Study Guide Exam #1

1. Social Construction of Reality.

a. What are the new factors that have shaped the discipline of the social construction of reality?

b. What does the claim mean that we live in a socially constructed world? Why is it important to understand the “world” this way?

2. The Great Transformation: Feudalism.

a. What are the main characteristics of the Feudal world view?

b. Why and in what ways was the Catholic Church the dominant institution?

c. How were the political and economic systems structured in Feudalism?

d. The concept of the individual and the market system did not exist in Feudalism. Why?

3. The Great Transformation: Modernity.

a. What are the main characteristics of the modern world view? How do they differ from the feudal world view? Why is this difference important to the claim that modernity is a socially constructed phenomenon?

b. How are the institutions in modernity structured? How different from the structure of feudal institutions. Why do I emphasize “new words”?

4. The Social Construction of the Free Market System.

a. What are the claims about the free market?

b. How did the forcible, violent and illegal destruction of the feudal economy, the newly emerging capitalist state, colonialism, public education, and technology create the free market system?

c. How did philosophy, social theory, economic theory, and religion serve as ideological justifications for the free market system?

5. The Social Construction of the Corporation

a. What were the constraints on corporations prior to the Civil War?

b. What were the judicial rulings that allowed corporations to escape the early constraints and become the most powerful institutions in our society?

6. The Social Construction of the Individual.

a. What are the conventional wisdoms about the “individual’? The concept of individualism?

b. What were the cultural factors that shaped the concept of the individualism?

c. What were the economic and political factors that created the individual and the concept of individualism?