

Student #1

Culture Exam –Day One

10/25/2017

Please answer both questions

5. Theory

How have classical and contemporary cultural theorists understood the role of cognitive processes (such as perception or interpretation) in the development of culture? What would they say are the advantages and disadvantages of cognitive explanations of culture?

4. Practice

How have practice theorists explained the way that culture is utilized differently in different situations or contexts? To what extent does the situation influence the way that a person can act and think, and how much control do people have over how different situations are acted out in social life?

Student #1

Culture Exam –Day Two

10/26/2017

Please answer both questions

1. Boundaries

How have boundary theorists conceptualized the role of (e)valuation in the drawing of boundaries? What explanations have been offered as alternatives to evaluative theories of boundary construction?

2. Production

What does it take for there to be innovation in a field? How have production of culture scholars explained the tension between stasis and innovation, imitation and differentiation?

Student #2
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SUBTOPIC 3: PRODUCTION AND RECEPTION OF CULTURE

Starting from the premise that cultural producers operate from a fundamental position of uncertainty, how do producers operate within this uncertainty? Which aspects of the field of cultural production and reception contribute to uncertainty, and how might cultural producers seek to control each of these aspects?

SUBTOPIC 5: CULTURE AND COGNITION

What concepts do recent work in cognition present, and how do they address—or complicate—theoretical and methodological debates in cultural sociology? In particular, how does metaphor theory interface with cultural models of human reasoning, and what are its potential issues?

Student #2

Culture Exam –Day Two

10/26/2017

Please answer both questions

SUBTOPIC 1: CULTURE AND IDENTITY

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the concept of “identity” for the study of individuals and collectivities? What is the relationship between identity and boundaries, and how are these concepts interrelated?

SUBTOPIC 4: CULTURAL OBJECTS, SPACES, AND MATERIALITY

What makes a materiality-focused approach distinctive from other forms of studying cultural objects? What benefits does a consideration of materiality provide studies of cultural objects which other approaches downplay? On the other hand, what factors might a materiality-forward theoretical approach neglect?

Student #3
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4. Culture and Micropolitics

Accounts of culture in democratic politics tend to theorize the possibilities and limits of political talk. Accounts of culture in authoritarian regimes tend to theorize the stability of systems of domination. Does culture function differently within democratic, authoritarian, and revolutionary institutions? Can these different approaches to culture in politics illuminate each other theoretically or substantively?

6. Materiality

Theorists of materiality interrogate the ability of nonhumans to initiate action, often conceiving of nonhuman agency in novel ways. However, some approaches to nonhumans, such as Jerolmack and Tavori 2014, explicitly reject the equality of human and nonhuman actors. Outline the various approaches to the agency of nonhumans and their methodological and political consequences. Given these considerations, do nonhumans have agency, and if so, what is the quality of this agency?

Student #3

Culture Exam –Day Two

10/26/2017

Please answer both questions

5. Production and Reception of Culture

Production of culture uses the structuring of institutions to explain differences in cultural products. Reception studies use the structuring of social position to explain the interpretation of cultural objects. Can these two perspectives come together to provide a more thorough explanation of cultural products? Is there a place in these perspectives for seeing cultural products as causes in themselves? If not, why does this matter?

3. Sociology of Art

For much of the 1980s and 1990s, sociology of art overlapped with the production of culture perspective, bringing social theories about art into wider discussions of culture. How did production of culture depart from pragmatist, Frankfurt schools, and semiotic approaches to the sociology of art? Discuss several approaches to the sociology of art developed in the subsequent decades, and how they are similar to or different from production of culture. Has sociology of art abandoned the production perspective, or refined it?