Chapter 2-3
Paradigms, Theory, Research, and Ethnicity of Social Research

What are the functions of theory?
- Definition of Theory: A theory is a systematic set of interrelated statements intended to explain some aspect of social life.
- Functions of theory:
  - Prevents "flukes".
  - Make sense of observed patterns in ways that suggest other possibilities.
  - Shapes and directs research efforts.

What is a paradigm?
- A paradigm is a fundamental model or scheme that organizes our view of something.
- Social sciences use a variety of paradigms to organize how they understand and inquire into social life.

What is the difference between macrotheory and microtheory?
- Macrotheory: Theories that focus on society at large or at least on large portions of it.
  - Examples: government fiscal policy, international trade
- Microtheory: Theories that deal with society at the level of individuals and small groups
  - Examples: marriage and divorce behavior, consumer decision-making

What are the major social science paradigms?
- Positivism - assumes we can scientifically discover the rules governing social life.
  - Auguste Comte: societies can be studied and understood logically and rationally.
- Conflict - focuses on attempts of a person or group to dominate and avoid being dominated.
  - Karl Marx: class struggle
- Symbolic interactionism - examines development of shared meanings and social patterns in the course of social interactions.
  - George Herbert Mead: most interactions revolve around the process of individuals reaching a common understanding through language and other symbolic systems.

What are the major social science paradigms (continued)?
- Ethnomethodology - focuses on how people make sense of life while they are living it.
  - One method commonly used is to break the rules to see how people react to that, such as facing the rear of the elevator instead of facing the front.
- Structural functionalism - focuses on the functions the elements of society perform for the whole system of society.
  - Example: the function of the police in the larger society
- Feminist paradigms - examines how previous images of social reality have often come from and reinforced the experiences of men.
  - Example: occupations traditionally dominated by men vs. those by women, and how such occupations offer different wage rates.
What are the two logical systems?
- Deduction: Progress from general principles and theories to specific cases.
- Induction: Proceed from particular cases to general theories.

An example showing deductive methods
- Grades (a) Theory and Hypothesis
- Grades (b) Observations
- Grades (c) Accept or reject hypothesis

An example showing inductive methods
- Grades (a) Observations
- Grades (b) Finding a pattern
- Grades (c) Tentative conclusion

What are the steps of deductive research (hypothesis testing)?
- Literature review of relevant theories and past findings
- Theory and hypothesis
  - Develop theoretical arguments for your study
  - Develop hypotheses based on your theoretical arguments
- Operationalization
  - Measurement of variables
  - Issues related: conceptualization, operationalization, measurement
- Observation
  - Actual collection of data to test the hypotheses
  - Issues related: sampling, mode of observation
- Data analysis
  - Statistical methods - accept or reject the hypotheses

What are the steps of inductive research (grounded theory)?
- Literature review of whatever has been done in the topic area
- Observation
  - Sample, data collection
- Data analysis
  - The main purpose of data analysis here is to find patterns in behavior/attitude
  - Pattern finding and theory construction

What is the wheel of science?
- The wheel of science refers to the interaction between induction and deduction.
What are the ethical issues in social research?

- Voluntary participation - no one should be forced to participate.
- This norm can conflict with the scientific need for generalizability.
- No harm to participants.
- Unless well-informed give consent. For example, some pioneering medical treatments.
- Anonymity and confidentiality.
  - Anonymity: even researchers cannot identify subjects.
  - Confidentiality: researchers promise to keep information about the subjects private by, probably, destroying the records containing such information.
- Deception of the subjects.
  - Deception in research requires very strong justifications. Unless absolutely necessary, deception should not be allowed.

What are the ethical issues in social research (continued)?

- Analysis and reporting.
  - Researchers have the obligation to be truthful in their analysis and should report the results fully and accurately.
- Institutional Review Boards (IRB).
  - Reviews all research proposals to guarantee subjects' rights and interests are protected.
  - Visit U. of U. IRB: [http://www.utah.edu/irb](http://www.utah.edu/irb)
- Professional codes of ethics.
  - Professional associations in several disciplines publish codes of ethics to guide researchers.

Additional Things to Do

- Read Diekmann, Jungbauer-Gans, Krassig, & Lorenz (1996) and Salari & Rich (2002). Again, you are not expected to understand everything in these articles at this point.
- Pay attention to two issues: (1) did they use deductive or inductive approach? And (2) What are the ethical issues involved and how did the researchers deal with them?