

Stratification Area Exam Guidelines
Revised October 2020 (David Hachen Chair)

OVERALL SCOPE OF AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THE EXAM

The goal of this exam is to provide the opportunity for interested students to develop and demonstrate a broad grounding and expert familiarity with key research and guiding questions in social stratification. The exam will assess students' mastery of core readings, theories and research in social stratification and ability to synthesize material and develop arguments. Passing this qualifying exam, indicates that a student is competent to interact with professional peers on the basis of shared knowledge and understanding, and to organize and teach social stratification courses.

REQUIRED COURSES

Students must have taken and passed the Social Stratification Seminar.

EXAM PREPARATION AND READING LISTS

The committee creates and updates a standard list of readings in specific topical sub-areas within social stratification. There are three **required** sub-areas:

- Foundations
- Social Class
- Status Attainment and Social Mobility

There are 11 elective" sub-areas, from which each student must select four (4):

- Income and Wealth Inequality
- Labor Market Stratification
- Poverty
- Gender
- Race and Ethnicity
- Cultural Stratification
- Institutional Contexts: Neighborhoods and housing
- Institutional Contexts: Criminal Justice and Mass Incarceration
- Institutional Contexts: Immigration
- Institutional Contexts: Comparative and Cross-National
- Assortative Mating and Families

All sections (except the "Foundations" section) have around 15 readings, so students are expected to read in total 95 readings.

Students can, with the guidance of the chair, propose and develop a sub-area reading list for an area not listed above.

Preparation for the exam involves reading the literature and developing a detailed

understanding of the questions, arguments, intellectual resources, evidence, and conclusions of the works on the list. We encourage students to meet with the committee faculty members to discuss ideas from the student's selected topics and to help the student develop connections across the readings.

EXAM QUESTIONS AND FORMAT

Students will have six (6) hours to complete the examination. Students will answer four questions. Two questions will pertain to readings from the required sub-areas, while the other two questions will be based on the readings from the "elective" sub-areas chosen by the person taking the exam. There will either be choices among questions in each part of the exam, or questions will be broad enough that students can focus on the issues they want to stress when answering the question.

Answers to questions will be evaluated in terms of both understanding of the material but also, and most importantly, the ability of the student to articulate their views and arguments for their positions.

Students are permitted to bring into the exam the reading list.

A note on citations: while exam essays should display close familiarity with substantive particularities of the readings discussed, complete and detailed formal citation is not required in the exam setting. The student should use in-text parenthetical citation when referencing work. The student's reading list serves as a list of the "works cited."

EXAM RESULTS

Overall, exams will be assessed as pass or fail. If a student fails the exam, they should retake the area exam in its entirety at the next exam date. Students who fail the exam should meet with the committee members to discuss ways to improve and better prepare for the next exam.

Students will be notified of exam results by the committee chair. Every attempt will be made to provide results two weeks after the exam, however this deadline may be extended if the exam date creates deadline conflicts for committee members.