Comprehensive Examination
Day 2 - Gender and Work

Fall 2007

Answer two of these "two hour" questions.

1. A number of predominately female occupations emphasize and exploit women's sexuality and sexual attractiveness. These occupations include those in the sex trades (e.g., prostitution, stripping), but many more in the "legitimate" service industry. In your answer, (1) provide examples from the literature of jobs that exploit women's sexuality; and (2) discuss the consequences of this type of work for gender inequality in the workplace.

2. A great deal of research in the sociology of gender emphasizes differences between men and women. Studies of workplace inequality, in particular, tend to derive their conclusions from comparisons between men and women workers. In your answer, (1) discuss some of the major findings from this approach; and (2) explain how including the experiences of LGBT workers has complicated our understanding of gender inequality in the workplace.

3. The labor force is divided between "men's jobs" and "women's jobs." In your answer, (1) provide an overview of this occupational segregation, citing as much empirical evidence as possible; and (2) discuss the major theoretical perspectives that sociologists have used to explain its causes and the reasons for its persistence.

4. Many sociologists and economists have linked gender roles to the earnings gap between women and men. In your answer, (1) discuss how women's family roles may contribute to their lower wages in the labor market; and (2) review the arguments from both supply and demand sides and provide your critique of each argument.