

**Family Exam
Fall 2015**

Day One: Theory and Foundations

Today you'll answer both of the following:

1. Family is not typically considered a theoretical area of sociology. Do you agree with this critique? If so, why is this the case? Are there exceptions? How might one cultivate a more theoretical approach to family, or why is this impossible?
2. Your exam reading list included quite a bit of social exchange theory because of your plan to study family decision-making in your dissertation. Can you summarize the theory, its development, and how it has been used in family research? As you work more on your dissertation, what are this theory's strengths and weaknesses for studying family decision-making? What other literature and research has emerged as important directions to pursue in developing and writing your dissertation?

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Day Two: Building on Foundations, Looking Toward the Future

Today you'll answer BOTH of the following:

1. We pushed you to include more gender and gender theory while creating your list. What did this add? What is the relationship between the reproduction of gender inequality and inequality more generally within and among families?
2. What is the relationship between family and consumption? How are families consumption units? How might families help us understand the link between money, material culture, and meaning-making? What can exploring this consumption *in* families and consumption as families teach us about families in general?

And answer ONE of the following two:

1. Family research has generated an impressive body of knowledge, yet very little of it is disseminated to families themselves. The family research used for public sociology is, in large part, geared toward policy makers rather than individuals. Why do you think this is the case? Should something be done about it? If so, what? If not, why not?
2. There is open antagonism between liberal and conservative family researchers. Please describe these dueling perspectives, the main debates between them, and the implications of this disagreement for what gets reported in the media or disseminated to people outside of academia.