

**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 III. Short Answer. Choose four.**

Explain what Karl Mannheim meant by the concepts of "ideology" or "utopia."

Contrast the views of a postmodern feminist theorist with those of a modern feminist theorist.

Examine the significance of the concept of "Class" for one of the following: Lise Vogel, Harriet Friedman, Nicos Poulanzas, Oliver Cox, William Julius Wilson.

Briefly compare the research orientation of Goffman and Garfinkel on one important point of divergence.

Provide a defense or a critique of the postmodern project

Describe one contemporary attempt to advance the rational choice theory

Summarize Merton's Theory of "Individual Adaptation to Structural Strain."

How relevant is the development of so called "cyber-space" to the sociological enterprise?

Describe the contributions of two African American sociologists to sociological theory.

What is your response to those who in recent years have pronounced a "crisis" in sociology due to the lack of Darwinian influence or absence of sociobiology as a major influence?

Dorothy Smith received recognition from the American Sociological Association in 1999 for her life time contribution to sociology. Describe her major contribution to sociology.

Briefly explain the relationship between sociology and phenomenology as evidenced in the work of Alfred Schutz

Explain how "positivism" and "sociology" are cojoined in the work of August Comte.

Single parent households headed by women appear to be increasing in the Third World as well as in the U.S. Discuss the work of a contemporary theorist that would help explain this phenomenon.

Assume you are attempting to study the impact of an aging population on the structure of health services. Select a theoretical orientation for your work and justify your selection.

Discuss the contribution of Theda Skocpol's theory of revolution to political sociology.

A common observation is that much of the contemporary empirical work of sociologists in the U.S. has become atheoretical. Critique and explain that observation.

Discuss one of the contributions of either Bourdieu or Giddens to sociology.

It is said that such great thinkers as Simmel and Veblen have been relatively neglected in mainstream sociology. Explain this.

Compare Toennies' concept of gemeinschaft and gesellschaft with Durkheim's mechanical and organic solidarity.

Discuss the significance of Erving Goffman's idea of "keying" in his Frame Analysis, or that of "impression management" in his Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.

Choose a current socio-political issue and present a sociological critique of it.

What do Comte, Hegel and Vico's theories of socio-historical change have in common?

Discuss the contributions of African Americans to sociology in the U.S.

Discuss the contributions of women to American sociology

Discuss Theda Skocpol's contribution to political sociology.

Discuss the importance of postmodernism to contemporary sociological theory

Name two books that you would recommend to a non-sociologist as a way to introduce him/her to what sociology is and what sociologists do. Justify your recommendation.

Describe the influence of Weber on the Frankfurt School.

Explain why Foucault believed language is important and compare his view with F.L. Bates' view of language.

Discuss the works of at least two major authors on the subject of rational choice theory.

Using either modernization or dependency theory, explain the magnitude and pattern of the AIDS epidemic/pandemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

Discuss the current state of systems theory.

Briefly describe gender relations from a modern and postmodern feminist theoretical perspective.

Discuss the influence of Weber on the works of Talcott Parsons.

Feminist scholars have been accused of being atheoretical. Critique this argument using the works of two feminist scholars

Select the work of one critical theorist and discuss how his/her ideas reveal Marx's influence

Describe sociobiology's approach to understanding the social world and explain why you agree or disagree with this perspective.

Explain the concept of "cultural capital" and its relevance to social mobility

Discuss and critique the concept of the "network society."

Briefly describe two contemporary versions of what is classically known as exchange theory.

Describe grounded theory and discuss the major concerns of mainstream sociology with the theory

Discuss the notion that postmodernism is against the project of Enlightenment.

Explain Schutz's distinction between directly and indirectly experienced reality and give one example of each.

Discuss the idea that Weber should be understood as primarily a conflict theorist.

Provide a Marxist analysis of a contemporary social issue.

How does Herbert Blumer define the term "symbolic interactionism"?

Describe one contemporary attempt to advance the rational choice theory.

What is innovative about Giddens's theory of structuration? In what ways, if any, has he moved social theory forward?

Summarize Merton's theory of "individual adaptation to structural strain."

Discuss the influence of Marx on criminology through the work of one of the following: Austin Turk, George Vold, Richard Quinney, Richard Chambliss.

Describe the view that structural-functionalist and conflict theories are not in diametric opposition, but simply are different ways of viewing the same social reality, citing specific works of at least one theorist in each camp. III.-b.

Take any one of Goffman's concepts and illustrate it with original examples.

Critique the concept of deviance from a symbolic interactionist perspective.

Briefly discuss the influence of Schutz's phenomenological sociology on Garfinkel's ethnomethodology

Describe Blau's attempt to relate interpersonal exchange to social change.

Discuss three key theoretical concepts an undergraduate theory course should include and explain their relevance to the discipline.

Briefly discuss the limitations of Marxism and explain how feminists incorporate Marxist thought.

Explain Habermas' concept of the colonization of the life-world.

What is the main argument of Simmel's essay on fashion?

Explain Pareto's concept of "non-rational" behavior.

Why did Dahrendorf focus on social conflict? How successful was his analysis?

Do you find the contribution of postmodern theory to be useful for the future development of sociology?

Summarize the basic arguments of Giddens' theory of structuration.

Does social theory have a guiding or prophetic role to play in today's society? Give reasons for your argument.

Explain the following statement by a contemporary feminist scholar, "Changes in the mode of production give rise to changes in the mode of reproduction."

Examine the significance of the term "reflexive sociology" for one of the following: Gouldner, Bourdieu, or Giddens.

Discuss and illustrate the importance of rationality in the work of Weber

Discuss the impact of globalization on the meaning and meaningfulness of social stratification.

Discuss the concept of power and cite works demonstrating its importance in sociological theory

Discuss some of the mounting evidence that women played a significant but unacknowledged role in the development of sociology in the United States.

Discuss the meaning of Weberian Marxism.

Critique the one major theoretical work associated with the notion of social construction of reality.

How do modernization theory, dependency theory, and world systems theory view social historical development?

Select an African-American female theorist or social critic and discuss her contribution to sociological theory.

Present a brief feminist critique of a classical empirical work in sociology.

Discuss the dualistic or two-fold nature of self according to Mead.

Elaborate on Howard Becker's assertion that there are always practical implications embedded in theory and that all social actions are motivated by little theories.

From a Weberian perspective on the causes, course, and effect of social stratification, evaluate Paul Starr's portrayal of the development of the profession of American medicine.

Using the work of Foucault on the relationship between language and power, discuss the merit and implications of the definition of medicine as "a cultural response to disease" (keeping in mind the anthropological notion that culture is language).

Compare and contrast structural-functionalist and Marxist arguments regarding the rise of modern technology.

Briefly explain Parson's "AGIL" model.

Contrast Marx's use of the concept of division of labor with that of Durkheim.

Discuss the role of "law" in the development of modern society according to one of the following: Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Toennies.

Provide a brief description of Simmel's concept of "stranger."

What is the role of the individual in modern society according to Durkheim?

Discuss Veblen's idea of "conspicuous consumption."

Evaluate the strengths and/or shortcomings of a contemporary conflict theory.

Present and evaluate a major postmodernist critique of sociology.

Compare Simmel's treatment of alienation with that of Marx.

At what point was the concept of culture introduced into American sociological theory and from what sources?

What concept of human nature can you infer from the works of either Mead or Cooley?

Discuss the importance of the concept of the social group in the work of one 20th century sociologist.

Describe the construction of dichotomies as a form of conceptualization important in sociological theory.

What school of thought is generally recognized as the distinctively American tradition in social theory and why?

How does Goffman's work differ from the work of Garfinkel?

Distinguish Marxian feminism that is informed by the work begun by Engels from the contemporary feminism of a theorist like Dorothy Smith.

Evaluate the importance of Garfinkel's "etcetera principle."

Explain Schutz' distinction between directly and indirectly experienced reality and its implications for sociology.

Describe voluntaristic theory of action as discussed by Parsons.

Explain Weber's theory of bureaucracy.

Identify and assess any feminist critique of mainstream sociological theory.

Defend or criticize Merton's advocacy of theories of the middle range.

Illustrate the difference in the conceptualization of conflict in the theory of Dahrendorf and in Marxian theory.

Identify what Anthony Giddens means by the "agency."

Identify what Pierre Bourdieu means by "habitus."

Identify the theoretical contributions of the Chicago School to urban sociology.

Discuss the contributions of any two African-American sociologists to sociological theory.

Choose a current social issue and present a sociological description/critique of it.

Describe C. Wright Mills' concept of the power elite.

For the most part sociologists have written for other sociologists. However, a few books have been read by a wider public because they represent "popular intellectualizing" about society. Critically and historically analyze the presentation of social life in one of the following works: Asylums, The Lonely Crowd, White Collar, Organization Man, and Habits of the Heart.

Discuss the relevance of the "sociology canon" for applied sociology.

Compare and contrast the use of gender in the work of one of the following: Marxists, structural functionalists, social interactionists, or exchange theorists.

Identify and discuss one empirical sociological, theoretically important study of religion in the United States.

Discuss a recent theoretical treatment of the concepts of race and ethnicity.

Critically analyze rational-choice theory from a feminist perspective.

Criticize any sociological theory from the point of view of an exchange theorist.

Evaluate the significance of Durkheim's discussion of abnormal forms of the division of labor.

Illustrate the difference in the conceptualization of conflict in the theory of Dahrendorf and in Marxian theory.

Give the broad outline of any postmodernist critique of any classical theory.

Critique Merton's advocacy of theories of the middle range.

Identify Weber's concept of charismatic authority and its implication for research.

Outline the essentials of Giddens' structuration theory.

Identify the theoretical significance of Garfinkel's breaching experiments.

Describe the contribution made to conflict theory by either Pierre Bourdieu or Randall Collins.

Critique one contemporary conflict theory.

Expand on Comte's observation that "Society, because it is closest to us, is the hardest for us to study objectively."

Comment on the claim that the field of population is the most scientific aspect of sociology.

Evaluate the current status of the ecological approach in sociology today.

Critique the dramaturgical approach.

Summarize Durkheim's criticism of the utilitarian tradition.

Discuss the influence of any classical theory in Lynds' work, *Middletown*.

Discuss the empirical uses of the concept of ritual in the sociological literature of one of the following: Goffman, Lukes, Parsons, Alexander.

Explain Weber's theory of ideal types.

Discuss the "Thomas Theorem."

Explain the basic principles of exchange according to Peter Blau.

Explain Veblen's concept of "conspicuous consumption" and its function in social stratification.

Discuss the credo "the personal is political" from the perspective of feminist theory.

Discuss Schutz's concept of "life world."

From the perspective of sociology of religion, explain the proposition: Not all that goes on in church is religion and not all religion is in church. Cite empirical examples to support your argument.

Describe a theory that synthesizes micro and macro sociology.

Define cognitive dissonance. Apply this theory to a current issue.

Distinguish between folkways and mores. Provide examples of each concept.

Describe Mead's concepts of "significant other" and "generalized other" and provide an empirical example of each.

Critically evaluate two contributions that Robert K. Merton has made to sociological theory.

Summarize C. Wright Mills' theory of power elite in the United States.

Discuss the "dramaturgical approach" and cite advantages as well as disadvantages of this perspective.

Explain the following statement by the contemporary feminist scholar, Lise Vogel: "Changes in the mode of production give rise to changes in the mode of reproduction."

How does Herbert Blumer define the term "symbolic interactionism?"

Expand on Homans' statement: "I hold myself to be an ultimate psychological reductionist."

Discuss problems pointed out by Homans with the structural-functionalist explanation of institutions.

Explain Habermas, concept of the "colonization of the life world."

Explain what Parsons meant by The Voluntaristic Theory of Action.

Explain the theoretical and empirical importance of Dorothy Smith's treatment of gender as "a situated accomplishment."

How does the concept of "cultural capital" inform the analysis of race, class and gender?

Discuss "inter-subjectivity" as a basis for social organization in phenomenological sociology.

Criticize any specific theory of stratification from the point of view of an exchange theorist.

Defend Parson's use of the concept equilibrium against the criticism that it represents a status quo bias and makes social change impossible.

Illustrate the difference in the conceptualization of conflict in the theory of Dahrendorf and in Marxian theory.

Describe any specific post-modernist critique of sociology.

Assess and illustrate the significance of Georg Simmel,s "Formal Sociology."

Summarize Durkheim,s criticism of the utilitarian tradition.

Compare a theorist from "The Earlier Wave" of micro interactionism (symbolic interactionism) with a theorist from "The Later Wave" (Ethnomethodology)". Articulate the differences between the two.

Select two women sociologists of your choice and describe their contributions to the field.

Discuss C. Wright Mills, major contributions to sociology.

Discuss Garfinkel,s concept of the et cetera principle.

Discuss at some length Blumer,s main premises that underlie his sociological social psychology.

Distinguish between the development of the "self" from Cooley,s perspective and Mead,s perspective.

Briefly compare Comte and Vico,s stages of socio-historical evolution.

Compare a critical and a functionalist analysis of a current social issue (excluding OJ or fail!).

Compare the central ideas of two of the following: Marx,s Communist Manifesto, Weber,s The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, Durkheim,s Division of Labor in Society, Simmel,s Philosophy of Money.

Compare the essential elements of Erving Goffman,s project in his last major work, Frame Analysis, with his first major work, Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.

Compare two contemporary conflict theorists and evaluate their respective strengths.

Compare two contemporary feminist theorists and evaluate their respective strengths.

Discuss Pierre Bourdieu,s concept of habitus and critique its usefulness in empirical work.

Discuss the influence of the work of Dorothy Smith.

Identify and describe one contemporary theory that incorporates social market systems.

Identify the rational/utilitarian tradition as it is represented in one classical and in one recent theory.

Contrast the nature of social reality in the perspective of two of the following: Durkheim, Homans, Weber, Berger, and Luckmann.

Illustrate the distinctive character of Simmel,s formal sociology.

Identify charismatic authority as Weber used the type in his analysis and its implication for sociological study.

Discuss Blumer,s main premises underlying sociological social psychology.

Assess the contribution of Louis Wirth,s essay on Urbanism as a Way of Life to the research tradition of American urban studies.

Define Park,s cycle of race relations or Milton Gordon,s stages of assimilation.

Critically assess any social evolutionary theory of your choosing.

Define cognitive dissonance; illustrate by example.

Discuss one specific theory on the sociology of revolution.

Identify the role of ideology in the work of any contemporary sociologist.

Explain Max Weber,s theory of social action.

Illustrate the difference in the conceptualization of conflict in the theory of Dahrendorf and Marx.

Distinguish Berger and Luckman,s use of reification from Marxian uses of that term.

Discuss Goffman's concepts of impression management.

Explain Schutz's distinction between directly and indirectly experienced reality.

Discuss the concept of "the generalized other" in the Meadian tradition.

Defend the importance that Garfinkel gives everyday activities as a central concern of sociology.

Discuss C. Wright Mills, concept of the "sociological imagination."

Discuss the three types of authority proposed by Weber: traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic.

Summarize Durkheim's criticism of Herbert Spencer.

Compare and contrast Goffman and Garfinkel in one important respect.

Explain two of the following concepts citing relevant sources: mechanical division of labor; race , class, and gender; retreatism; middle-range theories; gender stratification; patriarchy; pattern variables.

Describe Merton,s typology of individual adaptation to structural strain.

Identify any two contributing post-modernist sociologists and their central ideas.

Briefly describe the central ideas of one of the members of the Frankfurt School.

Discuss social change from Durkheim,s point of view.

The materialist feminist critique has come under attack because of its focus on capitalism and patriarchy as social totalities. Discuss the major criticisms and alternatives to this perspective.

Evaluate the impact of Durkheim,s work on the current study of deviant behavior.

Why is Weber's notion of bureaucracy so important? Analyze an organization you are familiar with using Weber's characteristics of bureaucracy.

Set forth two contributions that Merton has made to sociological theory. Critically evaluate these contributions.

Discuss the "dramaturgical approach" and cite advantages as well as disadvantages of this perspective.

Compare Goffman's early work on Presentation of Self in Everyday Life to his later conclusions in Frame Analysis.

If Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity holds for modern societies, why is there a tendency toward anomie?

Choose a current social issue and present a sociological description/critique of it.

Briefly present an argument for or against the classical functionalist view of social change.

Assess and illustrate the distinctive contributions of Georg Simmel to the theoretical alternatives in contemporary sociology.

Describe the Voluntaristic theory of action in the work of Talcott Parsons.

Describe the looking-glass-self theory as the theory of self-formation developed by Cooley and expanded by Mead.

Discuss the agency-structure debate from an interactionist perspective.

Describe one theory of revolutions in the current sociological literature.

Describe and discuss the relevance of the work of two major seventeenth and eighteenth century social thinkers to the development of sociology (e.g., Vico, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke).

Discuss the state of sociology in the United States between the two World Wars and its contribution to later sociological theory.

Identify the most significant intellectual roots of Blumerian symbolic interactionism as represented in the work of Blumer.

Identify the points of difference between Durkheim's and Weber's respective sociologies of religion.

Discuss Goffman's use of the concept impression management and his insistence that issues regarding an actor's hypocrisy are irrelevant for sociological study.

Describe the problem of voluntarism in the action theory of Talcott Parsons.

Critique Homans' Exchange Theory in terms suggested by Peter Blau.

Distinguish "Post-Modernism" and "Post-Industrialism" as used in contemporary sociological literature.

Present a specific feminist critique of conventional understanding of gender.

Identify one contemporary (post-1970) neofunctionalist and his/her contributions.

Describe the reformulation of conflict theory according to Jonathan Turner, Ralf Dahrendorf, Randall Collins, or Immanuel Wallerstein.

How would you relate Ferdinand Tönnies sociology to the romanticism of his day?

Briefly contrast the two types of rationality in Weber: Instrumental Rationality and Value Rationality.

Describe C. Wright Mills, theory of power in the United States.

"If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences." Discuss.

Briefly discuss the contribution of one of the following to feminist theory:

Dorothy Smith

Rae Blumberg

Arlene Kaplan Daniels

Janet Saltzmay Chafetz

Patricia Hill-Collins

Choose a current social issue and develop a sociological description/critique of it.

Discuss the implications of Symbolic Interactionism for either social change or social control.

Discuss the developmental conception of the individual in Pragmatism and Symbolic Interaction.

Set forth two contributions that Merton has made to sociological theory. Critically evaluate these contributions.

Distinguish between self and socialization. How are they similar and how are they different in the Meadian tradition.

What is the importance of the taken-for-granted social world so significant in Garfinkel's theoretical analysis?

Discuss a feminist contribution to one of the following: ethnomethodology, Parsonian sociology, theory of development, or postmodernism.

Criticize any theory of stratification from the point of view of an exchange theorist.

Defend and criticize Parsons, use of the concept equilibrium.

Develop the argument that the notion of rationality lends a thematic unity to the work of Max Weber.

Critically evaluate Weber's work on the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. Why did Weber undertake this work?

Assess and illustrate the distinctive contribution of Georg Simmel as a theoretical alternative in contemporary sociology.

Identify and describe the significant contributions of an African American or Hispanic social thinker to social theory.

Select one empirical sociological study and explain how it substantiates a set of theoretical propositions.

Examine the view that there is a significant difference between the writings of the young and the mature Marx.

Choose a current social issue and present a postmodern critique of it.

Criticize Weber's ideas about bureaucracy from the point of view of a symbolic interactionist.

Present a phenomenological critique of the labor theory of value.

Why did American functionalists like Robert Merton reject social evolutionary theory? Discuss.

Identify Goffman's use of the concept impression management and assess its implication for sociological study.

Describe the contribution of C. Wright Mills to American Sociology.

Parsons characterizes the professional values of American society as: Achievement, Universalism, Functional specificity, Affective neutrality, and Collectivity orientation. How does he use these pattern variables to analyze the role of the modern physician?

How do modernist social thinkers such as Habermas differ with postmodernists such as Foucault on the subjects of rationality and enlightenment?

Describe Ethnomethodology and elaborate on its strengths and weaknesses by citing examples from the literature.

Discuss the intellectual influences on feminist theory citing relevant works and theorists.

Write a brief sociological analysis of President Clinton's search for an Attorney General.

How are the "I" and "me" related in Mead's theory? How do they work with the "generalized other?"

Identify the contributions of two important theorists to symbolic interactionism.

Defend and criticize Merton's advocacy of theories of the middle range.

Illustrate the difference in the conceptualization of conflict in the theory of Dahrendorf and in Marxian theory.

Assess and illustrate the distinctive contribution of Georg Simmel to the theoretical perspectives in contemporary sociology.

Distinguish among "Post-Modernism" and "Post-Industrialism" as those terms are used in contemporary sociological critiques.

Select what you consider one of the most influential sociological works of post-World War II and argue why that work is important to the discipline.

Discuss the genesis and development of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology.

From a sociological perspective, what is meant by "the whole (of a social group) is more than the sum of its parts?"

Compare and contrast the sociologies of William Graham Sumner and Lester Frank Ward. Discuss the continuing social-policy ramifications of their respective positions.

According to Weber's interpretation of history, how did the Protestant Ethic contribute to the development of capitalism?

Do you perceive Postmodernism as a boon or a bane for the future of sociological theory? Cite relevant literature.

In view of the recent failure of Marxist regimes how do you evaluate the viability of theoretical perspectives influenced by Marxist theory?

Compare two of the following concepts: Marx's "Alienation," Weber's "Rationalization," Lukacs's "Reification."

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of Goffman's Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.

What is dramaturgical analysis? Identify and describe the major contributions of two theorists.

Discuss Mead's theory of the social mind in relationship to the social self.

Discuss at some length Blumer's main premises that underlie sociological social psychology.

Apply your understanding of Weber's theory of rationality to a current event with which you have detailed familiarity

Describe an example of a work that integrates theory and research.

Discuss and critically evaluate the contribution of one of the following:

Robert Park

Milton Gordon

Robert Blauner

W. Lloyd Warner

Roland Warren

Ernest Burgess

Jessie Bernard

Alice Rossie

Criticize any theory of stratification from the point of view of an exchange theorist.

Give a broad outline of any post-modernist critique of sociology.

Evaluate Weber's use of authority types in his analysis of social organization.

Explain Schutz' distinction between directly and indirectly experienced reality and its theoretical implications for sociology.

What are some implications of chaos theory for sociology?

Discuss either the work of C. Wright Mills or that of Alvin Gouldner as establishing or contributing to a kind of skepticism toward the scientific pretentiousness of sociology.

Identify and assess any (your choice) feminist critique of mainstream sociological theory.

Discuss the differences between modernization theory, dependency theory, and Marxian theory,.

Cite and describe a theory in which conflict is productive for society.

Discuss the validity of symbolic interactionist concepts such as looking glass self, generalized other, Mead's concept of self, and the self-fulfilling prophecy in a mass society.

Briefly describe the Critical School's critique of sociology.

Discuss the treatment of social class/stratification in the works of the Chicago sociologists, citing specific works as examples.

Discuss the tendency toward reductionisms in the literature on race as opposed to the treatment of race as a political dynamic

Distinguish Berger and Luckman's use of reification from Marxian use of that term.

Present a Mertonian functional analysis of the current Japanese-United States conflict with regard to trade, industry, workers competence, etc.

Illustrate the distinctive character of Simmel's formal sociology.

To what extent have events in Eastern Europe validated/refuted Marxian criticism of capitalism?

Discuss a distinction between social theory and sociological theory, citing examples such as biosocial or macroeconomic paradigms.

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