

Afternoon Exam.

Write on two of the following questions

Question 5

Wallerstein claims that multiple forms of the labor relation can exist within capitalism, and that these different labor relations define different nations' positions within the world system. Brenner's critiques of Wallerstein's world-systems theory essentially postulates that relations of production, and specifically the wage relation, are definitive of capitalism. Samir Amin identified not simply waged labor, but the relatively rapid rise of wages in Western Europe in the late 19th century, as the basis of unequal exchange. The last four decades, however, have seen the proliferation of the wage relation in many regions that most world-systems analysts would classify as peripheral. Discuss the implications of this proliferation for world-systems theory and for a class-analytical critique of it.

Question 6.

The theory of epochal historical change -- historical materialism -- has long been considered a core element of Marxism. Within this theory, the specific transition from feudalism to capitalism has occupied a particularly important place, since this was the historical transition which provided the greatest amount of empirical evidence. Discuss the debates on the transition from feudalism to capitalism in terms of their bearing on historical materialism. Be sure to discuss the contributions of specific authors.

Question 7.

The labor theory of value has traditionally been viewed as a cornerstone of Marxism as a social theory. More recently, Marxists have tended to either ignore the labor theory of value or explicitly abandon it as an analytical tool. Give a brief description of the traditional Marxist understanding of the labor theory of value and discuss the contemporary critique of these concepts. What implications, if any, does this have for Marxist class analysis.

Question 8.

"Methodological individualism" has often been regarded by Marxists as one of the foundations of "bourgeois" social science. Recently, some scholarship within Marxism has incorporated many of the ideas traditionally associated with micro-individualist analysis, and some people have even argued that methodological individualism as the proper way of formulating micro-foundations for Marxist theory itself. Write an essay in which you define and discuss the central ideas of methodological individualism and analyze their relevance to Marxism. Be sure to discuss the views of specific authors in your analysis.

Question 9.

The relation between class and gender has been at the heart of the dialogue between Marxism and feminism. Take some empirical or historical problem in which the intersection of class and gender figures prominently. Discuss at least two contrasting analyses of this problem which highlight alternative ways of understanding the interaction of class and gender.