Contemporary Classics Study Questions

Chapters 1-5

1. What contrasts between the old country and the new and between the older and younger generations are evident at Ona and Jurgis' wedding feast?

2. What other function does the wedding scene serve?

3. What essential information is provided by Jurgis' flashback to life in Lithuania?

4. Why did Jurgis and Ona decide to go to America?

5. Why did they decide upon Chicago for their home? Does their initial impression of the city meet their expectations?

6. Why does Jurgis find a job so easily?

7. Describe the stockyards.

8. What evidence can you cite to show that Jurgis is somewhat naive?
9. In what way does the stockyard resemble a jungle?

10. Why does the family decide to buy a home? Describe the frustrations they encounter in doing so.

11. What does Jurgis learn that makes him begin to question his faith in America?

**Chapters 6-10**

1. Why has Jurgis and Ona's wedding been delayed so long?

2. What does the family learn from Grandmother Majauszkiene?

3. What is Grandmother Majauszkiene's response to the problems of the poor?

4. How do the various members of the family get work?

5. Why, after the wedding, does Jurgis resolve to control his temper and his indignity at what he sees about him?

6. How successful is Jurgis at protecting his family from harm?
The Jungle
Upton Sinclair

7. What is the great adventure which befalls Marija?

8. Explain Jurgis’ new attitude toward the union.

9. What immediate effects does the union have upon Jurgis?

10. What are some of the abuses which Jurgis learns about through the union?

11. What are some of the other frustrations that the family endures?

12. What does Marija learn after being fired from the canning factory?

Chapters 11-16

1. What is the Beef Trust?

2. How does Jurgis react to the blizzard?

3. Describe Jurgis’ accident in the plant and the effect it has on him and the family.

4. What does Jurgis discover when he tries to reclaim his job?
5. What misfortunes befall the family while Jurgis recuperates and how do they cope with them?

6. What causes Kristoforas’ death and what burden does his death place on the family?

7. Describe the job that Jurgis finally gets.

8. Why does Elzbieta go to work and what is her job?

9. Explain Ona’s mysterious disappearance.

**Chapters 16-20**

1. What goes through Jurgis’ mind as he sits in jail?

2. What is Jurgis’ view of justice?

3. What does Jurgis learn about life from the people in the jail?

4. What news does Stanislovas bring to Jurgis?
5. What does Jurgis discover after his release?

6. How does Jurgis respond to Ona's death?

7. Who seeks to rekindle Jurgis' sense of purpose?

8. What is blacklisting?

9. What is Jurgis' next job and how does it work out?

Chapters 21-25

1. Why does the settlement worker try to help the family?

2. Are the conditions at the steel mill any better than they were at the packing house?

3. What happens to little Antanas? How does Jurgis react?

4. What are the effects of Jurgis' life as a tramp?

5. What job does Jurgis get when he returns to Chicago?
The Jungle
Upton Sinclair

6. Why can't Jurgis find solace in religion?

7. After begging for a living, how does Jurgis view civilization?

8. Who is Freddie Jones?

9. Why is Jurgis arrested again?

10. Why doesn't the judge believe Jurgis' story?

11. Who is Jack Duane?

12. What does Jurgis find to be the most difficult aspect of his criminal activity?

13. As Jurgis becomes trusted in the criminal community, what are some of the things he learns?

14. Who is Mike Scully?

15. Why and how does Jurgis get back his old job at the stockyards?
Chapters 26-31

1. What issues cause the men to go out on strike?

2. How does the press treat the strike?

3. Describe Jurgis’ new job.

4. Under what conditions does Jurgis again encounter Connor?

5. Why is Harper unable to get Jurgis out of jail?

6. How does Jurgis find Marija?

7. What makes Jurgis think of Elzbieta and the family again?

8. Why does the rally which Jurgis attends have such an impact on him?

9. What does Ostrinski explain to Jurgis?

10. How is Tommy Hinds different from Jurgis’ previous employers?
11. What changes take place in Jurgis as a result of his affiliation with the socialist cause?

12. Why does Jurgis find the ideas of Schliemann so appealing?