

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN CULTURE
FEBRUARY 1 – 5, 2021**

You are required to answer THREE (3) QUESTIONS (ONE QUESTION FROM EACH OF PARTS A, B & C). Each answer should be 10-12 pages (12-point font, double-spaced and standard margins) in length. The complete exam should not total more than 36 pages in length (12-point font, double-spaced and standard margins) not including references. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT READ PAST THE 36TH PAGE.

Part A

1. Cultural capital is a key analytic tool in the sociological study of culture and inequality. Imagine that you are asked to give a lecture to an advanced undergraduate lecture on cultural capital. This class is instructed by a famous sociologist who uses this concept in their own research, and they will be sitting in on your lecture. How would you explain the significance of this concept to the undergraduate audience in a clear, concise way? What examples would you use? How would you signal to the course instructor (the imagined famous sociologist) that you understood the nuances and debates around this concept? In your response, you may wish to focus on the concept of cultural capital, or you may wish to bring other concepts that illuminate the link between culture and social inequality.
2. Reflect on the legacy of Bourdieu in the study of culture and inequality. What parts of Bourdieu's legacy are worth redeeming, conceptualizing, and what parts are worth dropping? You may choose to answer this question in general terms, or you may wish to focus in on a specific empirical area of culture to develop your arguments.

Part B

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages to studying cultural phenomena quantitatively vs. qualitatively? Illustrate these advantages and disadvantages with examples from the list. Identify ways in which the disadvantages of either mode of analysis can be mitigated by the other.
4. Pick an area of the comp list and, using supporting examples, discuss two sociological questions it has done a good job of answering. Then propose a sociological question it has made some attempt to answer but has not done as well in. Propose a methodological approach or integration with another area of the list that could help answer that question.

Part C

5. What are the weakest studies on the list, and what are the most valuable studies on the list? Justify your choices. What problems are created for the sociological study of culture by the weaknesses in those studies? Conversely, how is the study of culture strengthened by those valuable studies? Overall, based on your identification of these strengths and weaknesses, assess the health of the sociology of culture.
6. Looking across the comp list, how reliant do you think the contemporary study of culture is on classical sociological theory? Regardless of how in conversation with classical theory you believe contemporary cultural sociology to be, argue for if it should be more reliant, less reliant, or the same.