UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
FACULTY OF ARTS

JANUARY 2011 SESSION EXAMINATIONS

SOC 1001 Understanding Sociology

15.30 -17.30 Thursday 27 January 2011

NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer two questions from the following. (50 marks each)

1. Understanding society requires a focus on both the structural and agentic features of everyday life. Discuss.

2. Social class is a key influence on people's life chances and quality of life. Discuss.

3. The number and percentages of older persons in Malta will increase in the coming years. How will this affect Maltese society?

4. The meaning and definition of the 'family' is historically and culturally relative. Discuss.
Answer any TWO questions. READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY, identifying their various components. Take some time (not longer than 5 minutes each question) to PLAN and STRUCTURE your essays, and remember that legible handwriting is essential. The three basic ingredients of a good essay are sequence and strength of argument, use of examples, and evidence of additional reading. (Each question carries 50 marks)

1. In what ways, if at all, is sociological research a political animal?

2. Briefly discuss each of the following, taking care to emphasise the link between them: (a) population; (b) sampling frame; (c) theoretical vs achieved sample.

3. Discuss, with reference to two or more sampling techniques of your choice, the ways in which sampling is a sort of compromise between manageability and representativeness.

4. Briefly discuss each of the following with respect to research ethics: (a) free and informed consent; (b) confidentiality and anonymity; (c) relations with the public sphere in general and the media in particular.

5. “Sociological research is a valuable activity and contributes to the well-being of society. Members should strive to maintain the integrity of sociological inquiry as a discipline, the freedom to research and study, and to publish and promote the results of sociological research including making data available for the use of researchers in the future” (BSA Statement of Ethical Practice, 2002). Discuss.

6. Using an example of your choice, discuss the ways in which research design is very much a matter of creative choices and perspectives and ultimately opens up an infinity of outcomes.

7. Triangulation is said to offer a means of overcoming some of the limitations of research design. Do you agree, and why?
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any TWO questions. READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY, identifying their various components. Take some time (not longer than 5 minutes each question) to PLAN and STRUCTURE your essays, and remember that legible handwriting is essential. The three basic ingredients of a good essay are sequence and strength of argument, use of examples, and evidence of additional reading. (Each question carries 50 marks)

1. List and discuss some of the basic principles of experiments as a type of research design.

2. Contemporary survey-questionnaire design goes well beyond a basic attention to wording and takes into account structure, order, and cognitive aspects. Discuss.

3. What sort of processes might we take into account in order to understand social statistics critically?

4. In what way/s, if at all, is the ‘enumerative modality’ associated with politics, power, and the social order?

5. List and discuss the basic principles of questionnaire wording.
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any one question. (100 marks.)

1. Feminists have drawn attention to the patriarchal structure of the welfare state. Discuss with reference to different types of feminists.

2. Beyond the supporters and opponents of neo-liberal capitalism, others have proposed middle-of-the-road economic solutions. Discuss.

3. Significant sections of the poor have been portrayed as forming part of an ‘underclass’. Elaborate.
Answer the following question. (100 marks.)

Suppose you were asked to do sociological research on a topic of your choice. What would that topic be, why, and how would you go about it?

(Clue: Your answer should focus on research design rather than the empirical details of the topic.)
Section A. Write an essay on one of the following questions (50 marks)

1. There are a variety of theories which try to explain and explicate what leads to the oppression of particular social groups. With reference to one form of social oppression, delineate the various approaches used to explicate this matter and identify their limitations.
2. What is the link between politics and the formation of sociological theories? Comment with reference to gender, race, or sexuality.
3. Would you consider status identities as essentialist or socially constructed? Illustrate with reference to one form of identity politics.
4. With reference to a social movement of your choice, discuss the impact of feminism on the creation of social movements.
5. The colonized try to articulate a self-defined identity and reclaim their past. Why, and which social groups might relate to this process?

Section B. Write a paragraph of not more than half a page each on five of the following concepts (50 marks)

1. structure and agency
2. standpoint theories
3. critical theories
4. the difference between modern and postmodern theories
5. the difference between structuralist and post-structuralist theories
6. genealogy as the method used to rediscover micrological forces
7. administrative apparatuses
8. governmentalities
9. identity vs subjectivities
10. epistemic privilege
SOC 2002 Sociology of Social Welfare

11.45 – 12.45     Monday 24 January 2011

NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer one question from the following. (100 marks)

1. Mead and Field present similar yet contrasting perspectives on welfare. Elaborate.

2. Freedom is characterised by anxiety and uncertainty. Discuss the implications of this statement on social welfare.

3. The panopticon can be seen as a metaphor for welfare institutions. Elaborate.

4. The welfare state as an integral feature of a capitalist economy, but one which has emerged partly as a result of the class struggle. Discuss.
SOC 2003 Qualitative Approaches in the Social Sciences

14.15 – 16.15    Tuesday 8 February 2011

NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any TWO questions. READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY, identifying their various components. Take some time (not longer than 5 minutes each question) to PLAN and STRUCTURE your essays, and remember that legible handwriting is essential. The three basic ingredients of a good essay are sequence and strength of argument, use of examples, and evidence of additional reading. (Each question carries 50 marks)

1. In what way/s, if at all, is the research interaction itself methodologically relevant with respect to qualitative research?

2. List and discuss the basic principles of focus-group research in qualitative sociology.

3. In what way/s, if at all, is ethnographic research about the ‘imponderabilia of everyday life’ (Malinowski), and how do ethnographers seek to access everyday life as a multi-sensory field?

4. In what ways are qualitative interviews different from, say, survey questionnaires, and what are the basic ingredients of a good-quality interview?

5. Michael Agar describes ethnographers as ‘professional strangers’. Do you agree, and why?
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer one question from the following. (100 marks)

1. Functionalist sociologists identify the nuclear family as being functional to changing economic and social environments in modern societies. Elaborate.

2. Class standing can determine a whole host of life chances. Discuss in relation to family life.

3. Family priorities involve an interplay between situational and cultural factors. Discuss.

4. Social Networks provide opportunities for families. Discuss in relation to the concept of social capital.
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Choose any question from section A and answer the question in Section B. Choose any two questions from Section C. (Four questions in all.)

Section A. Write an essay on one of the following (40 marks)

1. Discrimination has a negative impact on the social and economic status, well-being and health of an individual. Discuss.

2. Social class derivation depends on the individual’s merit and motivation. Discuss.

3. \textit{Ethnic or racial categorization} is used as a relational concept to differentiate between ‘us’ and ‘them’. What effect does this type of categorization have on the group in question?

4. Why is fair and like treatment, or procedural justice, not conducive to eradicating social inequality? Illustrate with reference to one of the social groups discussed during lectures.

5. In what way do familial discourse and policy making discriminate against gay and lesbian couples?

6. Do you think that social divisions are socially devised or biologically determined, and why? Illustrate with reference to one form of social division.

7. What are the main issues that limit ostracised groups from participating fully within the public sphere? Discuss with reference to one disenfranchised group.

Section B (40 marks)

1. Which international and regional institutions does your country look to when it comes to rectify social inequality? How are directives transposed/implemented on a national level? You may limit your answer to one form of social inequality.

Section C - Briefly answer any two of the following questions. Do not write more than half a page on each (10 marks each).

1. What is the difference between direct and indirect discrimination?

2. What is the difference between positive action and affirmative action?

3. What is the role of anti-discrimination agencies?

4. Comment on two minority responses to stigma.

5. What is the difference between tangible and intangible social divisions?
6. What is the difference between equality of opportunity and equality of condition?

7. What, if any, is the difference between proletarianisation and embourgeoisement theory?

8. Bauman divides people into two classes, the globals and the locals. What does he mean by these terms?

9. What is the main difference between realist and social-constructivist feminists?
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer in essay form ONE question from each section:
(50 marks each)

SECTION 1

1. According to Durkheim “the degree of cohesion present in a society will generate a tendency to certain forms of suicide”. Discuss.

2. According to Durkheim’s theory of division of labour, “the transition from an agrarian to an industrial society would, unless regulated, result in an extreme moral disorder”. Elaborate.

SECTION 2

3. Discuss how Robert K. Merton clarified and strengthened the importance of sociological research.

4. Normative expectations emerge as central to Parsons’ analysis of social behaviour. Discuss
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Section A – choose six of the concepts listed below, and write half a page about each (10 marks each)

1. Pretty’s typology of participation
2. Codes of conduct
3. Ecolabelling
4. Environmental auditing
5. Corporate social responsibility
6. Pro-poor tourism
7. Ethical trade
8. Fair trade
9. Biodiversity
10. Anthropocentric or Ecocentric social movements
11. Globalised environmental politics
12. Footprinting
13. Carrying capacity calculations

Section B – Choose a topic and write an essay on one of the following (40 marks each)

1. Ecolabelling is usually a gimmick to attract tourists. Discuss.
2. Sociological research identifies between tourists and travellers. Travellers insist that they do not have such a negative impact on social and cultural environments. Comment.
3. Who are the travel professionals, and what part do they play in the promotion of tourism?
4. Tourism has a symbolic or exchange value. In what way?
5. Which development theory would you use to describe tourism in one particular country, and why do you think your choice helps explicate this phenomenon?
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer in essay form TWO of the following questions: (Each question carries 50 marks)

1. Marriage is often defined as “the process through which domestic groups are interlinked and the reproduction of society is socially achieved”. Elaborate substantiating your argument with relevant examples.

2. In many societies, “a person’s place in the scheme of things is structured by the circumstances of birth”. Discuss this statement with reference to kinship and descent organizations.

3. The Traditional family has over the years been undergoing a lot of changes. Elaborate and substantiate your answer with examples from your country.

4. In kinship residence is used to specifically denote the post nuptial location of a couple in regard to their kin. Elaborate.
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any TWO questions. READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY, identifying their various components. Take some time (not longer than 5 minutes each question) to PLAN and STRUCTURE your essays, and remember that legible handwriting is essential. The three basic ingredients of a good essay are sequence and strength of argument, use of examples, and evidence of additional reading. (Each question carries 50 marks)

1. In what way/s, if at all, is globalization not a unidirectional, uniform, or inexorable process?

2. ‘Globalization’ is actually an umbrella term for a number of processes that are said to characterise contemporary societies. Discuss.

3. What are ‘Fordism’ and ‘post-Fordism’, and how are they related to globalization?


5. It may be argued that the starting point of any account of globalization must be to think of time, space, and the relation between them as being socially produced. Do you agree, and why?

6. What is cosmopolitanism and how, if at all, does it help us understand the global society?

7. Do you agree that we are living in a ‘global village’, and why?
Answer ONE question from each of the following Sections:
(50 marks each.)

Section A


2. Various social gerontologists have brought forward different theories about ageing. Discuss any two of these perspectives

Section B

3. Europe is experiencing a series of changes concerning what is now termed the ‘de-institutionalisation’ of family life. Discuss this statement and show the repercussions on the older population.

4. Priority Direction 1 of The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing deals with “Older persons and development”. (a) Mention the main issues highlighted, and (b) elaborate on some of the actions recommended to implement these issues.
Answer any two questions. (Each question carries 50 marks)

1. Marx praises Wakefield – the 19th century British politician who promoted the early colonisation of southern Australia and New Zealand – for having “discovered that capital is not a thing, but a social relation between persons, established by the instrumentality of things”. Discuss.

2. In the very last paragraph of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber states: “It is, of course not my aim to substitute for a one-sided materialistic an equally one-sided spiritualistic causal interpretation of culture and of history. Each is equally possible, but each, if it does not serve as the preparation, but as the conclusion of an investigation, accomplishes equally little in the interest of historical truth.” Discuss.

3. Of Sombart’s contribution to social theory it has been argued that “despite his daft statements on race and nation, he had a sense of fine cultural distinctions and broad historical developments”. Discuss.

4. Do you agree with the view that Schumpeter’s theory of entrepreneurship is still “the most fascinating as well as the most promising” one we have?

5. In his major work *Philosophy of Money*, Simmel is concerned with money as a symbol. What does he mean by this?

6. Regarding Durkheim’s apparent disinterest in the sociology of economic activities, Swedberg asks: “Can we believe that a sociologist who claimed in the strongest terms that sociological research was not worth one hour of his time if it did not allow him to better understand the present would be capable of not closely studying the functional economic conditions of modern societies?” Discuss.

7. What did Polanyi mean by asserting that “laissez-faire was planned”? What, in your view, is his principal contribution to economic sociology?
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any two questions. (50 marks each.)

1. Outline Mark Granovetter's contribution to ‘new economic sociology’ with reference to at least one milestone publication.

2. Richard Swedberg’s efforts to establish economic sociology as a recognised and fast-growing academic discipline are an excellent example of successful academic entrepreneurship. Do you agree, and why?

3. Foreign Direct Investment is a clear example of an economic activity that cannot be satisfactorily explained without reference to institutions. Discuss.

4. “The self-understanding of market actors as entrepreneurial, risk-taking disconnected individuals which gained pre-eminence for over two decades and which has been exported by business schools, is now simply incredible.” This statement by Michael Power, Professor of Accounting at the LSE, appeared in Economic Sociology in March 2009. Discuss with reference to when it was published, the author’s background and the journal’s scope.

5. What is meant by the “performativity of economics”?
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer TWO questions from the following.

1) Montesquieu’s thought on the social dimensions of law paved the way for the scientific analysis of law as a social institution. Discuss. (50 marks)

2) Max Weber’s analysis of law is an intrinsic component of his sociology, both in relation to its perspective to the study of society and its theories on the conditions of modern society. Discuss. (50 marks)

3) Law is closely linked to social norms and a society’s moral understanding, while few insights are more central in the sociology of law than the connection of law with the function of social integration. Analyse this statement in relation to Emile Durkheim’s sociology of law.

4) Talcott Parsons is critical of C. Wright Mills for his ‘most biased appraisal of the role for the courts’ in *The Power Elite* where Mills implies that the judiciary in the US ‘simply does the bidding of the government and big business’. Conversely, Parsons maintains the relative autonomy of law with respect to the political system. Discuss and illustrate with examples from Maltese and foreign case law. (50 marks)

5) ‘The heart of a capitalist economic system is the protection of private property, which is, by definition, the cornerstone upon which capitalist economies function. It is not surprising, then, to find that criminal laws reflect this basic concern.’ (William Chambliss, 1976). Discuss this statement in relation to the law on the theft of wood from the Rhenish forests as critiqued by Karl Marx and the work of Chambliss on the various stages of vagrancy law in England. (50 marks)

6) ‘The sociological attention should thus turn away from a study of the cause of criminal behaviour towards an analysis of the motives of action on the part of the persons who engage in deviant or rule-violating conduct and the persons and institutions who apply rules. (Deflem, 2008). Discuss with reference to Howard Becker’s labelling theory. (50 marks)
Answer any two questions. (Each question carries 50 marks.)

1. Based on the theory of communicative action, Jurgen Habermas developed a conception of law that puts democracy at the centre of its analysis of society. Discuss.

2. The Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement criticized the legal system on the grounds of the betrayal of law’s ideas and ideals of justice, equality and fairness. Discuss how CLS unmask the actual workings of the law in the courts and other areas of legal decision-making.

3. “The increasing diversity of the legal profession has not always been accompanied by increasing equality” (Deflem, 2008). Discuss in relation to gender equality.

4. Discuss the ways in which Foucault has influenced the contemporary sociology of law.

5. Moral panic is fundamental in allowing legislature to demonise a sector of society, highlight a ‘problem’ and then provide us with an oppressive solution which we must accept. Discuss this statement from a human rights perspective.

6. It may be argued that today’s society is more panoptic than ever. Discuss.
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any two questions. (Each question carries 50 marks.)

1. Pluralist theory holds that in parliamentary democracies the state is the impartial servant of society. Discuss.

2. The power to control and direct modern Western societies is in the hands of a relatively small group of persons. Discuss in relation to Mills’ Power Elite theory.

3. Discuss the relevance, to the sociology of governance, of Steven Lukes’s contribution towards the debate on the investigation of power relations.

4. According to Max Weber, the actual operation of a democratic society is in the hands of the bureaucracy. Discuss.

5. “There will be a deepening involvement of sociology with the formation of practical public policies or reforms ... The point of doing social research, from a practical angle, is simply to allow policy-makers better to understand the social world, and thereby influence it in a more reliable fashion than would otherwise be the case” (Giddens, 1987). Discuss in the context of the sociology of governance.

6. In a globalised world, governments retain some limited powers. Do you agree with this statement? Discuss in relation to Anthony Giddens’ The Second Globalization Debate.
SOC 2058 Sociology of Health and Illness

10.30 – 11.30                          Friday 3rd June 2011

NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer any one question. (100 marks.)

1. “Medicine is a form of social control”. Discuss.

2. “The internet fundamentally alters the lived experience of illness.” Discuss with particular reference to the process of medicalisation in late modern society.

3. “Social inequality and health inequality are linked and both are a product of the social organization of society.” Discuss.
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer one question from the following. (100 marks)

1. Is there really such a thing as a Mediterranean cuisine, or is the notion simply a myth?

2. Using examples from the course and from your own work, discuss the ways in which food habits and social distinctions are related.
NO DICTIONARIES ALLOWED

Answer in essay form ONE question from each section (Each question carries 50 marks)

SECTION A

1. It was largely through the works of Robert Merton that Functionalist thought on social systems came to play a significant part in sociological studies. Discuss.

2. Through his analysis of systems, Talcott Parsons attempts to give an overall picture of how societies are structured and fit together. Discuss.

SECTION B

3. Compare and contrast Niklas Luhmann’s Neo Functionalist theory with the Parsonian Functionalist theory of systems.

4. Niklas Luhmann contends that Talcott Parsons failed to recognise that “structural differentiation” takes analytical primacy over “functional differentiation”. Discuss.
Answer One question. (100 marks)

1. Postmodernism is an unwelcome deviation from important issues in everyday social policy. Do you agree, and why?

2. A new approach in social policy evaluates social polices in people’s lives. Discuss the importance of listening to direct experience, focusing on an issue of your choice.

3. Discuss the interplay of structure and agency in the process of social exclusion, focusing on an issue of your choice.