

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO ~ DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN GLOBAL MIGRATION
August 19 to 23, 2024

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 and double-spaced) in length. The complete exam should not total more than 36 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font), not including references. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT READ PAST THE 36TH PAGE.

Part A.

1. How do scholars theorize unfreedom under capitalism for migrant workers? What have been the main areas of debate between these scholars? How have scholars sought to move beyond the binary of free and unfree labour in the migration context? In your answer, consider the analytic consequences of different methodological approaches.
2. The idea of 'contextual factors' is a central focus in migration studies. It is deployed at different analytical scales to explain the character of population flows and displacements, and post-migration outcomes. Focus on readings in the modules on "post-migration", "refugee status, resettlement and critique" and "gender, sexuality, and migration" to critically assess the different ways the notion of context is used to explain patterns and outcomes.

Part B.

3. How do scholars conceptualize and analyze the relationship between gender and migration? Specifically, how do they understand unequal gender relations as a mechanism driving migration? And how do they analyze the ways migration modifies gender inequalities? In your answer, pay attention to the various domains of gender relations under examination, within or across studies, including the household, the workplace, social movements, law, policy or others. What do we see when analyzing one domain rather than another? What does the study of multiple domains teach us? What domains are under-analyzed in the literature?
4. How are the concepts of substantive rationality and discretionary power deployed in scholarship on the politics of precarious non-citizenship? How do they reveal and help explain the multi-scalar and multi-actor character of the boundaries within and between citizenship and non/citizenship? In your answer, identify specific scales and actors that are key in the deployment of substantive rationality and discretionary power. Consider both processes or instances in which the blurring of boundaries extends the rights and entitlements of precarious noncitizens and those where it retracts or reduces them.

Part C.

5. Recent years have seen growing calls for immigration policy reforms in Canada. In order to address these concerns, it would be important to identify and prioritize immigration policy issues and develop evidence-based policies. To achieve effective and meaningful immigration policy reform: 1) identify the top 2 priority immigration policy issues that we should consider; 2) state why these policy issues should be the priority; 3) what evidence is there to support your claim; and 4) what are some of the policy options, opportunities and challenges the governments can anticipate as they try to address these issues. In your answer, please draw on relevant theoretical perspectives and empirical evidence to support your analysis.
6. In today's globalized world, borders have become increasingly fluid and permeable. While most countries welcome free movement of goods and services, and to some extent the movement of people, made possible by global free trade, in many countries governments are increasing efforts to patrol, block and regulate borders. Discuss in what ways borders have become less permeable and more regulated? Why do we see these changes? What does it say about the nature of global migration today, and what are ways in which we need to rethink the dominant theories on global migration? In your answer, please draw on material in the sections on Global and Transnationalism Perspective on Migration and the sections on The Politics of Non/Citizenship, particularly the subsection on Theorizing non/citizenship, and the section on Multi-Scalar & Probationary Non/Citizenship.