

**Social Psychology Area Exam**  
Part One: September 6, 2017

Today's questions will focus on the underpinnings of social psychology, including theory and method. Tomorrow will focus on more concrete concepts and ideas. Although you generated a reading list in studying for the exam, we expect that you may draw on work from other classes, that you have learned about at conferences, or that you have read for personal research projects.

1. What is it about the subject matter, level of analysis, or methodological approach in social psychology that encourages the proliferation of theories? How does one determine the applicability of one theory or another to a particular situation? Alongside the answer to these questions, either:
  - a. Choose two social psychological theories and discuss research that has been done, or might be done, to show how the processes posited by different theories interrelate.
  - b. Discuss a research project or program situated in one theoretical tradition that either offered, or has the potential to offer, significant insight to another theory.
2. Symbolic Interaction is largely considered the root of current day sociological social psychology. This might be particularly apparent in theories of identity, but less so in other areas. Discuss the connection between symbolic interaction and either affect control theory or status characteristics and expectation states theory.
3. Choose one of the following questions about experiments:
  - a. While some experimental research encourages subjects to interact face-to-face more or less naturally, over time researchers have increasingly imposed stringent experimental constraints to prevent this. Why? What sorts of demands does face-to-face communication place on people? What complications might it introduce? Why do these need to be suspended to tease out predicted effects? What does it mean for the generalizability of these findings that subjects need to be prevented from interacting naturally?
  - b. Katz and Collins study and theorize about emotions that are deep and potentially transformative. Is it possible to study such emotions in experiments? Discuss attempts to generate emotional responses experimentally, the types of emotions that can and cannot be readily induced, and possible differences in the experience of emotion in the laboratory versus outside of it. Do you think some emotional states are beyond the reach of the experimenter? If so, what are the theoretical and methodological implications for the study of emotion? If not, what potential exists in the experimental study of emotion?

## Social Psychology Area Exam

Part Two: September 7, 2017

1. Use existing concepts in sociological social psychology to generate 1) a *social psychology of leadership*, 2) a *social psychology of parenting*, or 3) a *social psychology of religion/religiosity*.

Build the foundations of this area by drawing in the definitions of, and specific work on, at least four of the following concepts – identity, looking glass self, self-concept, schema, socialization, impression management or identity work, altruism, deviance, violence, cognition, stigma, frame, proximate others, emotion, justice, social exchange, status, and legitimacy (you may also nominate other concepts as important, provided you give a convincing rationale) – and their connections to specific topics of interest in the area.

2. As a job candidate, one of us once claimed that we could never teach a class entirely on Social Structure and Personality because Kohn and Schooler were dry and there's just so little in that vein to get undergraduates excited about (unfortunately, we soon learned we were being interviewed by one of Schooler's star students). Prove that embarrassed job candidate wrong, constructing a course outline and/or approach, selecting specific topics and readings, and discussing what you would do to make it interesting, contemporary, and social psychological.
3. Choose one of the following about contemporary issues:
  - a. Recent editions of the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* (to service 7 year olds) eliminated "nature words" such as *acorn*, *dandelion*, *fern*, *otter*, *pasture*, and *willow* and introduced words such as *broadband*, *blog*, *cut-and-paste*, *MP3 player*, and *voice-mail*. Use sociological social psychology to discuss possible cognitive, identity, and behavioral consequences of such vocabulary changes.
  - b. Explain why group or social identities may be sources of conflict that lead to violence. Refer not only to the theory, but everyday occurrences (e.g., appearances, language, patterns of interaction) that give rise to hatred and conflict. As a consultant for an afflicted community, offer preliminary suggestions for remedial actions.
  - c. Speculate from a sociological psychological perspective why a material "monument" is a potentially powerful symbol of social relations and a possible cause of social interaction (unifying, contentious, or both).