

### Midterm Examination Prep Sheet

**Rules of the Game:** The midterm examination for this course will take place on **Weds Oct 6/2004 from 3pm to 415pm**. Should you be unable to take the exam on the given date and time, you **must** contact me no later than 24hr in advance and provide me with a reasonable excuse and sufficient evidence. If you do not contact me 24hr in advance and arrange an alternate exam format, **you will receive a zero on the exam and cannot pass the course.**

**The Format:** For this exam, you will need the following materials with you at the start of class; no other materials, including course books, will be permitted.

- At least two (2) and preferably three (3) blue books – these are available at the bookstore and other convenience stores on campus;
- Two blue or black pens – no exam written in pencil will be graded;
- And one 8 ½" by 11" (letter size) sheet of paper, on which you can write notes for this exam.

Your sheet of notes can be double-sided, and can contain notes (including page citations) in preparation for the questions listed below. You cannot, however, write out the entire essay or concept identification question; if you do, each question for which you have written the entire response will receive a zero. **Your sheet of notes must contain page citations for any material that comes from a course text, and your responses for the questions on the exam must include page citations where appropriate; failure to include citations to all sources used in a response will result in a full letter grade deduction per question where the problem appears.**

At the end of the exam, you will submit the blue books, the exam sheet, and your sheet of notes. No credit will be given for anything not written in the blue books, but at least I'll be able to see where you were heading in the event you run out of time.

**The Details:** The midterm exam will ask you responses to two essay questions. One of these will be a required question that everyone will respond to; the other response will be to your choice of two questions. All questions that can appear on the exam are presented here for your preparation.

Your responses should be an argument that clearly addresses the "big question" posed to you, one that clearly demonstrates the entire thought process that went into the development of that argument and ways in which you are utilizing the course materials to support the claims you are making. You need to have adequate textual support for your responses, so think of these as short "Schaffer papers." (You should refer to the "How to Write a Schaffer Paper" handout in preparing for this examination; it is available on the course web site and on Blackboard.) You need to utilize this format when citing the texts: **(Author Year: Page) or (Author, Page).**

The film clip will take approximately 10 minutes to view; therefore, you should allow yourself about 30-35 minutes to write each essay. Your essay responses should be approximately 3-6 "blue book" pages. I will announce the time remaining when there are 30, 15, and 5 minutes left in the exam.

Good luck, and happy preparing...

**The Exam Questions:** All the questions listed below are fair game for this exam. Question 1 will *definitely* appear on the exam, though you will not know which of the film clips mentioned below will be shown in class for your analysis. Two of the remaining three questions will appear on the exam, and you will choose one for your response. **The question to which you must directly respond in your thesis statement is in boldface.** Please note: The numbers of questions 2 and 3 on the exam – the two you get to choose from – will *not* be the same as they are here. Hence, when you're preparing your notes for the exam, be sure to include some hint as to what the question is about. Essays that respond to the wrong question will receive a zero.

**Everyone will respond to Question 1.**

1. The point of understanding a theorist's analytic framework is to be able to use it to analyze other social phenomena. After outlining and discussing the appropriate elements of Weber's analytic framework (including concepts and criteria for recognizing those concepts), use that framework to evaluate what's going on in one of the film clips listed below, making sure to clearly demonstrate both how it is you have come to that evaluation and how it is what you're viewing meets the conceptual criteria discussed in your essay. Then, use this discussion and evidence to respond to this question: **In what ways does this film portray the dangers highlighted by Weber's discussion of the development of modernity, and what might Weber say about how we should avoid these dangers?**

Film clips that are fair game for this question include the following; one will be shown in class as a refresher for you:

- The first "Two Bobs" scenes from *Office Space*, including the evaluation of Peterman (the main character) and Milton
- The closing scenes from *Trainspotting*, including Ren's theft of the heroin money, his leaving of some of it for Spud, and the "Choose Life" voiceover
- The "Mr Anderson" scenes from *The Matrix* – from when he is chewed out by his boss to when his mouth is sealed by Agent Smith

**Two of these three questions will appear on the exam; you will choose one of them for your response.**

2. Weber's discussion of the uses of rationalization in the transition from the Protestant ethic to the spirit of capitalism and in the development of bureaucracy reflect a tension in his thought about the degree of agency we have in the social order. After discussing Sewell's notion of agency and developing criteria for recognizing it, identify the extent to which agency appears (or does not appear) in Weber's discussion of the uses of rationalization and the tensions between the two. Then, use that discussion to answer this question: **To what extent do you see the increasing rationalization of society as enhancing our agency or depriving us of it, and why?**

3. Describe the ways in which there are similarities between the descriptions Weber gives of the processes of the transition from the Protestant ethic to the spirit of capitalism, the development of formal rational law, and the development of modern rational bureaucracies. **To what extent would you say that these all result from similar changes in one particular element of Weber's analytic framework, and why?**

4. Outline the *complete* analytic framework Weber develops to understand the intricacies of social action, being sure to highlight the ways in which each element of the framework operates at a particular level of analysis. Then, using that framework, outline the overall path of Weber's critique of modern society, being sure to show how that critique derives from his analytic framework. Then, respond to this question: **How would Weber's prescriptive social theory**

**derive from his analytic framework, and what kind of social action and social relationships do you think would result from those kinds of changes?**

**A final note:**

This exam is all about your preparation for it. The questions are challenging, but given enough time and dedication thought about them (and given that you've already read all the material), you can do what these questions are asking you to do. A few hints:

**Spend time on this:** You should probably spend at least 30 minutes to an hour each day on your preparation for this exam. If you do that, you should be well prepared for this exercise.

**Start with the stuff you know:** Look through the entire prep sheet and figure out what you can easily handle preparing at this point in time. Take care of that first, and then move on to the questions that are tougher for you.

**Break the questions down:** For all of the questions, break them into sections or elements that need to be addressed. This is partly done for you by listing the steps you need to go through to fully and completely address the question. Make sure you address all the elements of each of the different questions.

**Prepare good notes:** If your exam notes are sloppy, incomplete, or unreadable, you'll freak out on exam day. Make sure that *you* know what's on your notes and can go through it rather easily.

**Ask questions:** If you're having problems or can't figure out if you're on the right track with your response, *ask me*. I am more than happy to take a look at drafts of your work, but will only do so up until 48 hours before the exam (in other words, Mon 6pm). After that time, I cannot guarantee that I will be able to get you feedback on your work. You should also ask questions during the midterm exam prep session on Monday in class; that session will be governed entirely by your questions, so as long as you have them, we'll keep going.

**Get a good night's sleep:** If you don't, you'll freak out, and none of this will matter anyway. Be sure to take care of your body, and you'll get through this in fine form. That means **no cramming**.