

**Sociology of Gender: Comprehensive Exam
Spring 2016**

I. Answer ONE of the following questions:

1. In the 1970s, feminist sociologists insisted on the distinction between biological sex and social gender. More recently, feminist sociologists have questioned this neat conceptual binary. Discuss changes in the conceptualization of biology in the sociology of gender. In your answer, explain the reasons for the original analytical distinction and discuss the works that were most significant in challenging it. Do you think that the distinction is still viable?
2. A prevalent sociological approach to the study of gender inequality points to its maintenance and reproduction through interactional/relational processes. How is gender inequality perpetuated through interaction, and what are the limitations of an interactional perspective in fully understanding gender inequality?

II. Answer ONE of the following questions:

1. Review the major theories and empirical findings on the division of housework and childcare between women and men in dual-earner heterosexual households. Why have women continued to perform the bulk of domestic labor and childcare even as their labor force participation and earnings have dramatically increased? What can an intersectional analysis tell us about the mechanisms producing gendered patterns of housework and childcare? Use at least two examples of an intersectional analysis of housework/childcare to bolster your argument.
2. A recent article in *Signs* explores the achievements, shortcomings, and potential future directions of qualitative research in feminist scholarship. Assess how gender was (traditionally) handled in the social sciences and how empirical inquiry has changed over the past few decades, being sure to integrate relevant scholarship to support your arguments.

III. Answer ONE the following questions:

1. Apply the theory of 'doing gender' to health. Use it to explain gendered health behavior, medical decision-making, and mortality/morbidity patterns among men and women. Be sure to incorporate the main components of the theory in your answer and relate it to the research question that most interests you in your own work.
2. In recent years, more and more processes and behaviors have become "medicalized." Define that process and describe how such medicalization has contributed to maintaining gender inequalities. What are the implications of this for the research question that most interests you in your own work?