

FEDERATION COMPREHENSIVE/QUALIFYING THEORY EXAMINATION
Federated Ph.D. Sociology Program
Texas Woman's University
University of North Texas

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Fall 2003

BEFORE BEGINNING:

Read through the questions and instructions so that you may make wise use of your choices and time.

Try to focus on the intent of the questions and approach them as comprehensively as time allows.

You will have until 5:00 p.m. to complete the examination. You should spend approximately half of your time on Parts I and II, on pages two and three (two questions), and half of your time on Part III, pages three and four (three questions). The questions of Part III are intended to be more focused and topically limited.

PLEASE **DOUBLE-SPACE** YOUR ANSWERS. THE BEGINNING OF EACH ANSWER SHOULD START AT THE TOP OF A NEW PAGE AND BE CLEARLY NUMERED.

Do not put your name on your paper. Use your assigned number, which is _____.

Part I: Broad General Questions - Choose and write on one question

I-1. Compare and contrast the approaches of Marx and Durkheim to the explanation of social problems/pathologies.

I-2. Choose one substantive field of sociology and describe how theory has been used to direct research in that field, citing at least three examples.

I-3. Below are a list of theorists and topics generally associated with them. Select three and justify these as representing the foundations of sociology.

- Suicide - Durkheim
- Social Class - Marx
- Bureaucracy - Weber
- Race - Myrdal
- Population - Malthus
- Total Institutions - Goffman
- Assimilation - Gordon
- Power - Mills
- Race/Class/Gender - Collins
- World Systems - Wallerstein

I-4. Describe and critique what you see as the best two examples of theoretical synthesis in sociological theory work.

I-5. Compare and contrast descriptions and criticism of two of the following scholars of capitalism: Durkheim, Weber, Marx, or Tönnies.

I-6. Discuss the impact of Marx, Durkheim and Weber on at least two contemporary sociological theories from the following: Structuralism, Neo-Functionalism, Stratification, Conflict, Rational Choice, Symbolic Interactionism, or Critical Sociology.

I-7. Compare and contrast at least one classical and one contemporary theorist's version of conflict theory from the following: For classical choose from Marx, Weber, Simmel, or Pareto and for contemporary choose from Dahrendorf, Habermas, Bourdieu, or Collins.

Part II: Development of Social Thought – Choose and write on one question

II-8. Discuss the 19th Century intellectual antecedents that shaped U.S. sociology in the 20th Century.

II-9. Compare and contrast French and German contributions to sociology in the 19th and early 20th Centuries.

II-10. Discuss the influence of the theories of Herbert Spencer or Auguste Comte on one of the following: Emile Durkheim, William Graham Sumner, or Lester Frank Ward.

II-11. Discuss the influence of the Enlightenment belief in progress in the works of three of the following social thinkers: Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, Auguste Comte, Ferdinand Tönnies, or Max Weber.

II-12. How is the sociology of one of the following figures elaborated in one contemporary sociological school of thought? In your answer, discuss specific research projects and debates. Choose from Marx, Weber, Simmel, or Durkheim.

II-13. Discuss the contribution of each of the following precursors of sociology to the development of modern social thought: Rousseau, Vico, Ibn Khaldoun, Hobbes, Locke, Hegel, Kant, Condorcet, and Saint Simon.

II-14. From early social/philosophical thought to contemporary sociological theory, critique some of the major uses of the concept of power (or its equivalent) as a component in theory building.

II-15. Discuss the historical role of sociological theory in: (a) defining the growth and change of sociology as a discipline, (b) holding the discipline together, and (c) providing a basis for empirical work.

II-16. Trace the 18th century European origin of the concept of class and critique the continued contribution of theoretical work on class/stratification to the body of sociological theory.

Part III: Short Questions – Choose and write on three questions

III-17. Explain what Eric Olin Wright meant by “contradictory locations within class relations.”

III-18. According to Durkheim, what is the relationship between types of social solidarity and their corresponding forms of law?

III-19. Briefly explain Sheldon Stryker’s concept of salience hierarchy.

III-20. Goffman has been described as focusing on the “sociology of the forgotten.” Explain this concept and give an example from his work.

III-21. Compare and contrast Homans’s behavioristic approach to exchange theory and Blau’s dialectical approach.

III-22. How could it be argued that one of the following has made a substantial contribution to the canon of sociological thought: Choose from Jane Addams, Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, or Marianne Weber.

III-23. Discuss Pierre Bourdieu’s contribution to the sociology of education or sociology of art.

III-24. Name two books that you would recommend to a non-sociologist as a way to introduce him or her to what sociology is and what sociologists do. Justify your recommendation.

III-25. Explain Giddens' concept of structuration.

III-26. Discuss the role of community studies in early U.S. sociology.

III-27. Discuss the contribution of one African American sociologist to sociology in the U.S.

III-28. How did Robert Merton's conceptualization of structural functionalism differ from earlier functionalist theory?

III-29. Explain two of the following concepts citing relevant sources: prisoner's dilemma, greatest happiness for greatest number, private vices, public benefits, satisficing, or rational economic man.

III-30. Contrast Marx's use of the concept of division of labor with that of Durkheim.

III-31. Provide a brief description of Simmel's concept of stranger.

III-32. What is the role of the individual in modern society according to Durkheim?

III-33. Discuss Veblen's idea of conspicuous consumption.

III-34. Compare two contemporary conflict theories. Evaluate their respective strengths and/or shortcomings.

III-35. Summarize Jeffrey Alexander's or Anthony Giddens' critique of postmodernism.

III-36. Summarize Comte's hierarchy of sciences.

III-37. Summarize Spencer's classification of society.

III-38. Describe Pareto's concept of the 'circulation of elites.'

III-39. Summarize Habermas' concepts of communicative and instrumental action.