

Instructor's Exam Questions for 7th edition of READINGS FOR SOCIOLOGY

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 providing 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) The sociologist Berger describes is 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. What Makes Sociology Different? (from *The Rules of Sociological Method*) ÉMILE DURKHEIM

- 1) Émile Durkheim is:
 - a. a former Catholic priest who became a sociologist after he retired from the priesthood
 - b. the pseudonym of Helen Gable, a novelist who often writes about social problems

- c. a Spanish politician whose commentaries on Spanish TV have made him very popular
- d. a 19th-century French sociologist who was one of the pioneers of the sociological discipline

2) According to Durkheim, a social fact is:

- a. a statistic about a country, state, city, or other organization
- b. any social construction created by people
- c. as compulsory to individuals as the law or legal decisions reached by a court
- d. a characteristic or fact about society, rather than about individuals

3) Social facts have what characteristics, according to Durkheim?

- a. they are external to the individual, they constrain, and they coerce
- b. they are rational and logical, having been created in open debate and with scientific proof
- c. they are historical and make up our historical memory
- d. they can only be expressed as part of language—written and oral

4) Probably the best synonyms for social facts are:

- a. history and biography
- b. the individual and the group
- c. society and culture
- d. reason and emotion

5) Based on Durkheim's argument, one could conclude that individuals:

- a. have a natural inclination to fight and make war rather than seek peaceful solutions
- b. have little choice but to conform to society's demands
- c. are largely responsible for their own actions—good and bad
- d. have basic animal instincts which compel them to keep in close contact with one another, form families, towns, and organizations, and pursue collaborative leisure activities

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?
- objective (able to see the facts for what they are)
 - subservient (to those who belong to the group and can offer admittance)
 - unusual (especially in terms of cultural practices and beliefs)
 - untrustworthy (does not follow the usual rules of society)
 - heroic (chooses to do what is right rather than what is expected)
- 4) Simmel's essay describes:
- the social process of exclusion and avoidance of things and people different from the cultural norm
 - the stages of acquaintanceship: awareness, identification, exploration, normalization, inclusion, and attachment
 - 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
 - the way we detach ourselves from situations and events that threaten our sense of self—i.e. the ability to avoid being drawn into problematic scenes by acting as if we are invisible

Answer key for Instructor's Exam Questions for *Readings for Sociology*, 7th Edition

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- c
- a
- b
- c
- c
- d

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- a
- c
- c
- a
- d
- c

3. What Makes Sociology Different? (from *The Rules of Sociological Method*) ÉMILE DURKHEIM

- d
- d
- a
- c

5. b