Comprehensive Exam
in
Theory

Day One

2-hr. Question: Please select one of the following:

1. What is your theoretical framework for analyzing social conflict? Include in your discussion the different conceptualizations of the origins, the conditions and factors, and the outcomes of conflict in the theories (both classical and contemporary) from which you derive your own framework.

2. Discuss the importance of the "subjective" in several different theories (e.g., Weber, Freud, Simmel, Mead, Goffman). How have these conceptualizations of subjective understanding (whether individual or collective) served as the "micro-macro link" in recent sociological analysis?

1-hr. Questions: Please answer two of the following:

1. Discuss some of the important ways Gramsci diverged from Marx in his theory of class struggle, as it relates to a more general theory of collective action.

2. "Scratch a theory and you’ll find an autobiography." This popular saying in sociology suggests that theories emerge from concrete life experiences. Choose at least two prominent sociological theorists and explore the relationship between their autobiographies, social contexts, and social theories. What does this exercise tell us about the nature of social theorizing?

3. What are the central tenets of the theories of George Homans and James Coleman? Critically evaluate their contributions to contemporary sociological theory.