

May 10, 2017

M.A. Examination in Sociological Theory

This is a three-hour closed book examination. Answer one question from Part one and I question from Part II. Answers will be evaluated on the depth of knowledge demonstrated on specific theories and concepts, facility with comparing and contrasting different theories and concepts, and the breadth of theories and concepts covered. Email the completed examination to yourself, Ms. Linda Keen, and to Dr. Gerald Turkel. Also, return the laptop and jump drive to either Ms. Linda Keen or Ms. Deanna Nardi.

Part I

1. Choose two classical theoretical approaches that take different positions on power and inequality. Compare and contrast their analyses of power and inequality. What are the core differences in their alternative approaches?
2. Compare the writings of either Weber or Bourdieu with Marx's writings on relationships between economic and cultural aspects of society. How do they differ in their formulations of economic and cultural aspects of society? Are their approaches complimentary or not?
3. In his study of social theory, Robert Nisbet refers to five themes that are central to social thought: Community, authority, status, the sacred, and alienation. Select one of these themes and compare and contrast how Durkheim and either Marx or Weber analyzes it.

Part II

1. To what extent can the body be conceptualized as a site of resistance and human agency? How do you understand the terms "resistance" and "agency" in their relationship to embodiment. Draw on the writings of two theorists in your answer.
2. The body is formulated both as a subject and an object in social theory. The body can be both a locus of human agency as well as an object of power relations. Compare and contrast two of the following theorists on the duality of the body: Foucault, Bourdieu, Merleau-Ponty, Goffman, Giddens, and Butler.
3. Social theory was originally established by representatives of privileged groups: White men from the global north. How has the inclusion of theories rooted in the experiences of historically marginalized groups changed social theory? Discuss two theorists who represent marginalized groups in your answer.