

I. WHAT IS A THEORY OF HISTORY? WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR “HISTORY” TO BE AN OBJECT OF THEORY?

1. Negative answer: history as such is not a legitimate object of scientific theory
2. Positive answer: the overall trajectory of history can be explained
3. Contrast: historical materialism vs cosmology, evolutionary biology, individual organisms
4. Why Bother? *Historical Materialism is, above all, a theory of the history of future.*

II. THE GENERAL THEORY OF HISTORICAL MATERIALISM & THE SPECIAL THEORY OF CAPITALIST HISTORY

1. What precisely is the *explanandum* of the General Theory?
2. The core intuition of the General Theory

III. FUNCTIONAL EXPLANATIONS IN GENERAL

1. The basic logic of Cohen’s Reconstruction of Historical Materialism
 - #1. The forces of production *functionally explain* the relations of production, and
 - #2. The relations of production *functionally explain* the superstructures.
2. The structure of functional explanations: review from earlier lecture
3. Functional vs intentional explanation (reprise)
- 4 Functional explanation & functional description
- 5 Functional explanations vs epiphenomal attributions

IV. Functional explanations in HM

1a. the level of development of the productive forces in a society explains the nature of its economic structure.	1b. The economic structure of a society has the effect of furthering the development of the productive forces
2a. The economic structure explains the nature of its superstructure.	2b. The superstructure of a society is has the effect of contributing to the stability of the economic structure

V. TECHNOLOGICAL DETERMINISM IN THE GENERAL THEORY OF HISTORY

1. Why the PF tend to develop
2. A functional Explanation for the emergence of classes.
3. A Functional Explanation for the Transformation of class structures.
4. The outcome of transformation
5. Five theses that summarize Cohen’s argument
 - *Compatibility Thesis*
 - *Development thesis*
 - *Contradiction thesis*
 - *Transformation Thesis*
 - *Optimality thesis*

V. THE SPECIAL THEORY OF CAPITALIST HISTORY: THIS WILL BE DISCUSSED MORE IN LECTURE

The Traditional Marxist Theory of How Capitalist Contradictions → Socialism

