Gender Comprehensive Examination
Day # 1
Fall 2007

General questions. Answer two of these “two hour” questions.

1. Examine feminism's contribution to sociological research methodology. In your answer, (1) include a discussion of feminist critiques of sociological methods and describe whether/how feminist scholarship has altered the course of sociological inquiry and methods; (2) give examples of the relevance of feminist inquiry in contemporary sociology; and (3) conclude with an informed perspective on how/whether we should expect feminism to continue to influence sociological thought and empirical work.

2. Trace the impact of postmodern theory on feminist theory. In your discussion, (1) explain the extent to which postmodernism represents a break from the concerns of second wave feminism; and (2) discuss how you incorporate insights from postmodernism in your own understanding and research on gender.

3. Discuss the history of the relationship between feminism and the sociology of gender. In your answer, (1) explain how political activism can and should shape our scholarly agenda; (2) discuss both the benefits and the drawbacks of merging activism with scholarship; and (3) examine how feminism does (or does not) impact your own research goals.

4. The question of the origins of male dominance over women was a central preoccupation of feminist theories of the 1970s, but the topic has since been abandoned. In your answer, (1) discuss this history, explaining the main perspectives on the question of “origins” (2) speculate why this topic is no longer the center of attention; and (3) reflect on what you think are the major questions for feminist theory today.

5. Transnational feminist sociology is generating a great deal of interest among gender scholars today. In your answer, (1) explain this perspective; (2) choose a topic of concern to gender sociologists (e.g., workplace inequality, teen pregnancy, the household division of labor); and (3) explain how this perspective would apply, focusing on both its strengths and weaknesses.