There are no Triads of the Week™ for week 8 (cue the cries of agony & dismay). Why is this?

Our goal now is to take the next step in the world of Triads™. Up to this point, I have given you sets of three terms or concepts that I believe encompass the readings (or a distinct part of it) for each week. I have had great fun doing this, but it’s time now for you—the students of History 100—to give it a try and to share in the joy.

How to do this? The idea is that, while you do the reading, you should think about themes or concepts that seem to be emerging with particular prominence. It may be ideas or concepts that arise over and over again. It might be themes that a given author—whether Lenin, Carr, or me—focuses on at great length. Perhaps (I would say “probably”) more than three will emerge. So the task then is to determine which three terms or concepts, in combination with one another, do the most to encompass the readings or raise the most interesting questions. Once you have identified those three, you have triad™!

But why would we engage in such a seemingly strange exercise? What, in short, is the bloody point? The point is actually a really big one: every day we are overwhelmed with information—call it “information overload.” One of the greatest challenges that we face simply as humans in an information-saturated environment is making sense of it all. This means establishing hierarchies of what is crucially important, what is somewhat important, and what is curious and valuable as a detail—but only a detail. The task, in other words, is one of identifying and framing the problem that we seek to address. That’s what we’re doing. Is there a line of work in which this skill would be irrelevant? I cannot imagine that there is.

There will be an exercise in discussion section on this. You can be well prepared if walk into the room with a triad in your own head ready to go, or at least with an idea of a couple of the concepts that should definitely be included the triad.

Good luck.