

**FEDERATION COMPREHENSIVE THEORY EXAMINATION**

Federated Ph.D. Sociology Program  
Texas Woman's University  
University of North Texas

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**Spring 2004**

**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 (two questions) and half of your time on Part III (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 SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS – Choose and write on one question

I-1. Compare and contrast the views of Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber on at least 2 of the following subjects (in 2 separate sections):

- role of division of labor in modern society,
- concept of freedom in modern industrial society,
- place of the individual in contemporary society,
- future of Western society.

I-2. Discuss the impact and continuing relevance of at least four of the following classical works in sociological theory and practice (in 4 separate sections):

- Durkheim's Suicide,
- Weber's Protestant Ethic,
- Simmel's Principles of Sociology,
- Marx's Capital,
- Comte's Course of Positive Philosophy,
- Spencer's Social Statics,
- Tonnies' Community and Society,
- Veblen's, Theory of the Leisure Class.

I-3. Discuss the impact and continuing relevance of at least 4 of the following contemporary works in sociological theory (in 4 separate sections):

- Parsons' Structure of Sociological Theory,
- Merton's Social Theory and Social Structure,
- Sorokin's Social & Cultural Dynamics,
- Blumer's Symbolic Interactionism,
- Goffman's Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,
- Mills' Power Elite,
- Habermas' Legitimation Crisis,
- Garfinkel's Studies in Ethnomethodology.

I-4. Compare and contrast the sociological theories of Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, and Weber in respect to at least 2 of the following subjects (in 2 separate sections):

- agency and structure,
- comparative-historical social systems,
- the master trend of social development,
- social norms and institutions.

I-5. Elaborate on how Durkheim, Marx, Simmel, and Weber theorized about at least 2 of the following subjects (in 2 separate sections):

- class, power, and status,
- social evolution, progress, and human happiness,
- political democracy and authoritarianism,
- ethnicity and nation

I-6. Compare and contrast the ideas of Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber on at least 2 of the following subjects (in 2 separate sections):

- general sociological theory and methodology,
- structures and functions of society,
- the Hobbesian problem of social order,
- sources of social conflict.

I-7. Compare and contrast the views of Marx, Durkheim, Simmel, and Weber with those of Habermas, Giddens and Bourdieu on at least 2 of the following subjects (in 2 separate sections):

- nature, types, and functioning of capitalism,
- significance of religion for the genesis and evolution of modern society,
- role of elites in social history,
- process of societal rationalization,
- relationship between economy and social organization.

Part II. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL THOUGHT – Choose and write on one question

II-1. Trace at least 2 of the following contemporary theories to its predecessors in the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century: Structural Functionalism, Symbolic Interactionism, Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology, or Postmodern sociology.

II-2. Discuss the impact of at least 2 of the following pre-sociological social theorists on classical sociological theory: Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Locke, Vico, Smith, Condorcet, or Saint Simon.

II-3. Trace the origin, evolution and application of the concept of “dialectics” from classical to modern and post-modern sociological theory.

II-4. Describe the past, present, and future (as you see it) of “grand theorizing” and give pertinent examples from both classical and contemporary sociological theory.

II-5. Outline and analyze 4 main stages or theorists in the development of social thought from Aristotle through Comte.

II-6. Discuss the similarities and differences between social philosophy (or philosophy of history) and sociology or social science according to major classical and modern sociological theories.

II-7. Trace the influence of at least 2 of these pre-sociological social thinkers--Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Montesquieu, Smith, Condorcet, or Saint Simon--on at least 2 contemporary or current sociologists.

II-8. Identify and analyze elements of sociological theory in the development of at least 2 of the following social sciences: political science, anthropology, psychology, or economics.

II-9. Compare classical, contemporary, and post-modern treatments of positivism citing and using works of at least 2 theorists from each.

II-10. Pick one substantive field of sociology and describe how theory has been used to direct research in that field, as well as how research in that field has influenced theory, citing at least three examples.

Part III. SHORT QUESTIONS - Choose and write on three of the following questions

III-1. Summarize Merton's discussion of types of individual adaptations to structural strain.

III-2. Examine the significance of the term "reflexive sociology" for Bourdieu.

III-3. Briefly discuss Giddens' theory of structuration.

III-4. Why did Dahrendorf focus on social conflict? How successful was his analysis?

III-5. Discuss Herbert Blumer's concept of "Symbolic Interactionism."

III-6. Take any of Goffman's concepts and illustrate it with fresh examples, thus confirming, criticizing, or adding additional nuances to his theory of interaction order.

III-7. What is Sociobiology? Give an example of the theory.

III-8. Defend or criticize the Postmodern project.

III-9. How can social theory contribute to the sociological project? Present reasons for your argument.

III-10. Compare and contrast the ways in which the concept of power is used by any two sociological theorists in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

III-11. Outline the basic propositions of Emerson's exchange network theory.

III-12. According to Durkheim, what is the relationship between types of social solidarity and their forms of law?

III-13. Explain the nature and role of power according to Giddens' structuration theory.

III-14. Define and discuss the inter-relationships among Parsons' cultural, social, and personality systems.

III-15. Describe and explain the impact of the Frankfurt School on the Marxist tradition of sociological theory.

- III-16. Present Comte's hierarchy of the positive sciences.
- III-17. Apply Marx's thesis-antithesis-synthesis scheme to social development and change.
- III-18. Discuss Durkheim's distinction between social causes and social functions.
- III-19. Explain and apply Weber's idea of 'elective affinity.'
- III-20. Define and describe Veblen's concept of a leisure class.
- III-21. Compare and contrast Weber and Parsons' use of the term "social action."
- III-22. Explain Goffman's term "total institution" and give at least two examples.
- III-23. Explain how Weber employs *Verstehen* in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
- III-24. Identify and explain the various forms of alienation Marx believed are caused by industrial capitalism.
- III-25. Explain what classical interactionists meant by the term "self indication".