

Federation Ph. D. Qualifying Exams Spring 1992 - Spring 2000

(Questions are in chronological order. Some of the questions appear more than once. This repetition has been left in to give a sense of which questions get re-asked)

Part II. History and Development of Thought. Choose one.

Compare and contrast the "social construction of social class" in the work of Robert and Helen Lynd, W. Lloyd Warner, and of the Chicago School.

Discuss the influence of Weber on the works of two of the following: Talcott Parsons, Robert Merton, C. Wright Mills, and Alvin Gouldner, and how that influence has shaped contemporary versions of structural-functionalism.

Contrast and compare the historical development of European and U.S. sociology from the 1890s to World War II.

Do you believe that the growth of knowledge in sociology has occurred through slow incremental accumulation and improvement upon old theories or through conflict and conceptual revolutions? Provide examples for your argument.

How did classical European sociologists influence early American sociology? Discuss and illustrate your answer by citing specific examples from two of the following: Marx, Spencer, Durkheim, Simmel, and Comte.

Discuss how postmodern sociological theory is a continuation of, or a reaction to classical and modern sociological theory.

Sociological theory is frequently divided (some say arbitrarily) into "classical" and "contemporary." What is the value of such a division and how does it help or hinder the development of theoretical conceptualization and innovation?

Discuss the role of sociological theory over time in: (1) outlining the growth and change of sociology as a discipline, and (2) holding the discipline together.

Other than coining the term sociology, discuss the lasting substantive influence of Comte on sociology

Compare the convergence of macro and micro sociological theories in the work of a classical sociologist with the explicit attempt to combine the two in the work of a contemporary sociologist

Discuss the influence of the Darwinian theory of evolution in the history of sociological theories.

Discuss the influence of the enlightenment philosophy, or of the French Revolution on early sociological theory.

Trace the development of One significant and socially relevant idea from 18th century socio-political thought through 19th and 20th century sociological theory.

Discuss the development of the critical-conflict perspective from classical Marxist theory to any two of the following contemporary schools of thought in that tradition: Neo-Marxism (Lukacs, Gramsci), Critical Theory (Frankfurt School), Structural Marxism (Althusser, Poulanzas), Dependency Theory (Gunder Frank, Cardoso), Historical Sociology (Tilly, Chase-Dunn), World Systems Theory (Wallerstein).

Discuss the philosophical concept of "pragmatism" as it has been used and redefined in sociological theory.

Trace the evolution of sociology (late 19th or early 20th century) through the work of theorists who have relied heavily on the notion of morality.

How is the sociology of one of the following theorists elaborated in one contemporary sociological school of thought? Discuss specific research projects and debates. Choose from Marx, Weber, Simmel, or Durkheim.

Trace the development of conflict/critical theory in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Describe the development of theories of the origin of social order within the sociological tradition during the 17th and 18th centuries. Cite examples that illustrate the major developments.

Discuss the history of the theoretical contributions of empirical sociology to sociological theory in the U.S. prior to World War II in terms of two of the following: community/field studies, industrial sociology, race relations, social class studies, mapping/canvassing.

Compare and contrast the reactions of any two of the following to the 18th century French or Scottish Enlightenment: Marx, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Simmel, Pareto

Describe the development of theories of the origin of social order within the sociological tradition during the 18th and 19th centuries. Cite examples that illustrate the major developments.

Identify and discuss the works of early proponents and opponents of social Darwinism in the United States.

Trace the development of 19th century positivism using the works of scholars who made suggestions about the social utility of scientific knowledge.

Discuss the modification of the thought of one of the following: Marx, Weber, Simmel, Durkheim, as borrowed by two contemporary schools of thought.

Contrast the history of theory in American sociology from late 19th century or early 20th century with that of either French or German sociology.

Describe how the ideas of the 18th century Enlightenment and 19th century reactions to it influenced classical academic sociology. Cite specific examples that illustrate your major points.

Discuss the two European schools of thought that influenced the development of early American sociology

Toonies, Simmel, and Weber are generally considered the founding fathers of classical German sociology. Explain their "staying power" in sociological theory through time.

Trace the evolution and major theoretical controversies in any one of the substantive areas of sociology

Describe one of the major ideas of the 18th century Enlightenment that influenced the academic development of sociology.

Discuss the influence of the theories of August Comte and Herbert Spencer on William Graham Sumner and Lester Frank Ward.

Classification of historical stages into different periods has been a major component of the development of classical sociological theory. Identify one such classification and assess its impact on sociology.

Trace the American and European historical roots of symbolic interactionism.

Discuss the history of the idea of alienation in social theory.

Discuss the European influences on the development of American sociology.

Discuss the intellectual history underlying one of the following theories or schools of thought:

Ethnomethodology

critical theory

social evolutionary theory

exchange theory

macro-systems theory

symbolic interactionism

Discuss the role of sociological theory in the development of sociology as a discipline in the U.S. in the first half of the 20th century.

Discuss the influence of the biological theories (such as Darwinian evolution, or medical terminology concerning "pathology") on one of the following sociologists: Herbert Spencer, William Graham Sumner, Lester Frank Ward, Wilfredo Pareto, or Emile Durkheim.

Discuss any two European theorists who were influential in the development of early American sociology through the first quarter of the 20th century.

Discuss two of the dominant ideas of the social philosophy of the 18th and 19th centuries that influenced the development of sociology.

Discuss the influence of the biological theory of evolution in the early sociological theories.

"Oppositions" play a central role in most "conflict theories" and are, often, loosely described as dialectical. Trace this development in social theory from Hegel and Marx through one of the following: Simmel, Mills, Adorno, Horkheimer, Coser.

If you set out to write a book like Talcott Parson's Structure of Social Action, what selection of theorists would you include? Defend your selection.

Discuss the influence of the theory of biological evolution on one of the following sociologists: Herbert Spencer, William Graham Sumner, Lester Frank Ward.

Select the work of any contemporary theorist in sociology. (The theorist's work must post-date 1950 and be regarded relevant to general theory). Identify the immediate intellectual precursors of his or her work, and describe their historical heritage.

The American sociologist, Albion Small once said that Marx did not add a "single formula which will be final in the terms in which he expressed it. In spite of that... in the ultimate judgment of history Marx will have a place analogous with that of Galileo in physical science." Give arguments for or against Small's prediction, citing critics and supporting evidence on both sides.

Among the pre-Nineteenth Century social philosophers listed below, select two and illustrate the way their ideas were reflected in the development of sociological theory through the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Machiavelli, Francis Bacon, Hobbes, Hume, Vico, Montesquieu, Rousseau.

In recent years labels such as applied sociology, sociological practice, and clinical sociology have come into vogue. Develop and support the argument that the ideas represented by these labels have always been part of sociology. Cite references and describe changes in the ideas.

The industrial revolution is said to have been one of the greatest transformations in the history of humanity because it radically transformed the previous social system. Trace the effects of industrial movements upon the development of social theory.

Since Auguste Comte, virtually all of the social thinkers who influenced the development of sociology recognized some of the limitations of the application of science or rationality. Illustrate this from the works of two of the following: Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Pareto. Critique each theorist's position on this point.

Compare any two typologies of society that were centrally important in the 19th century social theory.

Describe the influence of one of the following pre-sociological thinker of the 17th and 18th centuries in the later development of the discipline: Vico, Hobbes, Rousseau.

Discuss and critically analyze the treatment of theories of progress in the works of two of the following: Comte, Marx, Tocqueville, and Spencer.

Contrast the history of theory in American sociology with that of either French or German sociology as they developed through the first quarter of the 20th century.

Contrast the pre-19th century roots of the functional theory paradigm with the distinctive pre-19th century ideas that inspired any (your choice) alternative paradigm in contemporary sociology. Illustrate with specific references and descriptions.

Trace the search for principles of power or order in the development of sociology from its founding to the present time, citing representative concepts and works.

Contrast the underlying philosophy of science in the development of theoretical sociology in Germany and France in the early Twentieth Century. Illustrate the comparative impact of those developments upon contemporary sociological analysis.

Trace the development of the sociological analysis of religion from the early Nineteenth Century to the present.

last updated 30 May 2000