Comprehensive Examination in Racial and Ethnic Relations

DAY 1 -- 4 hrs total

Required Question (2 hrs)

1. Outline William Julius Wilson's "declining significance of race" thesis, with attention to his account of the emergence of both the African-American middle class and the urban "underclass." What kinds of evidence does he present? Then identify and evaluate the major critiques of Wilson's arguments, being as thorough and specific as possible. Which of these critiques are the most accurate and important, and why?

Choose 2 of 3 (1 hr each)

1. Identify and discuss the major institutional factors that are believed to be responsible for the disproportionately low matriculation, achievement, and graduation rates of minority group members in higher education, especially at predominantly white schools. Review theory and evidence, and offer concrete policy recommendations to address these problems.

2. Several authors, including especially E.M. Blalock, Jr., have dealt theoretically and empirically with the relationship between the relative size of a racial or ethnic minority population in a geographic area and the relative economic and occupational status of that population in that area. Summarize and evaluate this body of literature, emphasizing the work of Blalock.

3. Although many social scientists in the 1950s expected that social and economic development would diminish the importance of ethnicity as a basis for political conflict, "ethnoregional" movements continue to proliferate around the globe. Outline the major theoretical perspectives that have been advanced to account for this seeming paradox, and evaluate the empirical evidence bearing on each.