

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
Comprehensive Examination in Sociological Theory  
August 12, 2008**

**Answer the required question in Part I. Then choose two questions from Part II to answer three questions in total. Number your responses to indicate the questions answered (e.g., I, II2, II5). Do not copy the question as part of your answer. Do not put your name on your answer document. Do not create a title page. Use 12-point font, Times New Roman or Arial, double-spaced, with 1" margins at top and bottom and 1 ¼" on each side. Use ASA style for any references. Number all pages. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors. Do not exceed 20 pages, including references. If your references come from the reading list, you do not need to list them on a separate page; please list only those readings not drawn directly from the list. The provisions of the University of Colorado's Honor Code apply to all aspects of this exam.**

**You have 24 hours to complete the exam. Return the finished document (Word or PDF attachment) to Rebekah via email by 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, August 13. Submit using your last name as the filename (e.g., *irvine.doc*). You do not need to return the original copy of the exam questions.**

**PART I: Answer the following question:**

According to Durkheim, Marx, and Weber, what are the core characteristics of a modern society? How does each theorist account for the transition to modernity?

**PART II: Answer two of the following questions:**

1. Discuss the fundamental differences between the theories of Karl Marx and the theories of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Marxists Adorno, Horkheimer, and Benjamin.
2. If social action is a "performance" or "presentation," how does knowing this give a social researcher further advantage for understanding or explaining a social situation or set of social actions? Draw on Butler, Garfinkel, and Goffman in your answer.
3. Consider Foucault's *History of Sexuality, volume 1*. Choose one of the concrete shifts in the deployment of sexuality discussed in the book. Explain how Foucault documents when and how this shift occurred. How could we further verify this historical hypothesis?
4. According to Dilthey and Geertz, what are the central aspects of interpretive sociology? Outline these, and then introduce some skepticism about interpretive sociology using one additional author on the list.

5. What is culture and why is it useful for explaining social action? Give an example.
6. Compare and contrast Harvey's and Lyotard's views about the postmodern condition.
7. Compare Durkheim and Freud on the sources of religious feeling. On what grounds does Durkheim say that religious beliefs are not merely illusion? How does Freud dispute this?