkheim's theory of structural functionalism focuses on anomie (the loss of norms and purpose that results from weaker social ties and an increased pace of change). Weberian theory emphasizes that modern industrialized society controls our lives through rigid rules and rationalization, trapping us in a so-called iron cage of bureaucracy.

DIF: Difficult      REF: Pages 19–20, 21–23, 24–25  
OBJ: 1.3 The Sociological Perspective      MSC: Analyzing