Discussion of Essay I:

- See the Essay Assignments section of the “Theory as a Writing Intensive Course” handout. Begin thinking about your first essay topic by consulting the 3 purposes outlined on this page, keeping in mind that you must do 2 of the 3 options.
- Always be sure to cite sources properly—root what you are talking about in the text! Do not plagiarize. Be very careful and cite everything! Consult the Instructions to Authors page in the course packet if you have questions about format for citations.
- Manuscript formatting advice can also be found in the course packet.
- Submit the essays electronically. Essay I is due 9.22.05. There will be extra office hours before revisions are due.

Concept: a word or short phrase that identifies; a concept ID should identify, define and explain the concept’s significance (political, practical or theoretical); concept ID should occur at the appropriate level of abstraction

Concept IDs in Marx:
- Alienation
- Objectification (falls within categories of alienation)
- Estranged labor
- Private property
- Emancipation

4 Aspects of Alienated Labor:
- Alienated from fellow humans (see p.39-40)
- Alienated from task/labor process (see p.35-7)
- Alienated from species/being (see p.40)
- Alienated from nature/object/product (see p.36-7)

These seem to be materialist concepts. Marx was a proponent of materialist theory, therefore his concepts are rooted in materialist proof generated within society. NOTE: By “materialist,” Marx (and the other theorists we are reading this semester) is commenting on epistemology, not moralism. A materialist is not money-grubbing or concerned with material goods rather than spiritual well-being; a materialist explanation puts lived reality and material conditions before ideas as the basis for knowledge and shaping social life. Thanks to Rebecca for reminding Dr. Brush to make this point.

The Function of Religious Criticism in Marx:
- Marx utilizes criticism of religion (something we know) so that the same type of scientific/social stance can later be used in the discussion of labor.
• Concepts are problematized in order to be analyzed. (See the first sentence on p.34 where Marx identifies concepts such as religion, property, wages, labor, etc.)
• Marx wants to denaturalize the economic/material basis of the world by showing how the natural political economy exists. To do this, he first criticizes religion in the same format he later uses to criticize the economy.
• Both religion and economics are part of society so Marx is arguing at multiple levels.
• Religion is a system of ideas (an ideology: the theory of relationship between ideas) as is economics. By discussing religion as a social object, Marx is able to compare it to other things such as economics.

More On Alienation:
• **Alienation from nature/object:** humans overproduce and then do not even receive what they need to survive; subsistence living (working to create what is immediately needed) is the opposite of the society Marx writes about; the natural world provides the means for life; the sensuous external world ceases to be a means for subsistence and becomes the raw materials for production (top of p.36)
• **Alienation from task/labor process:** Marx claims that we realize ourselves through work/labor so we further estrange ourselves from the world; work needs some level of creativity to have any humanity (p.39); this is lost in the Industrial Revolution; you should love what you do so that work becomes an extension of yourself
• **Alienation from species/being:** by realizing the self through work, man is left with nothing but “food, booze and a good fuck” (Dr. Brush); this debases man because it represents a lack of self
• **A note on money:** money is the evidence of alienation in capitalist society; the concept of money does not indicate subsistence (the ideal according to Marx) but rather the inability to directly appropriate nature to fulfill needs; money means that there is no direct inalienable relationship between the work done and the commodity received (one must work to get money to purchase commodities)

Theoretical Significance of alienation: alienation is not a natural course of events; it represents the destruction of creativity, innovation, individuality, and potential in society