

Sociology of Gender: Comprehensive Exam
Fall 2017

I. Answer ONE of the following questions:

1. As gender scholarship has developed, sociologists have moved to conceptualizing gender not just as a social role, but as a social structure. How and why has this change in conceptualizing gender occurred?
2. The grand theorizing about gender inequality and patriarchy characteristic of the 1970's and early 1980's has been replaced by more contextualized and contingent theorizing asking "what is gender?" or "how does gender illuminate a specific phenomenon?" With specific examples from your readings, describe this trend in feminist theory. Then discuss what is both gained and lost by this change of focus in feminist theory.

II. Answer ONE of the following questions:

1. In 2012, an AAUW report stated that women working full time in the United States still earned just 77 percent, on average, of what men earn, a gap of 23 percent. Though the gap has narrowed since the 1970s, due largely to women's progress in education and workforce participation and to men's wages rising at a slower rate, progress has stalled in recent years, and the pay gap does not appear likely to go away on its own. How has gender scholarship informed us about labor force participation, work and families, and diversity issues that relate to this issue?
2. Sociologists studying gender inequality use various levels of analysis, including the individual (personality), interactional, cultural (discourses), and organizational. Pick one of the following institutions and review the literature on how gender inequality is reproduced at these different levels:
 - Workplace
 - Schools
 - Family
 - State

III. Answer ONE the following questions:

1. Black feminist thought and transnational feminist sociology argue that conventional understandings of gender are limited because they focus almost exclusively on middle class, western, heterosexual white women. Explain their critiques. Then apply that critique to one of the research questions that interests you the most.
2. Apply the theory of 'doing gender' to education. 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.