D. Social Construction:
1. Types of Societies
   a. Reference Point: Food
      Development of social institutions coincides with the introduction of food production. Essentially four different "subsistence strategies" have provided humans with our most basic resource: FOOD.
   
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. Food Collection</td>
<td>(~ 10 kya → present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Pastoralism</td>
<td>(~ 10 kya → present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Farming</td>
<td>(~ 8 kya → present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Industrial</td>
<td>(~ 1800 BCE → present)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Social Construction and Theory
Types of Societies
1. Reference Point: The Industrial Age
   Societies are often categorized in relation to their acceptance of industrialism, or the idea that the application of science to create technologies that transform labor is valued.
   a. Pre-industrial society: Hunter-Gatherer, Pastoralism, Horticulture / Agriculture
      - The notion of industrialization has not arisen in these societies. Much time is spent producing food using human and animal labor as energy sources.
   b. Industrial society – Factory-based, market-based
      - Acceptance of industry and social changes that go along with it. Manufacturing a strong sector of the economy.
   c. Post-industrial society – Service/Information-based
      - Machinery and technology fully integrated into society
      - Energy production and food production become equally important in industrial societies.
      - Post-industrial societies are sophisticated enough not to rely on internal production, but are truly globalized societies. Strong service sector of the economy.
D. Social Construction

Many sociologists believe that our social lives are constructed. The building blocks of the social construction are our statuses and roles.

2. STATUS vs. ROLE

a. Status:
   A recognized social position that an individual occupies. Status is passive and static. Status exists in our mind as an IDEA.

i. Status Set:
   All possible statuses that a person can move between over time; for example,
D. Social Construction

2.a.ii. Types of Status

1. Ascribed status: involuntary positions
   for example,
   - male or female (sex), skin color (race), daughter or son (family relation)

2. Achieved status: voluntary positions
   for example,
   - college student/professor, athlete, officer, criminal

Note that the two types of status work together: what we are ascribed often helps/hinders us to achieve other statuses.

3. Master Status: A status of particular importance to others in defining actors.

D.2.b. Social Roles

By our nature, we imitate and we learn from our institutional interactions our social ROLES, or social behaviors ACTUALLY performed by individuals.

BEHAVIOR = ACTION

The word and concept (originally French, rôle) borrows from the field of theater, “acting” on the “stage of life,” so to speak.

Questions:
- What role are you “playing” now? What are its expected behaviors?
- What other roles have you “played” in your life?
- Are you always aware of the roles you are playing?

The Dimensions of Social Space

Activity/Behavior at XYZ = Role

(e.g., x15 y59 z82 = “Friend” = loyal, honest, sharing, listening, etc.)
2. c. Role Problems: Social roles cause us trouble

i. Role Conflict
Involves conflicts between two or more statuses
For example: (what role do I play?)
Conflicts between role expectations of a police officer who catches her own son selling drugs – mother and police officer.

ii. Role Strain
Involves a strain from a single status
For example: (who should I satisfy?)
Student who tries to balance demands from two professors urging student to study for two different exams on the same day.

iii. Role Exit
(becoming an "ex")
Disengaging from social roles can be traumatic if not properly prepared.
For example:
- Ex-boyfriend or girlfriend, ex-husband or wife, ex-narcoterrorist, ex-convict (criminal), ex-patriate (traitor), etc.

D. Social Construction
Berger and Luckmann, 1966

Note that different cultures offer alternative statuses and roles. The creation of status and role is a SOCIAL PROCESS, culturally defined and difficult to resist, individually.

How we collectively act and react defines the statuses and roles accepted by society.

a. Reality is constructed out of the meanings and values of the observer.

Understanding this allows one to see through the "façade" of society. This has been referred to "Waked Up" by various philosophers and even in modern film.

What is reality? It is a concoction of the material and non-material world, a mixture of sensory information and how we make sense of it:

Our concept of reality is more than mere sensory stimuli – we make sense of the world using the mental tools offered to us by our culture.

b. What we agree is real in society becomes real.

For example, TERRITORY is socially constructed. In what way are the borders between states or countries made "real" if they don't have any geographical or cultural "markers"?

Another example: MONEY is socially constructed. We all agree on a value for the symbol-filled paper that we call "money" – without such agreement, money is worthless (e.g. Germany 1920s: PBS).

A third example: TIME is socially constructed. What we measure as "Time" socially matters (one hour lunches, 50 minute classes, daylight savings time, etc.) does NOT conform to the nature and experience of time (time flies when you're having fun and drags when you're bored). Different cultures have different calendars and different days, weeks, months, etc. (not just different names but different time spans). Clocks and calendars are artifacts of human social construction.

A fourth example: YOU are socially constructed. But you are also Shiva.
D. Social Construction

4. Sociological Perspectives

a. Symbolic-Interaction Theory

Max Weber, (Germany, 1864-1920) and followers

Focus: Social Meaning

- Ideas and Concepts

i. The Work Ethic: The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism sewed together two institutions – economy and religion – to see how the meaning system of each changed the other.

ii. Rational-Legal Society: A rational-legal society is one built around logic, efficiency, and law rather than morality, tradition, and self-determination.

iii. The “irrationality of rationality”: This is seen when rigid routines and strict design lead to a mechanized environment in work or government (“bureaucracy”), leading to a society lacking meaning for the individual, yet one in which the individual is powerless to change it (the “iron cage” of rationality). For example, see Charlie Chaplin’s classic film, “Modern Times.”

b. Social-Conflict Theory

Karl Marx (Germany, 1818-1883) and followers

Focus: Social Power

- Ideas and Concepts

i. Economic condition is at the base of the social order – other institutions are part of the superstructure.

ii. Alienation: the condition in which the individual is isolated and divorced from his or her society, work, or the sense of self. Alienation can exist from:

- Product of labor
- Process of labor
- Self

iii. False consciousness: a condition in which the beliefs, ideals, or ideology of a person are not in the person’s own best interest. Marx believed that capitalism is the creation of two classes that are in conflict (bourgeoisie—owners—versus proletariat—workers).资本家class among workers who are alienated by modern social relations. False consciousness is to have a class consciousness, or the awareness of one’s rank in society.
D. Social Construction

4. Sociological Perspectives
   c. Structural-Functional Theory
      Emile Durkheim (France, 1858-1917) and followers
      Focus: Social Order

   Ideas and Concepts
   i. Manifest function: recognized purpose
      vs. Latent function: unrecognized/unintended
      Ex: Educational Institutions: manifest function = to learn
         latent function = develop social life
   ii. Conscience collective: “the communal beliefs, morals, and attitudes of a society”; leads to social integration
   iii. Mechanical Solidarity: “a type of social order in which there is an intense sharing of morals and values”; preindustrial society
      vs. Organic Solidarity: “social order based around an acceptance of economic and social differences”; industrial society
   iv. Anomie: society no longer has the support of a firm (lit. “without law”) collective consciousness; social disorder

D. Social Construction

4. The social construction of reality
   d. The Thomas Theorem: (from W.I. Thomas, 1931, Chicago School of Sociology)
      “A situation defined as real is real in its consequences.”
      Socially constructed realities have real implications for individuals’ lives and welfare. Ex: violating territory, stealing money

   e. How do we study this "socially constructed reality"? Using ethnomethodology - a technique that involves “breaking the rules”, or norms, to evaluate people's responses.
      For example, riding an elevator backwards, pointing in the air at nothing, or asking for someone’s seat on the subway.
      Q: How do people react? Q: What does this tell you about social norms and their power?

D. Social Construction

Using the Thomas Theorem, we can see that life is a drama played out by individuals reacting to situational definitions.

f. Erving Goffman: The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life
   aka "Dramaturgy":
   - Examines social interaction in terms of theatrical performances
      Shakespeare: “All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players.” (As You Like It)

Dramaturgy involves:
   i. Presentation of self
      - Impression management - making oneself appear in the best light possible;
      - Fronts – the part we play to satisfy our master status
      - Decet – using any means to stabilize the definition of self and situation
   ii. Role performance
      - Real life stage “regions” (front stage, back stage, off stage), use of props, and scripts define social expectations
      Example: Doctor's office – what “regions”, “props” and scripts exist in that social setting?
Social Constructions are more easily seen if you have a sense of RELATIVITY:

Getting Perspective

On the holistic, non-ethnocentric, relative perspective....
...and getting the BIG PICTURE!

Powers of 10

Exponential Notation
Earth = 1.274 x 10^6 = 12,740,000 meters wide
(12.74 million meters)

Cell = 1.274 x 10^-6 = 0.00001276 meters wide
(12.76 millionths of a meter)

NASA's Powers of 10 (YouTube)