INTRODUCTION TO THEORY

Theoretical Paradigms

1. Functionalism (Structural-Functionalism)
   a. Focuses on how social forces maintain stability
   b. Looks at structures of society: culture, family, religion, etc..
   c. Concepts: manifest and latent functions, dysfunctions
   d. Ex: education
   e. Macro
   f. Founders and followers: Conservative, white, men, religious (Durkheim, Merton)

2. Conflict
   a. focuses on competition for resources, winners and losers (inequality)
   b. social forces have “functions” for some people and “dysfunctions” for others
      (race, gender, class, sexuality)
   c. Concepts: power, subordination
   d. Ex. Education—tracking, taxes
   e. Macro
   f. Founders and followers: Marx, social critics, minorities

3. Symbolic Interactionism
   a. Focuses on how everyday interaction between people creates/sustains/changes social forces
   b. How do people experience life/interactions, what influences those experiences and interactions
   c. Concepts: identity, meanings (shared), expectations (roles), values, personality, interaction
   d. Ex. Education — interaction btw. Teacher/student, stage for teacher and student, standardized testing
   e. Micro
   f. Founders and followers: social psychologists (Weber, Mead, Goffman)

Usually you blend these three paradigmns together

   Ex. Feminist theories/scholarship

What theories would ask the following kinds of questions? (from page 15, Society: The Basics, Macionis)
1. How is society integrated?
2. What are the major parts of society?
3. How is society divided?
4. What inequalities exist?
5. How do people experience ____?
6. How do people create, sustain, change social patterns/expectations in everyday interaction?