

Culture Exam -Day 1
October 2016
Student #1

Please answer both questions

Section 6. Collective Trauma, Narrative, and Memory

Some literature on collective memory has emphasized the role of moral and reputational “entrepreneurs” in influencing socially organized discourse surrounding public figures and events, while related studies have emphasized the primacy of ritual, narrative, cohort effects, or other factors. (Some studies emphasize the instrumental interests of social actors, while other approaches focus on more non-instrumental functions or motives.) Discuss and adjudicate between alternative approaches to this issue.

Section 7. Production of Culture and Knowledge, and Culture in Organizations

Social scientists describe how different varieties symbolic production—from gastronomical writing to journalism to music to scientific knowledge—are situated within enterprises, networks, fields, epistemic cultures, and other forms of social organization. Evaluate the major accounts of these social contexts of cultural production, considering the degree to which these perspectives are complimentary.

Culture Exam –Day 2
October 2016
Student #1

Please answer both questions

Section 1. Classical Theory and Antecedents

How have cultural theorists addressed the opposition between human beings' materially determined existence and human beings' status as a culturally and linguistically oriented species? What conceptual resources do they offer for understanding this tension? Where has consensus emerged and where does controversy remain, if at all?

Section 5. Materiality, Material Culture, and Cultural Objects

Both Heidegger and Benjamin, in different ways, observed technologically induced changes in the way human beings relate to material objects and the physical environment. Discuss the extent to which these observations are borne out in more contemporary, social scientific approaches to materiality and material culture, and elaborate the possible social and cultural consequences of these technologically induced changes.

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Student #2

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Section One: Core Cultural Theory.

Classical and contemporary sociological theorists have offered different definitions of what culture *is*. These conceptualizations of culture have, in turn, informed different understandings of what culture *does*. Trace some of these intellectual lineages, providing examples of what each one helps illuminate and what it tends to obscure.

Section Two: Culture, Power, and the State

The so-called "cultural turn" has opened up new avenues for the sociological analysis of states and state-building processes. Compare and contrast this new cultural perspective with traditional, materialist approaches. Discuss some of the novel findings it has yielded. Offer suggestions on productive avenues for future research.

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Section 3. Civil Society and Social Movements

Sociologists have looked to both civil society and social movements for explanations and empirical examples of social change. What is the status of culture in these two bodies of thought? Where do they overlap? Where do they differ? How do they complement each other?

Section 6. Methodological Perspectives in Cultural Sociology

Depending on how it is conceptualized, culture can be operationalized and measured in multiple ways. Describe some of the different ways sociologists have attempted to measure culture, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches.

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Student #3

Please answer both questions

Question 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?

Question 3. Race, Class, Inequality

What leads to the development of different tastes and ways of viewing the world, and how do these distinctions turn into meaningful markers of inequality? In other words, what creates different stocks of cultural knowledge, and why do they matter in explaining inequality?

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Student #3

Please answer both questions

Question 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?

Question 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?