

SOC116: History of Sociological Thought

Dan Ryan

Leading Questions: Emile Durkheim's *Suicide*

1. What is the basic gist of the investigation that makes *Suicide* the paradigmatic example of sociological research?
2. What empirical relationship between suicide rates and economics does Durkheim make note of?
3. Do suicides simply increase with economic hardship and decrease when the pressure lets up?
4. What pattern does Durkheim observe in relation between international expositions and suicide?
5. What is Durkheim's conclusion about suicide and economics?
6. Consider "a dim perception, in the moral consciousness of societies, of the respective value of different social services. ..." (113b8). What is Durkheim referring to here?
7. Even if economic inheritance were eliminated and so everyone started out with the same material advantages, "a moral discipline would therefore still be required to make those less favored by nature accept the lesser advantages" (115a2). Explain.
8. Durkheim keeps saying "for this to be effective, it must be considered just" and "to be effective, it must have the power to dominate individuals." What's he getting at?
9. Insight at 115a9-b2. Explicate.
10. Reading page 116, what is "anomy"?
11. So, summarize "anomic suicide."
12. What's the author up to in the last section?