Questions on readings on Unit 8
“Islamic Republic of Iran”
(submit typed answers the day after the unit test day)

Rubric:
90-100%: Complete and detailed typed answers to all questions/prompts. Clearly legible.
80-89%: Almost all questions/prompts are answered satisfactorily. Legible.
65%-79%: Missing many answers to questions/prompts. Illegible in parts.
64% and below: Missing the majority of answers to questions/prompts and/or largely illegible.

1) Excerpt from Iran Rising: The Survival and Future of the Islamic Republic by Amin Saikal
Introduction (pages 4-8)
a) Explain the nature of the two dimensional approach adopted by Khomeini. Using the Arabic words, explain the differences in these approaches and their varying socio-political objectives.

b) Why did Khomeini’s political Islamism threaten U.S. interests in the Middle East? What were some of the events that deepened the divide between the U.S. and Iran? Why was Khomeini less successful in exporting his jihadi version of Shia Islam in the region?

c) How did Khomeini seek to implement “a unique new Islamic order” with what ijtihadi concept? What type of government was the result?

d) By the end of the 1980s what were the three main theo-political factions. Describe their respective socio-political orientations.

e) After Khomeini’s death how did his successor, Ayatollah Khamenei utilize the “seesawing jihadi-ijtihadi” approach in governance? What has been the effect of this?

2) “Four decades after its revolution, Iran is still stuck in the past”
a) How does the article characterize Iran’s political and economic situation after 40 years have passed since the Islamic Revolution?
b) How did Ayatollah Khomeini “twist” Islamic doctrine and his own interpretation of it?

c) How has Ayatollah Khamenei made the situation worse?

d) What is the IGRC? What forces does it oversee and how are they employed to further state repression?

e) What evidence is there of public dissatisfaction with the “mullah’s, government repression and economic inequality?]

f) Thinking question: Do you think another popular revolution is likely? Explain.

3) “Iran’s Economic Crisis Drags Down the Middle Class Almost Overnight”

g) Why is Iran’s economy in “shambles”? How has this related to the government’s expansion of the money supply?

h) What is the J.P.C.O.A. and what has been the effect of President Trump’s decision to leave this?

i) What has been the historical influence of Iran’s middle class? What condition is are middle class Iranians in today? How has President Rouhani tried to help them?

j) How does the Taymouri family illustrate the problems for the middle class?

4) “Charts that show how hard US sanctions have hit Iran”

Summarize each of the five charts and, for each, explain the impact on Iran’s economy and its citizens.
5) “Iran’s Revolutionary Guards: The Supreme Leader’s Military-Industrial Complex”
   a) Why did President Trump declare the Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Force (ICRG) to be a “terrorist organization”?

   b) Describe the size and international reach of the ICRG? What roles does it play in the economy and in the military area? Specifically, how does it employ its “Al Quds” Force?

   c) Who are the leaders of the Revolutionary Guard and Quds Force?

6) Two articles on 2019 Protests:
   “With Brutal Crackdown, Iran Is Convulsed by Worst Unrest in 40 Years”
   a) When and why did widespread protests break out in November 2019? How many were estimated to have been killed by security forces at the time this article was written?

   b) How can we tell that protests were widespread? What was the government’s reaction?

   c) Who will likely suffer the most politically from these events? Why?

   “Iranians Honor Dead Protesters, Amid Vows to Fight On”
   d) How many are now estimated to have been killed in the November protests?

   e) What is significant about the event that takes place 40 days after a person’s death? What did the Iranian government forbid for those who died in the protests? Why?

   f) How and why did Khamenei change his interpretation of the protests and protestors?

   g) What vicious cycle may develop in the future as a result of these protests?

7) “The Precarious State of Working-Class Men in Iran”
   a) What are some of the social inequalities in Tehran? What is evidence of these? How has Iran transitioned in terms of its economic philosophy as a revolutionary state to its current economic philosophy? How has this impacted the working class?

   b) What is meant by “mahroum” and “mostaz’af”? Why were they held up to acclaim during the revolutionary period? What was expected of women in Iran’s revolutionary culture? How were men expected to comport themselves in society?
c) Who was Hashemi Rafsanjani? How did he change Iran’s economic policies? What was the result?

d) What were the neoliberal symbols of success in the post-revolutionary period? How was the “poor man” perceived? What does “arazel owbash” mean and how do they figure in crime statistics? What does it mean that they are often subject to “extrajudicial imprisonment”?

e) Why has policing and punishment of the urban poor escalated in recent years? What percentage of Iranians re estimated to be living below the poverty line? Why is women’s position in the urban labor market particularly precarious? What to many poor resort to in terms of jobs?

f) Which factors have delayed transition from youth to adulthood for many Iranians? (In your opinion, do you see any parallels in the U.S.?) How has the composition of new families changed in Iran? What are some of the other factors that are changing Iranian society?

8) Human Rights Watch World Report 2018 on Iran


Summarize briefly the major issues involved with the following:

Rights to Peaceful Assembly and Free Expression

Death Penalty:

Human Rights Defenders and Political Prisoners:

Due Process Rights and Treatment of Prisoners:

Women’s Rights:

Treatment of Religious Minorities:

Disability Rights