

Exam SOCA26 – autumn 2022

The exam consists of four (4) questions. Each answer can give a maximum of (10) points. The total number of points is 40. Pass requires 15 points. The grade C requires 25 points. The grade B requires 30 points, and grade A requires 35 points or more.

The answers can be written on separate paper sheets or in this compendium. If you write on separate paper sheets, please write your name and page number on each sheet.

Bear in mind:

- Reflect on your answer before you start writing.
- The course contents should be reflected in your answers.
- Define key concepts.
- It is generally helpful to provide real world examples to illustrate your lines of thought.
- *Write clearly. If the answers cannot be read, they cannot be graded either.*

Good luck!

Olle

1. Explain Marx notions of labour, exploitation, class conflict, commodification, commodity fetishism, base/superstructure, false consciousness, ideology, and class consciousness in historical perspective. Marx thought of his own theory in naturalist/positivist terms, that is, as a theory outlining the causal direction of human history in a rather deterministic way. Discuss some of the problems with this theoretical view of history (in so doing you may draw on the notions of performativity and reflexivity, and more generally on the interpretivist notion that the social world is fundamentally different from the natural world).

2. Describe Durkheim's conception of modernization/division of labour and the transformation of agricultural societies into industrialized societies. What is the focus area of Durkheim's thinking about society? Explain the difference between mechanical and organic solidarity. Describe briefly various forms of pathological division of labour and the causes that Durkheim hypothesized. How does variation in degrees of social integration and moral regulation produce different suicide rates according to Durkheim? Finally explain how Durkheim attempted to develop a naturalist/positivist (rather than interpretivist) type of sociology, according to which social facts are understood as entities that have influence one another (thus circumventing the level of individual psychology). Why is this idea problematic (from the viewpoint of methodological individualism)?

3. Describe Parsons' functionalist theory of differentiation/modernization/development. More specifically, describe the four subsystems (AGIL) he outlined and explain how social order/equilibrium is reached between them, according to Parsons. How do roles/statuses change in modernizing societies in terms of Parsons' five pattern variables? Finally consider some of the problems with Parsons' modernization theory (e.g. the problem of backward causation and the possibility of "dysfunctional" structures).

4. Describe how symbolic interactionists understand the development of the human mind and the self through social interaction: in so doing, explain how our minds are social (in this view)? Why are human thought processes social according to symbolic interactionism? What does it mean to internalize a generalized other? Why are we humans acting on reasons for action according to symbolic interactionists (in contrast to viewing behaviour as caused by factors such as external stimuli, social forces and sub-personal factors, such as brain processes). What does it mean that we act on shared situation definitions? Finally think about the implications of this way of understanding the social world for policymaking/development policy? Do we have to take pre-existing, shared situation definitions and understandings (what we may call culture and institutions) into account when thinking about reform and policy change, of say education systems or criminal justice systems? If so, why, according to a symbolic interactionist?