

Essay 2

Respond to one of the following prompts. Essays should be double spaced and 5-7 pages long. Hard copies are due in class Wednesday, November 23. Late essays will be penalized 1/3 grade per day late. *Essays must be submitted to turnitin.com before being handed in.* Section IDs and enrollment passwords for turnitin.com are the same as on the first essay. If you've forgotten, the information is available from your TA.

1. Write a thesis-based essay agreeing with, disagreeing with, or modifying the following statement:

Max Weber's effort to understand the "internal characteristics" (*Protestant Ethic*, p. 4) of social groups, and his corresponding attempt to understand these groups as they understood themselves (*Verstehen*), adds nothing to sociology as an objective science and is therefore without merit.

- Considering Marx on the question of what it means to study society scientifically may be helpful when responding to this prompt.
2. Weber famously characterizes economic rationalism as "a shell as hard as steel" from which the spirit has fled (*Protestant Ethic*, p. 121). What does he mean by this, and what does he believe to have been lost? How and why has this loss taken place, and what does Weber believe to be its implications for modern society?
 - Suggested texts: *The Protestant Ethic & the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, "Science as a Vocation," "Politics as a Vocation"
 3. What is the relationship between ideas and the development of society in the thought of Max Weber? Does one cause the other, or is the relationship more complex than that?
 - Suggested texts: *The Protestant Ethic & the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, "Structures of Power," "Class, Status, Party," "The Social Psychology of the World Religions"
 4. Weber argues that the spread of bureaucratization is a part of the historical process of rationalization and disenchantment. He also identifies three sources of political authority: tradition, charisma, and statutes (rational/legal). What is the relationship between each of these sources and the process of bureaucratization? What concerns Weber about this process?
 - Suggested texts: *The Protestant Ethic & the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, "Politics as a Vocation," "Bureaucracy," "The Sociology of Charismatic Authority," "The Social Psychology of the World Religions"