

Instructor's Exam Questions for *Readings for Sociology*, Ninth Edition

Part I: The Study of Sociology

1. Sociology as an Individual Pastime (from *Invitation to Sociology*)

PETER L. BERGER

- 1) According to Peter Berger (*Invitation to Sociology*), the discipline of sociology is defined by
 - a. its use of statistics to test hypotheses.
 - b. the good works and improved living conditions that come from higher education.
 - c. its effort to understand society in a scientific way.
 - d. its respect for others' privacy, and its avoidance of personal matters.
- 2) Berger believes that sociology
 - a. is a scientific practice that is only successful if the sociologists are passionate about doing it.
 - b. is a waste of money if it does not make people's lives better.
 - c. must use statistics to be credible.
 - d. is invaluable as a tool to make the world a better place.
- 3) When we talk about sociological methods we are referring to
 - a. a particular way sociologists act in public settings, as opposed to in their personal lives.
 - b. the processes by which sociologists gather and analyze data.
 - c. a teaching technique that raises questions rather than provides answers.
 - d. the scholarly writing done by sociologists.
- 4) Berger writes about several images people have of sociologists. Which is NOT one of them?
 - a. sociologist as scientist with a sense of inferiority about the quality of his or her science
 - b. sociologist as statistician
 - c. sociologist as celebrity, often appearing on television to give an opinion of news events and social problems
 - d. sociologist as solver of society's problems
- 5) Berger describes the sociologist as a person who is
 - a. committed to changing the world.
 - b. easy to get along with and much admired.
 - c. curious about everything people do.
 - d. unlikely to vote, but knows a lot about voters and voting behavior.
- 6) Sociologists make an effort to do many things. Which of the following is NOT one of them?
 - a. understand and appreciate what is socially deviant as well as what is socially acceptable
 - b. question the things everyone takes for granted
 - c. compare social practices in their own society with those in other societies

- d. discover potential threats to their country's security and communicate these to the government
- e. discover or uncover information that provides new insight into what people think they know

2. Personal Experiences and Public Issues (from *The Sociological Imagination*)

C. WRIGHT MILLS

- 1) "The _____ requires us, above all, to think ourselves away from the familiar routine of our daily lives in order to look at things anew," write Anthony Giddens and Mitchell Duneier.
 - a. sociological imagination
 - b. Protestant ethic
 - c. research process
 - d. universal perspective
- 2) In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills argues that personal troubles
 - a. are sometimes best handled by telling a person what he or she wants to hear.
 - b. are of concern to psychologists rather than sociologists.
 - c. are better dealt with if we understand the social context in which they occur and recognize them as social issues that many others face as well.
 - d. are exaggerated when people watch a significant amount of television.
- 3) The major distinction or comparison Mills uses throughout his essay is
 - a. civilization (modern society) and primitives (premodern society).
 - b. justice (laws) and fairness (tradition).
 - c. individuals (biography) and society (history).
 - d. happiness (emotions) and contentment (understanding).
- 4) A significant reason for the importance of sociological understanding is that
 - a. the rate of social change has increased and threatens to disorient people.
 - b. terrorism can now strike anyone, anywhere in the world.
 - c. we are rapidly becoming a global village.
 - d. children are no longer learning most of what they need to know from their parents.
- 5) Mills talks about unemployment, war, marriage, and the city in order to show that
 - a. people can choose to be depressed about the state of the world or be optimistic and hopeful.
 - b. modern society is much more complex than premodern societies.
 - c. human nature is the prime cause of both happiness and unhappiness.
 - d. what happens to individuals and what they do is strongly influenced by their social situation.
- 6) Mills calls society's organization and methods of operating
 - a. an iron cage.
 - b. mechanisms of control.
 - c. social structure.
 - d. sociality.

3. The Tragedy of the Commons

GARRET HARDIN

- 1) The “commons” Hardin talks about in “The Tragedy of the Commons” is
 - a. the student union in his university, where all students congregate but there is little interaction across racial and ethnic lines, hence the “tragedy”.
 - b. the many public executions and lynchings that took place in town squares during the era of Jim Crow (between the Civil War and the modern civil rights movement).
 - c. almost anything that can be ruined by individuals pursuing their own self interest, heedless of the costs this has on the things we all share or have “in common”.
 - d. the land available to everyone in pre-Industrial England where wood could be gathered and animals could be grazed—land that was taken away by rich and powerful elites, hence the “tragedy”.
- 2) The topic Hardin (“The Tragedy of the Commons”) builds his discussion around, but does not confine his analysis to, is
 - a. global population growth.
 - b. industrial agriculture.
 - c. declining test scores among American school children.
 - d. family values.
- 3) Hardin (“The Tragedy of the Commons”) strongly objects to ideas put forward by whom in his 1776 publication, *Wealth of Nations*?
 - a. Thomas Jefferson
 - b. Adam Smith
 - c. Benjamin Franklin
 - d. Andrew Carnegie
- 4) One solution to the “Tragedy of the Commons” is
 - a. abolish private property and distribute all things according to the greatest needs.
 - b. appeal to people’s conscience to do the right thing.
 - c. impose policies, restrictions, taxes, or penalties to regulate the use of “the commons.”
 - d. technological innovation directed at solving new and age-old problems.

4. The Stranger

GEORG SIMMEL

- 1) Georg Simmel’s essay “The Stranger”
 - a. describes the fictional character in Albert Camus’s novel *The Stranger*.
 - b. examines the relationship between persons immersed in a situation and someone who is present but not involved in the situation.
 - c. explains the attraction of movies, especially Westerns, where a hero (a stranger) comes to town, solves the town’s problem, then leaves.
 - d. explores the roles of group solidarity and community integration in the evolution of society.
- 2) What characterizes the stranger, according to Simmel?
 - a. The stranger is judged more harshly than other members of the group.

- b. The stranger is either physically different from those in the group or displays distinct cultural features, such as an accent or way of dressing.
 - c. The stranger has something others want and is careful to withhold it until he or she gains acceptance by the group's members.
 - d. The stranger may receive confidential information withheld from other members of the group.
- 3) Which term can best be applied to the stranger?
- a. objective (able to see the facts for what they are)
 - b. subservient (to those who belong to the group)
 - c. unusual (especially in terms of cultural practices and beliefs)
 - d. untrustworthy (does not follow the usual rules of society)
 - e. heroic (chooses to do what is right rather than what is expected)
- 4) Simmel's essay describes
- a. the social process of exclusion and avoidance of things and people different from the cultural norm.
 - b. the stages of acquaintanceship: awareness, identification, exploration, normalization, inclusion, and attachment.
 - c. the seemingly contradictory nature of a social type or character who can be both near and remote, different and similar, a part of the group yet apart from it.
 - d. the way we detach ourselves from situations and events that threaten our sense of self—that is, the ability to avoid being drawn into problematic scenes by acting as if we are invisible.

5. The Mark of a Criminal Record

DEVAH PAGER

- 1) Pager seeks to answer several questions in her essay, "The Mark of a Criminal Record." Which is NOT one of them?
- a. Do potential employers evaluate (and discriminate) equally between blacks and whites who have a criminal record?
 - b. Do potential employers discriminate against applicants who have a criminal record?
 - c. Do potential employers discriminate against black applicants?
 - d. What explains the much higher rate of incarceration for blacks versus whites?
- 2) In Pager's essay, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," the term "mark" refers to
- a. Erving Goffman's idea that a "mark" is someone who has been taken advantage of.
 - b. the common usage as a negative attribution, as in "a mark against me."
 - c. the effect or consequence of spending time in prison, especially the difficulty in holding a job due to the personal damage of having been incarcerated.
 - d. the denial of voting rights in many states, even when a person has served his or her time in jail.
- 3) Pager's research, described in "The Mark of a Criminal Record,"
- a. used a panel study design to follow the same group of individuals over a period of approximately 20 years, from schools to jobs and beyond.
 - b. took an ethnographic approach, with Pager and her students going to the research site and spending many hours over several months with the people they were studying.

- c. was an audit study that sent “testers” into the field to obtain and record the responses of select people to different “tester characteristics.”
 - d. analyzed statistical data from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Statistics data file.
- 4) One major conclusion reached in Pager’s research on race and crime is that
- a. Black males face discrimination for both their race and whether or not they have a criminal record.
 - b. White males do not face discrimination if they have a criminal record.
 - c. Black males face discrimination if they have a criminal record but not because of their race.
 - d. White males face less discrimination than black males for their race, but more discrimination if they have a criminal record.
- 5) One significant finding of Pager’s research was that women who serve time in prison are more likely to do what afterward?
- a. They’re less likely to return to prison than men who have served time in prison.
 - b. They’re better prepared for jobs than women who have equally low socioeconomic status.
 - c. They’re more likely to return to prison than men who have served time in prison.
 - d. None of the above. Pager didn’t study women at all.

6. Telling the Truth about Damned Lies and Statistics

JOEL BEST

- 1) The statistic on children’s deaths, used by the graduate student in Best’s article
- a. was ridiculous; if true, by 1980 more than a billion children would have been killed each year.
 - b. greatly underestimated the actual number of deaths of children caused by unsafe toys.
 - c. was based on a study paid for by food manufacturers.
 - d. was accurate, but reported out of context and therefore could have been misinterpreted.
- 2) Best concludes that
- a. we are better off trusting our own opinions than believing statistics, no matter how good the research that gathers and analyzes these statistics.
 - b. policies and planning should be voted on, not decided by experts who rely on statistics.
 - c. although statistics can be wrong or misused, we still need good statistics.
 - d. all statistics are inherently flawed because they can never recommend the right decision or the best course of action.
- 3) Best encourages us to approach statistics
- a. with the assumption that those who use them intend to deceive us.
 - b. critically, by evaluating their quality and claims.
 - c. casually, by never taking them too seriously.
 - d. cynically—most statistics are both wrong and irrelevant, and cannot be trusted.

7. Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought (from *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*)

PATRICIA HILL COLLINS

- 1) According to Patricia Hill Collins, black feminist thought
 - a. grew out of the empowerment felt by the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States.
 - b. can be practiced or embraced only by black women who share common experiences of oppression.
 - c. must combine ideas and action on behalf of social justice.
 - d. recognizes the “essentialism” of race—the indelible and distinguishing features of being black.
- 2) Which of the following describes the concept of “intersectionality” with regard to Hill Collins’s “...Black Feminist Thought”?
 - a. When people of different races meet (at “intersections of life”) they make comparisons of one another.
 - b. There are times and places where identities are ambiguous, and people must create their own.
 - c. People in power make the rules, laws, and dominant social norms that are imposed on others.
 - d. The experiences and standpoints of individuals are specific to and a combination of not only the social class they occupy but also their race, gender, and sexual orientation.
- 3) In describing black feminist thought, Hill Collins explains how
 - a. Latina and other minority women’s experiences have much in common with black women’s, and these women can form alliances and coalitions to work on social-justice issues.
 - b. black women all have the same “standpoint” about their situation as a racial minority.
 - c. futile it is for black women to seek and hold political office in a government that remains racist in its laws and policies.
 - d. black women’s experiences with black men are not feminist issues because there is no racial antagonism in their interactions or relationships.
- 4) Hill Collins describes black feminist thought as “critical.” What does she mean by this?
 - a. Issues are so pressing for black women that they must be confronted now, not later.
 - b. A commitment to social justice must link thought and understanding to social action.
 - c. Philosophers have only described the world as it is; to be critical is to recognize and attack the problems in the world.
 - d. Life is a balancing act, such that any action creates a reaction. Any intended action must gauge this and be careful not to upset the balance.

8. Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study

ALLAN M. BRANDT

- 1) The Tuskegee Syphilis Study was an attempt to
 - a. prevent the transmission of syphilis among college-age women.
 - b. find out the long-term effects of syphilis when it is left untreated.
 - c. develop ethical guidelines for doing research on animals.

- d. show that men and women need different types of medical treatment.
- 2) The Tuskegee Syphilis Study was carried out
 - a. over a forty-year period, from the 1930s into the 1970s.
 - b. in several poor countries in Africa and Southeast Asia.
 - c. by private doctors and pharmaceutical companies.
 - d. with the full understanding by all the research subjects participating in the project that it had potential risks as well as benefits.
 - e. All of these are features of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study.
- 3) The Tuskegee Syphilis Study was, for the control group, a study of
 - a. the long-term effects of untreated syphilis.
 - b. the effectiveness of penicillin in the treatment of syphilis.
 - c. medical practices that could save money and still be effective.
 - d. deviant behavior.
- 4) Brandt argues that _____ was at the heart of the study.
 - a. sexism
 - b. an overly optimistic faith in modern medicine
 - c. homophobia
 - d. racism
- 5) The medical and scientific community seemed to maintain what attitude with respect to the study's subjects and their (ill) health?
 - a. a humanitarian and compassionate morality
 - b. a version of Darwinian evolutionism
 - c. a belief that medical practitioners must make decisions about who will receive care and who won't
 - d. a belief that all problems can be solved with technology
- 6) The most problematic aspect of the study, according to Brandt, was that the participants
 - a. did not have health insurance and so many of them lost their homes and life savings.
 - b. were not only given the impression that they were receiving effective treatment, but were systematically prevented from receiving proper treatment.
 - c. provided inaccurate and sometimes dishonest information about their medical history and conditions.
 - d. accepted the money for medical treatment but used it for other purposes, such as home repairs and recreation.

Answer Key for Instructor's Exam Questions for *Readings for Sociology*, Ninth Edition

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- 1. c
- 2. a
- 3. b
- 4. c
- 5. c

6. d