

## **Sociology of Health Comprehensive Exam**

**Fall 2017**

***Answer 2 of the following 4 questions:***

1. It has been argued that there has historically been a "rise and fall" to the medical profession. Explain this argument. Do you agree with the assessment? In your answer, be sure to highlight where you think the status of medicine lies today.
2. Some have argued that the doctor-patient relationship is asymmetrical, while others assert that this relationship has become more equal. Present these stances, providing support for both arguments. End the essay with your own conclusion(s), supported with empirical evidence.
3. Men tend to have higher rates of mortality, but women tend to have higher rates of morbidity. Explore this paradox. Your response may include but need not be limited to the following issues. What is the evidence for higher mortality of men? For what types of diseases does this hold true? In what circumstances do women have greater mortality? How does this pattern change over the life-course? Why do women have higher morbidity, worse self-reported health, and more physical impairment? For what measures or diseases do men have greater problems? What are the social causes of the gender differences in mortality and health? Do social factors fully account for these differences? Present research evidence for all theoretical explanations.
4. What do Link and Phelan mean by "being at Risk of Risks" in their popular Fundamental Causes approach to understanding persistent health disparities? How does the ongoing struggle between a biomedical/clinical perspective and more sociological approaches to addressing health disparities relate to this notion of understanding "being at Risk of Risks"? Finally, offer pros and cons for the continual focus on healthy behaviors - how does this focus facilitate social justice in health, and how does it negate health equity?

*Answer 1 of the following 2 questions:*

1. According to some advocates, the knowledge of human genetic make-up resulting from The Human Genome Project will not only impact basic science, the practice of medicine, and the delivery of healthcare, but will also explain human behavior, and even provide solutions to social problems. Understood in this way, The Human Genome Project challenges the position held by the social sciences, and in particular by sociology, since the end of the Second World War. How has sociology responded to and incorporated – or not – genetic research? What do you see as the most pressing threats and opportunities for an engagement between sociology and genetics?
  
2. Health disparities are a significant research focus in the area of medical sociology. How might a focus on genetics help or hinder our understanding of those inequalities? Select at least two of the following social categories to analyze in this regard – age, race/ethnicity, social class, gender. What additional research needs to be done to help us better understand the nature of the relationship between genetics, health inequalities, and sociocultural causes?