

M.A. Comprehensive Exams
Fall 1993-Spring 1999

(Note: Theory questions are listed first, followed by methods and then specialty areas)

Spring 1999(a) Theory Questions

Answer either question 1 or 2

1. Select one of the classical founders of sociology and discuss his/her contribution to the field, citing representative works.
2. Select and describe one of the schools of thought in sociology and identify its major proponents and their representative works.

Spring 1999(b) Theory Questions

1. Select from the following theoretical perspectives. Please describe the perspective, state the assumptions on which it is based, and suggest ways in which the perspective can be used to analyze some current event or situation.

- symbolic interactionism
- post modern theory
- conflict theory
- structural-functionalism
- systems theory
- phenomenology
- critical sociology
- dramaturgy

Fall 1998 Theory Questions

1. Select one from the following theoretical perspectives. Please describe the perspective, state the assumptions on which it is based, and suggest ways in which the perspective can be used to analyze some current event or situation.

- symbolic interactionism
- exchange theory
- conflict theory
- structural-functionalism
- systems theory
- phenomenology
- critical theory
- dramaturgy

Spring 1998 Theory Questions

Answer both Questions 1 and 2

1. Choose one of the following areas and discuss the theoretical or empirical contributions of two sociologists to this area:

- Deviance
- Formal Organizations
- Family
- Minorities
- Social Class

2. a. What is meant by theory and what is the relationship between theory and research?
- b. Select a major theoretically based work in sociology and use this work to illustrate the relationship between theory and research.

Fall 1997 Theory Questions

Answer both questions 1 and 2.

1. Select from the following theoretical perspectives the one you think has the most to offer sociologists. Discuss the assumptions of the perspective and the various uses of the perspective.
 - structural-functionalism
 - microinteraction
 - neo-Durkheimian
 - conflict
 - rational action theory
2. Select one American sociologist you think has contributed the most to social theory. Discuss the contribution(s) and defend your choice.

Spring 1997 Theory Questions

Answer questions 1 or 2.

1. Distinguish what is meant by "grand theory" and "middle range theory." Identify at least one proponent of each and briefly describe their contributions to sociological theory.
2. Pick one theorist of your choice. Describe the major contributions he/she has made to sociological theory. Include in the description his/her theoretical approach and discuss at least one major work that illustrates that approach.

Fall 1996 Theory Questions

Answer question 1 or 2.

1. Select two of the following sociologists. Identify and discuss the contributions of each of these two sociologists to one of the following areas: religion, deviance, class.
 - Karl Marx
 - Georg Simmel
 - Talcott Parsons
 - Erving Goffman
 - Auguste Comte

- Emile Durkheim
- Max Weber
- Herbert Spencer

2. Pick one theorist of your choice. Describe the major contributions he/she has made to sociological theory. Include in the description his/her theoretical approach and discuss at least one major work that illustrates that approach.

Spring 1996 Theory Questions

Answer question 1 or 2.

1. Select two of the following sociologists. Identify and discuss the contributions of each of these two sociologists to one of the following areas: religion or deviance or class.

- Karl Marx
- Georg Simmel
- Emile Durkheim
- Auguste Comte
- Max Weber
- Herbert Spencer
- Talcott Parsons
- Erving Goffman

2. Pick one theorist (other than the two discussed in question 1) of your choice. Describe the major contributions he/she has made to sociological theory. include in the description his/her theoretical approach and discuss at least one major work that illustrates that approach.

Spring 1995 Theory Questions

Answer question 1 or 2.

1. Compare and contrast any two of the following theoretical perspectives. Please include information describing each of the two perspectives and the assumptions on which each is based, as well as mention examples of theorists in each of the two perspectives.

- Conflict theory
- Exchange/rational utilitarian theory
- Structural-Functionalism
- The microinteractionist/symbolic interactionism tradition

2. Select three of the following theorists and, for each, describe his/her contribution(s) to sociological theory.

- Ferdinand Toennies
- Herbert Blumer
- Max Weber
- George Homans
- Emile Durkheim
- Peter Blau
- Mary Douglas
- Talcott Parsons

- Karl Marx
- Erving Goffman
- Georg Simmel
- C. Wright Mills
- George Herbert Mead

Fall 1995 Theory Question

1. Pick one theorist of your choice. Describe the major contributions he/she has made to sociological theory. Include in the description his/her theoretical approach and discuss at least one major work that illustrates that approach.

Fall 1994 Theory Question

1. Pick one theorist of your choice. Describe the major contributions he/she has made to sociological theory. Include in the description his/her theoretical approach and discuss at least one major work that illustrates that approach.

Spring 1994 Theory Questions

Answer questions 1 and 2.

1. Virtually everyone in sociology believes in the necessity of theory. What is meant by theory? What are the functions of theory for the discipline of sociology?
2. Pick one theorist of your choice. Describe the major contributions he/she has made to sociological theory. Include in the description his/her theoretical approach and discuss at least one major work that illustrates that approach

Fall 1993 Theory Questions

Answer either 1 or 2.

1. Compare and contrast any three of the following theoretical perspectives. Please include information describing the perspectives and the assumptions on which they are based.

- Functionalism
- Feminist Sociology
- Conflict
- Phenomenology
- Critical Theory
- Exchange Theory
- Symbolic Interactionism
- Humanist Sociology
- Postmodernism

OR

2. Select three of the following theorists and, for each, describe his/her contribution(s) to sociological theory.

- Ferdinand Toennies
- George Herbert Mead

- Max Weber
- Peter Blau
- Jane Adams
- Robert Merton
- Jessie Bernard
- Erving Goffman
- Emile Durkheim
- Talcott Parsons
- Georg Simmel
- C. Wright Mills
- Karl Marx
- Herbert Blumer

METHODS QUESTIONS

Spring 1999(a) Methods Questions

1. Identify and describe four of the following

- Types of probability sampling
- Methodological triangulation
- Survey techniques
- Levels of measurement
- The process of hypothesis testing
- Validity and reliability of measurement
- Scaling techniques

Spring 1999(b) Methods Questions

1. Define and give a real (or contrived) example of six of the following

- ordinal level of measurement
- ideal type
- stratified random sample
- case study
- measure of association
- test of significance
- unobtrusive measure
- longitudinal study

Fall 1998 Methods Questions

1. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of three of the following as techniques of obtaining data.

- mailed questionnaire
- participant observation
- use of available data (e.g. the Census)
- content analysis of mass media
- life histories or documents

2. Define and give a real (or contrived) example of five of the following:

- ordinal level of measurement
- longitudinal study

- stratified random sample
- ideal type
- measure of association
- case study
- test of significance
- unobtrusive measure

Spring 1998 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between a conceptual and an operational definition. What are the problems or issues involved in moving from a conceptual to an operation definition?

Fall 1997 Methods Questions

Answer both questions 1 and 2.

1. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of three of the following as techniques of obtaining data:

- mailed questionnaires
- participant observation
- use of available records (e.g. the Census)
- content analysis of mass media
- life histories

2. Define and give a real (or contrived) example of five of the following:

- ordinal level of measurement
- ideal type
- stratified random sample
- case study
- measure of association
- test of significance
- unobtrusive measure
- longitudinal study

Spring 1997 Methods Questions

Answer questions 1 and 2.

1. A poll is designed to study habits of library usage among students at P.U. Various suggestions are made regarding the sampling of students for this purpose. Some suggestions are indicated below. What particular objection(s) can be made to each suggestion?

- a. The survey will be conducted just before mid-term exams.
- b. A booth is set up in front of the library, and those who Pass by will be polled.
- c. Freshman English is mandatory, so all students currently enrolled in all Freshman English classes will be polled.

2. Define and give a real (or contrived) example of four of the following:

- a. case study
- b. ideal type
- c. longitudinal study
- d. unobtrusive measure
- e. test of significance

- f. measure of association
- g. stratified random sample
- h. ordinal level of measurement

Fall 1996 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between five of the following pairs, using examples to illustrate:
 - a. Qualitative and quantitative research
 - b. Archival and observational data
 - c. Reliability and validity in measurement
 - d. Inductive and deductive reasoning
 - e. Conceptual and operational definition
 - f. Independent and dependent variable
 - g. Variable and value(s) of a variable
 - h. Probability and nonprobability sample
 - i. Research question and research hypothesis

Spring 1996 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between five of the following pairs, using examples to illustrate:
 - a. variable and value(s) of a variable
 - b. independent and dependent variable
 - c. probability and non-probability sample
 - d. research question and research hypothesis
 - e. conceptual and operational definition
 - f. reliability and validity in measurement
 - g. inductive and deductive reasoning
 - h. archival and observational data
 - i. qualitative and quantitative research

Spring 1995 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between five of the following pairs, using examples to illustrate:
 - a. archival and observational data
 - b. inductive and deductive reasoning
 - c. conceptual and operational definition
 - d. qualitative and quantitative research
 - e. reliability and validity in measurement
 - f. probability and non-probability sample
 - g. research question and research hypothesis
 - h. independent and dependent variable

Fall 1995 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between three of the following, using examples to illustrate.
 - conceptual and operational definitions
 - tests of significance and measures of association
 - research questions and research hypotheses
 - field research and survey research

- statistical sampling and theoretical sampling

Fall 1994 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between five of the following pairs, using examples to illustrate:
 - a. independent and dependent variable
 - b. research question and research hypothesis
 - c. probability and non-probability sample
 - d. reliability and validity in measurement
 - e. tests of significance and measures of association
 - f. qualitative and quantitative research
 - g. conceptual and operational definition
 - h. inductive and deductive reasoning
 - i. archival and observational data

Summer 1994 Methods Questions

Distinguish between five of the following pairs of terms, defining each, and using examples to illustrate your answer.

1. field research and survey research
2. independent and dependent variables
3. probability and nonprobability samples
4. validity and reliability in measurement
5. internal and external validity in experimental design
6. research question and research hypothesis
7. mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories
8. tests of significance and measures of association

Spring 1994 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between three of the following, using examples to illustrate.
 - field research and survey research
 - tests of significance and measures of association
 - statistical sampling and theoretical sampling
 - conceptual and operational definitions

Fall 1993 Methods Questions

1. Distinguish between five of the following pairs, using examples to illustrate.
 - a. independent and dependent variable
 - b. research question and research hypothesis
 - c. probability and nonprobability sample
 - d. reliability and validity in measurement
 - e. tests of significance and measures of association
 - f. qualitative and quantitative research

- g. conceptual and operational definition
- h. inductive and deductive reasoning
- i. archival and observational data

SPECIALTY AREA QUESTIONS

Spring 1999(a) General Sociology Questions

1. How would you define and describe sociology to an introductory sociology class?

Spring 1999(a) Race/Ethnic Relations Questions

Answer either question 1 or 2

1. Compare and contrast two of the following theoretical approaches to the study of race relations and cite at least one advocate of each: assimilation, cultural pluralism, internal colonialism.
2. Select any four sociological concepts that you consider the most useful or powerful in explaining race/ethnic relations in the U.S. today. Write an essay on race relations organized by your use of these concepts.

Spring 1999(b) Race and Ethnic Relations

Answer either question 1 or 2

1. Explain how minority-dominant relationships are established and maintained. Include in your explanation the basic types of responses of minority groups to domination.
2. Define and discuss the differences between institutionalized racism and individual racism. Be certain to include in your discussion examples of each type of racism and distinguish between direct and indirect institutionalized racism. Discuss the long term effects of institutionalized racism on minority groups.

Fall 1998 Questions

Answer 2 of the following three questions:

1. Describe the major focus and characteristics of a feminist theoretical perspective on domestic violence. Include in your discussion ways in which this perspective differs from more mainstream sociological perspectives.
2. Summarize and discuss the feminist critique of research on domestic violence, including issues of quantitative/qualitative methods and ways that feminist researchers question conventional sociological methodology for domestic violence research.
3. Choose one area of social response to the problem of domestic violence--the criminal justice system, clinical/treatment approaches, or the women's advocacy movement--and describe some of the major issues in this area and how they represent a change in social attitudes and institutional response to domestic violence.

Spring 1998 Business Questions

Answer two of the following five questions with a minimum of 2 pages each.

1. Describe the appropriate steps to effective delegation.
2. Describe what is needed to plan and conduct an effective meeting.
3. Discuss some techniques to becoming a better communicator.
4. Describe the "DIGEST" approach as a problem solving technique and describe a situation using this approach.
5. Describe "DIVERSITY" and why and how it is a business issue.

Fall 1997 Women's Studies Questions

Choose one of the following

1. As a discipline, women's studies has been driven by feminist pedagogical practices. Please answer the following:

- What makes women's studies pedagogy feminist?
- Why is an alternative pedagogical paradigm important for women's studies?
- What are the non-academic uses/applications of feminist pedagogy?
- Describe the ideal feminist classroom.

Based on your own personal experiences, describe how you intend to make a contribution to feminist pedagogy.

2. Feminist theory has evolved considerably over the past several centuries. Please consider and respond to the following:

- What social, economic, and historical contexts and/or conditions have facilitated the development of feminist consciousness?
- What do you see as the key turning points in the development of feminist consciousness?
- Identify a major feminist theorist and describe the key points of his/her major works (other than Gilman).
- What have your experiences of learning and/or using feminist theory been like?

3. The field of women's studies has evolved quickly since the late 1960's. Please consider and respond to the following:

- What conditions led to the emergence of women's studies?
- What were the key turning points in the development of women's studies?
- Where is women's studies today as a discipline in terms of diversity and multicultural issues? Globally?
- Based on your own experiences, how would you like to see women's studies evolve over the next 25 years?

General Sociology Questions

1. Choose your favorite concept in sociology. Why is it your favorite? Define it and suggest a concrete application for it.

Fall 1997 General Sociology

1. Choose your favorite concept in sociology. Explain it and suggest a concrete application for it.

Spring 1997 General Sociology

1. What do you consider to be the major contributions of sociology to the understanding of society? Justify your answer.

Fall 1996 General Sociology

Answer questions 1 and 2.

1. Explain clearly three of the following concepts and show how all three can be applied in one of the following areas: social interaction, inequality, gender roles, minorities or education:

- a. Status
- b. Norm
- c. Power
- d. Role
- e. Culture
- f. Reference group
- g. Prejudice
- h. Socialization

2. Pick any current issue and provide a sociological analysis of it, citing relevant sources.

Fall 1996 General Sociology

Answer questions 1 and 2

1. Explain clearly three of the following concepts and show how all three can be applied in one of the following areas: minorities, education, gender roles, inequality, social control, or social interaction.

- a. culture
- b. reference group
- c. role
- d. prejudice
- e. norm
- f. power
- g. socialization
- h. status

2. Pick any current issue and provide a sociological analysis of it, citing relevant sources.

Spring 1995 General Sociology

Answer questions 1 and 2.

1. Explain clearly four of the following sociological concepts and show how these four can be applied to one of the following areas: social stratification or sociology or the family or minorities or aging or any other substantive area of your choice.

- a. norm
- b. power
- c. socialization
- d. status
- e. reference group
- f. role
- g. social inequality
- h. culture

2. If you were to describe the sociological perspective to a non-sociologist, what would you say?

Fall 1995 General Sociology

1. Explain clearly three of the following sociological concepts and show how all three can be applied in one of the following areas: criminology, family, sex roles, deviance, minorities, stratification:

- a. norm
- b. power
- c. socialization
- d. status
- e. reference group
- f. role
- g. social inequality
- h. culture

Fall 1994 General Sociology

1. Select four major sociological concepts. Clearly explain each and show how these can be applied in one of the following substantive areas:

- criminology
- family
- gerontology
- sex roles

Spring 1994 General Sociology

Answer questions 1 and 2.

1. Explain clearly four of the following sociological concepts and show how these four can be applied to one of the following areas: social stratification or sociology of the family or minorities or aging or any other substantive area of your choice.

- a. reference group
- b. role
- c. social inequality
- d. culture
- e. status
- f. socialization
- g. power
- h. norm

2. If you were to describe the sociological perspective to a non-sociologist, what would you say?

Fall 1993 Race-Ethnic Relations

Answer two of the following

1. Compare and contrast two of the following theoretical approaches to the study of race relations and cite at least one advocate of each: assimilation, cultural pluralism, internal colonialism.

2. Explain how minority-dominant relationships are established and maintained. Include in your explanation the basic types of responses of minority groups to domination.

3. Select five of the following and describe his/her major contribution to the sociology of race/ethnic relations.

- Robert Blauner
- E. Franklin Frazier
- Sue Jewell
- Carol Stack
- Robert Staples
- Irene Blea
- Patricia Hill Collins
- Mario Barrera
- Milton Gordon
- Michael Omi
- Charles Willie
- Howard Winant

4. What factors will influence the rate of assimilation and acculturation of an immigrant group? What recommendations would you give to governmental and refugee agencies to facilitate the refugee relocation process? Explain your recommendations.

Fall 1996 Statistics Substantive Area

Answer all of the following.

1. Write a "conceptual" definition of the nature and use of each statistical procedure listed below. Include in your discussions when the procedure would be most appropriately used, what the procedure is designed to provide the researcher, and basically how the statistical results are to be interpreted. Feel free to sketch in hypothetical "results" in, say, tabular form, to illustrate your decision.

- Analysis of variance
- Multiple correlation analysis
- Multivariate analysis of variance
- Chi square test of association (a.k.a. "of independence)

- Mann-Whitney U

2. Describe the process of performing a statistical analysis using a programming package such as BMDP or SPSS. Illustrate a simple problem by describing a data set and providing a program example.

3. What does it mean when a researcher reports that they have a "statistically significant" correlation or mean difference? In responding to the foregoing question, include mathematically sound definitions of I and Y.

Fall 1995 Racial-Ethnic Group Relations

Answer one of the following.

1. Much of the social science literature evaluates the African-American family from a disorganization or cultural-deficit theoretical perspective. Statistics suggest that poverty, high crime rates, escalating teen births, and school failures are among the many indicators of problems in the African-American family. Using a Family Science, sociological and human service perspective, what do you as a professional in the field see as the root of the problem? Address three of the issues listed below that you feel would have an impact on addressing the problem. Cite references and/or experiences where appropriate.

- Parenting skills of African-American families
- Family life education: Is there a need?
- African-American fathers
- The Black Church and spirituality
- The role of schools and higher education in support of the African-American family
- Kinship and community support
- Values and morals: What is at stake?
- Economics and work ethics in African-American families

2. Using the model of Racial-Ethnic stratification (Williams' modification of Noel) that allows for the historical comparison, compare the experiences on the U.S. of either African Americans or Mexican Americans with any group of European immigrants.

Answer one of the following.

1. Explain the origin and substance of the different definitions of racism frequently held by Blacks and Whites in the U.S. Illustrate by examples.

2. How does the intersection of class and gender further inform any discussion or study of racial/ethnic relations?
3. Describe and discuss some of the African family patterns that Billingsley and others believe have survived (although diluted and modified in the U.S.), giving specific examples of the African and U.S. manifestations of the patterns.

Summer 1994 Minorities

Answer either 1 or 2.

1. Compare and contrast two of the following theoretical approaches to the study of race relations and cite at least one advocate of each: assimilation, cultural pluralism, internal colonialism.

OR

2. What factors will influence the rate of assimilation and acculturation of an immigrant group? What recommendations would you give to governmental and refugee agencies to facilitate the refugee relocation process? Explain your recommendations.