

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH
FEBRUARY 1-8, 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. Although intersectionality is not often discussed explicitly in the health literature, this well-known theoretical perspective may apply especially to the study of race, sex, and class as risk factors in health and mental health. Give your definition of intersectionality to be clear (as a starting point) and review findings from the existing literature which reflect intersectional thinking. Also review cases where findings may be wrong because of the failure to consider intersectionality. Finally, outline a study you would implement to study the intersectional effects of race, class, and gender.
2. The social causation of health has unique qualities compared to the notion of causality often articulated in epidemiology and the health professions. Comment on some of the unique issue in social causation that must be considered, relative to a medical model approach, and discuss designs which may be effective in separating social causation from social selection.. As one example of social causation, explain why the joint effects of gender and race can be considered as social causes.

Part B

3. Does fundamental cause theory (FCT) have anything to say about the COVID-19 global pandemic? Outline several pandemic-related issues where FCT would be a good guiding framework.
4. Compare and contrast literature on socioeconomic health inequality with literature on gender health inequality. In your answer, (a) discuss which literature has more empirical puzzles that remain unexplained and (b) articulate some of the unique methodological complexities that confront each literature.

Part C

5. What are the implications of statements about social movements in the material on the reading list for potentially understanding how and why the Black Lives Matter movement might be associated with black-white differences in mental health? Through what processes might that movement be associated with mental health for various racial groups? Which aspects of mental health? Why?
6. Only a few of the papers on the reading list explicitly investigate associations of socioeconomic mobility (e.g., upward or downward income mobility) with health. However,

many studies investigate associations of socioeconomic position with a greater range of health outcomes. Some of those might be relevant to the investigation of mobility effects. After briefly summarizing the studies on mobility, discuss the implications for research and theory on effects of socioeconomic position and health for understanding and further investigating mobility and health. Address the limitations of developing hypotheses about social mobility and health based on findings and theory about socioeconomic position differences in health.