I. ALTERNATIVE CLASS CONCEPTS: If “class” is the answer, what is the question?

1. Class as Subjective location. How do people classify themselves in the system of social stratification?

2. Class as Distributional Location. How are people located objectively in distributions of material inequality?

3. Class as Empirical Summary of Stratification. To what extent do the different empirical dimensions of social inequality coincide in ways which constitute empirically distinguishable groups?

4. Class as Market-Opportunity structure. What determines the basic life chances of individuals in a market society?

5. Class as the basis for economic conflict. What forms of conflict are most systematically linked to the social organization of production?

6. Class as Historical Variation. How should we characterize and explain the variations across history in the social organization of inequalities?

7. Class and social emancipation What sorts of transformations are needed to eliminate economic oppression and exploitation within capitalist societies?

II. THE CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF MARXIST CONCEPT OF CLASS:
A Step-by-step guide

Step 1. Relational vs. gradational concepts
- explain what a relation is

Step 2. What kind of relations constitute “class” relations?
- Class relations vs gender relations vs race relations vs friendship relations

Step 2a. The concept of relations of production:
- Assets have to be deployed in production – tools, raw materials
- deployment can be described in technical terms: a production function
- relational terms: rights and powers of actors
- note: power and rights over things = relations between people

Step 2b. Class relations as a form of production relations: when these rights and powers are unequally distributed.
Step 3. Variations in class relations
- key idea = qualitatively different kinds of relations
- of course also quantitative variation: gap between rich & poor can be big or little
- qualitative variation is more crucial: what can be owned
- consider slavery: people can be owned
- pure slavery = absolute property rights in people; feudalism = joint ownership in the labor resource of the peasant by lord and serf

Step 4. Class locations within class relations
- the places occupied by people
- simple polarization → two categories within every relation
- we will see that there are lots of complications

Step 5. Micro- and Macro-class analysis
- macro-concept = class structure: the totality of all the class relations within some unit of analysis = its class structure – class structures of countries, of cities, of corporations, of the world
- micro = impact on the lives of persons within relations via two primary processes – experiences & interests. Experiences refers to things that happen to you because you are in a class location; interests to what you have to do to meet your material needs because of your class position.

Step 6. The Explanatory Claims: The fundamental theses of class analysis
- What you have determines what you get and
- What you have determines what you have to do to get what you get.
- What you have to do to get what you get determines whose interests are opposed to your interests

Step 7. Marxist class analysis: the specificity of class mechanisms

Exploitation: a way of talking about how the interests of people within class relations are antagonist

Domination: a way of talking about control over activities. You can have domination without exploitation, but exploitation always entails at least indirect domination.
III. CLASS AS A CRITICAL CONCEPT

Within Marxism, the analysis of the effects of class in capitalism is always from the point of view of the abolition of capitalist class relations.

IV. A REPERTOIRE OF CLASS CONCEPTS

1. Class structure.
2. Class Interests.
3. Class formation.
4. Class capacities.
5. Class practices.
6. Class struggle.
7. Class consciousness.