

GROUP EXAM 1

Contemporary Sociological Theory

SPRING 2017

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Fall 2016

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- 1- Your textbook lists four changes in social life which culminated in the rise of sociological theory. List these changes and critically analyze them.
- 2- By drawing on C. W. Mills' notion of the sociological imagination, explain when a personal issue turns into a social problem. As an example, draw on the fact that "Representing just 5 percent of the world's population, the US now hold 25 percent of its inmates." (ACLU, 2017) and "At current levels of incarceration a black male in the United States today has greater than a 1 in 4 chance of going to prison during his lifetime, while a Hispanic male has a 1 in 6 chance and a white male has a 1 in 23 chance of serving time." (Bureau of Justice Statistics)
- 3- Hobbes writes, "Nature hath made men so equall" (Hobbes, 1968, 30). Elaborate on Hobbes notion of natural equality of us all, and explain how he links equality to social conflict. Also, expound on his solution for social conflict.
- 4- By distinguishing between aggregation of people and society, Rousseau criticizes Hobbes's notion of peace and order. These differences arise from their different understandings of human nature. Describe these differences, and discuss how Rousseau would explain the fact that while there are more than 300 million guns in the US, yet most people do not feel safe and secure.
- 5- Nearly 2 million students are homeschooled in the U.S. Use John Locke's comparison between private tutoring and public schooling for "boys" and "girls" to explain the popularity of private schooling in the US.

- 6-** How, from the idea that we are all equal, do Hobbes and Locke reach different conclusions about sovereign? Keywords here are: God, scarcity, survival, absolute authority, fear, abundance, reason, and division of power, consent.
- 7-** Explain why Montesquieu holds that number of slaves in despotic governments does not matter, and warns moderate governments (Western and Christian) about “danger from multitude of slaves.” Use this argument to explain mass incarceration in the US that primarily locks up African American and Hispanic populations.
- 8-** First describe what different types of slavery are from Montesquieu’s perspective. Then, explain what are the origins of slavery for him. To what extent do you (dis)agree with him? Why?
- 9-** Explicate Montesquieu’s stance on slavery, and compare it with Rousseau’s total opposition to slavery. Elaborate on their explanations (how they think about slavery and why).
- 10-** Explain Rousseau’s notion of general will, the role he assigns to law-givers and philosophers, and his advocacy for turning power into right and obedience into duty. Then, discuss the positive points and possible dangers of a such a conceptualization.
- 11-** Analyze the Wounded Knee massacre (Power Point) or the protest against Dakota Access Pipeline ([link here](#)) by applying Rousseau’s right of the first occupier.
- 12-** How would Rousseau and Adam Smith debate over Obamacare or abortion?
- 13-** Compare and contrast the way notions of sovereignty, contract (consent), and dissent develop from Hobbes, to Locke, and then Rousseau.
- 14-** First explain how Adam Smith would argue that big companies’ self-interested pursuit of wealth may serve the common good and result in universal opulence, then use an instance to critically evaluate (in favor or against) the theory.