Collective Behavior: Study Guide #1

1. Collective Behavior: Introduction

a. Three areas of study: subjects of analysis, social context.

b. The Crowd: definition, psychology, participants, symptoms, level of suggestibility.

c. The Public: emergence, definition, social psychology, public and democracy

d. Summary of classical collective behavior theories: theories of social strain.

2. Riots.

a. Classical theory and riots: efinition, characteristics, and examples

b. Contagion and Circular Reaction Theory: assumptions, argument, conclusions.

c. Social order riots: definition and examples.

3. Natural and Man-made disasters

a. Definition, characteristics, and examples.

b. Classical Theory and natural disasters: consequences of extreme social strain.

c. Disaster Research Center studies on collective behavior during natural disasters.

d. Hurricane Katrina: collective behavior and role of media (“Demonizing the Victims”)

4. Fads and crazes

a. Fads: definition, characteristics, examples.

b. What social processes are at work, and what does it reveal about the mass media and collective behavior?

c. Crazes: definition, characteristics, examples.

d. Ghost Dance and Witch Craze.

5. Cults.

a. Definition, characteristics, power of labeling.

b. Examples: People’s Temple Christian Church, Heaven’s Gate

6. Mass Hysteria.

a. Definition and characteristics.

b. The Great Fear: fear(s) and threat(s), social psychology, influence direct and indirect, institutionalization, self-destructive behavior.

7. Genocide.

a. Definition, international law, precedents, examples

b. Social preconditions to genocide: “evil other,” propaganda, economy, war, media.

c. Rwanda and genocide.