**Answers to each question should be between 1.5 pages Your writing needn’t be quite as formal or polished as it would for an argumentative essay. While you still need to write using sentences and paragraphs (no bullet points), you don’t need an extensive introduction or conclusion, or many of the other formal conventions of essay assignments. You need only focus on conveying the appropriate information in your answers. So just begin by answering the questions directly, and once you’ve addressed everything you think you need to address, stop and move on to the next question**

**For each theorist or author you discuss, you must include at least one direct quotation from the course readings to support your summaries and/or definitions (though, of course, you may include more than one single quotation for any single theorist/author). In terms of citation, all you need to do is place the appropriate page number in parentheses after each quote – like this (21) – nothing more**

**Question 1:**

How did Karl Marx inaugurate the modern study of ideology? After briefly describing the prior idealist conception of how ideas were thought to relate to material reality (i.e., Plato and Hegel), explain how Marx’s “materialist” method upends the way we should think about, and critique, ideas? Answers should discuss the importance of the division of labour and the base-superstructure model. And in what way does Marx describe commodity fetishism as the “ideology” of modern capitalist society? After defining Marx’s concept of the commodity fetish (particularly in contrast to the prior anthropological notion of the “fetish”), explain how the commodity fetish in particular affects or shapes our perception of modern capitalist society, and some of the problems that arise from this peculiar way of seeing the world around us.

**Question 2:**

How was the Marxist concept of ideology critiqued, refined, and further developed in the subsequent work of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser? Answers for Gramsci, which should focus on his concept of hegemony, should discuss (a) Gramsci’s insistence on the limitations of a strictly “economistic” understanding of ideology, (b) the new role of the state as an active, educational institution and (c) how civil society and/or popular culture becomes an important site for the transmission of ideology. And in terms of Althusser, answers should discuss (a) his insistence on the “material” character of ideology (b) his corresponding notion of interpellation as a process that creates ideological “subjects” and (c) his notion of the “invisibility” of ideology.

**Question 3:**

How does the work of Roland Barthes and Stuart Hall further redefine the concept of ideology as a process in which subjects read or interpret society as if it were a text? Answers for Barthes should (a) define semiotics and its two fundamental principles, (b) describe why Barthes understands ideology, or what he calls “myth,” as “second-order signification” and (c) explain why Barthes describes ideology (or mythology) as “depoliticized speech.” And answers for Hall should (a) outline Hall’s notion of “encoding/decoding” (b) explain why Hall thinks the “televisual” or “iconic” sign is an especially proficient transmitter of ideology and (c) describe the three potential positions or readings one may take when confronted with an ideological message or text (with examples).