

Faculty Qualifying Examination (QE) Fields and Preparation Process

(last updated July 2016)

BARKEY, Karen (new faculty member)

Fields: To be posted

Guidelines for Oral and Field Exams: To be posted

BLOEMRAAD, Irene

Fields: Area Studies: Canada, Immigration, Methods, Race and Ethnicity, Political Sociology, Social Movements

Guidelines for Oral and Field Exams

I generally supervise exams in immigration; race & ethnicity; political sociology (and related topics); and (on occasion) theory. I serve on many committees within and outside sociology. Since the requirements for any program, and any person, can differ, I offer these guidelines if you want to do exams with me.

I ask all students to do the following:

- *Speak to me well in advance of your exams.* If you are interested in having me serve on a committee, speak to me early in the process to find out if I am available and whether I am teaching a course relevant to your exam.
- *Write up a memo outlining the formal requirements of your exam, your expectations regarding my role, your responsibilities, and a time line.* In discussion with me, outline your broad topical area, the work you will do, a time line and (especially for non-Sociology students) the requirements of the exam. This is not a reading list, but a (somewhat flexible) contract about expectations.

I usually ask students to do the following, but I'm open to alternatives:

- *Take a seminar with me on the topic.* This might not be feasible, but if I am teaching on the topic, you should take my course.
- *Put together the first draft of your reading list yourself.* Building a reading list is excellent exam preparation. It requires you to figure out which debates and topics are most important in the field and which readings are central. To build your reading list, you can use my syllabi, other syllabi, other reading lists, or create one from scratch.
- *Organize the reading list around debates and/or substantive topics.* I want you to organize the readings into analytical, substantive or chronological categories. This helps me understand why you want to read a particular item. It is helpful to think about this process as putting together an extensive class syllabus for a graduate seminar you might teach. You need to show breadth (you have to "cover the basics"), but then you can concentrate in a particular area that is of most interest to you.
- *Revise the reading list in consultation with me, and during your reading.* I will suggest key readings to include and possibly some deletions. You can also change your list as you come across new items or debates during your reading. The list is not cast in stone.
- *Write me 1-3 short memos during your reading.* Based on the way you group your readings, I want you to write a few **short** memos (2-4 pages) identifying the debates, discussing how they fit in

the field and offering some thoughts on where research and thinking must go. This is NOT a literature review, but a synthesis across readings. I might also ask for one final synthetic memo, combining the prior memos, to provide an overview of the field as a whole. This memo would be less than 10 pages. We will discuss these memos in my office hours.

- *I will discuss possible exam questions in advance.* Based on your memos and our discussions, I will signal possible exam questions. I will not provide the exact exam questions in advance, but if you have done all the work this far, I fully expect you to pass the exam.

TIP: I highly recommend that you do your QE preparation with a few colleagues. You can then debate reading lists together, and form a reading group. This helps keep you on track, and lets you bounce ideas off each other.

BURAWOY, Michael

Fields: Theory

I do QEs in theory. After taking Sociology 201A and 201B students have to take another seminar, actual or equivalent to a Soc 202 in which student focuses on one “contemporary” theorist and writes three essays comparing him or her with canonical figures, specifically, Marx, Weber and Durkheim. Alternatively student can be GSI for undergraduate theory sequence (101-102) and write the three essays during the year. There is a basic reading list for canon (to which there may be additions depending on student interest) and student has to work up a list for the chosen contemporary theorist.

ENRIQUEZ, Laura

Fields: Development, Political Sociology, Rural Sociology, Latin America

I meet with students 4-5 times before the QEs and pose questions to them to assess their command of the sub-sets of literature we cover in each of these sessions, and to prepare them for “reflecting aloud” about these sub-sets of the literature. This fall I also will be experimenting with asking student to prepare short essays (3-5 pages) on sub-sets of their lists, in preparation for our meetings. The meetings are also a space for them, once I've done my questioning, to ask about the literatures.

I don't have set reading lists, but rather provide them with syllabi that I think represent a good starting point for the field they want to undertake with me. We then negotiate a list that involves adding to that syllabi to fill it out further, as well as taking off what is less relevant, bearing in mind their specific research interests.

FLIGSTEIN, Neil

Fields: Theory, Economic Sociology, Organizational Sociology, Political Sociology, Social Stratification, Industrial Sociology/Sociology of Work

In every field, there are a relatively small number of really big questions that have organized debate in that field. The best way to understand research in a particular field is to see how various schools of thought within the field attempt to organize their research in such a way as to promote their answer to one of the important questions. My goal is for students to show an understanding of these schools of thought, what debates they have generated, and what they have shown empirically.

In order to prepare for the exam, I first work with students to make a reading list. Students who have taken classes with me are free to use or modify the reading list from my class. We work together to define both the list and the questions. One way of thinking of a field, is to tell students to conceive of the list as the basis for a syllabus for an undergraduate or graduate course on the

topic. I suggest that they think about would be most important to teach to others about a particular field.

The core of the preparation is the production of a set of memos that answer these questions. I usually ask students to write 4 questions. The memos are usually 3-5 single spaced pages for each answer. I prefer students to turn all of the memos into me at one time point. Then we discuss the memos and if they are fine, I am ready for the exam. If I want some modifications of the memos, I ask students to rewrite. If students are having problems or prefer to discuss the memos one at a time, I am flexible. Finally, the questions that the student wrote about are the questions I will ask at the QE.

FOURCADE, Marion

Fields: Theory, Culture, Economic Sociology. All “baseline” reading lists are on the student Wiki.

QE Preparation Procedures

Theory

Requirements: enroll in Professor Fourcade’s graduate course (201) and complete all assignments **or** audit her undergraduate theory courses (101A/B) and complete all in-class assignments.

Write two 8-10p memos (double spaced) on topics of choice, to be decided jointly by student and prof.

Reading list: based on course reading list + additional texts agreed upon by both student and prof.

Economic Sociology

Requirements: enroll in Professor Fourcade’s graduate economic sociology (280Q) course and complete all assignments.

Write two 8-10p memos (double spaced) on topics of choice, to be decided jointly by student and prof.

Reading list: based on course reading list + additional texts agreed upon by both student and prof.

Culture

Requirements: audit Professor Fourcade’s undergraduate culture course (160) and complete all in-class assignments.

Write two 8-10p memos (double spaced) on topics of choice, to be decided jointly by student and prof.

Reading list: based on course reading list + additional texts agreed upon by both student and prof.

Science, Professions and Knowledge

Requirements: Establish a reading list jointly with Prof. Fourcade (no sample list available –no class).

Write three 8-10p memos (double spaced) on topics of choice, to be decided jointly by student and prof.

ORAL VS WRITTEN EXAM:

Written exam: Prof. Fourcade will prepare 2 essay questions. Answer is due within 8 hours (8-10 pages in all). Exam can be scheduled at any point during the semester.

LEAVE POLICY:

If Professor Fourcade is on leave (sabbatical or leave of absence), students willing to take an exam with her will have to wait until she returns from her leave to do so.

SCHEDULING:

Please schedule your exam (oral or written) during the semester.

FOX, Cybelle

Fields: Race and Ethnicity, Immigration

Guidelines for Oral and Field Exams

I generally supervise exams in race & ethnicity and in immigration. I offer these guidelines if you want to do exams with me.

- *Speak with me well in advance of your exams.* If you are interested in having me serve on a committee, see me early in the process to find out if I am available and whether I am teaching a course relevant to your exam.
 - *Write up a memo outlining the formal requirements of your exam, your expectations regarding my role, your responsibilities, and a time line.* In discussion with me, outline your broad topical area, the work you will do, a time line and (especially for non-Sociology students) the requirements of the exam. This is not a reading list, but a (somewhat flexible) contract about expectations.
 - *If possible, take a seminar with me on the topic.* If I am teaching on the topic, I **strongly** encourage you to take my course.
 - *Put together a draft reading list.* To build your reading list, you can use my syllabi, other syllabi, other reading lists, or create one from scratch. You should organize the reading list around big debates, questions, and/or substantive topics. You need to show breadth (you have to "cover the basics"), but then you can concentrate in a particular area that is of most interest to you.
 - *Revise the reading list in consultation with me, and during your reading.* I may suggest key readings to include, and, **in consultation with me**, you may change your list as you come across new items or debates during your reading. The list is not cast in stone.
 - *Write me 4 short memos during your reading.* Based on the way you group your readings, I want you to write a few **short** memos (2-4 pages single-spaced) identifying the debates, discussing how they fit in the field and offering some thoughts on where research and thinking must go. This is NOT a literature review, but a synthesis across readings. I might also ask for one final synthetic memo, combining the prior memos, to provide an overview of the field as a whole. This memo would be less than 10 pages. We will discuss these memos in my office hours.
 - After you complete a memo, schedule a half hour meeting to discuss the memo with me. Send me the memo **five days in advance of our meeting** so that I have time to read it. I cannot guarantee that I will be able to read late memos. I may ask you to revise your memo. Do not start on the next set of readings until we have discussed the last set.
 - *I will discuss possible exam questions in advance.* Based on your memos and our discussions, I will signal possible exam questions. If you have done all the work this far, I fully expect you to pass the exam.
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GOLD, Thomas

Fields: China, Theory, Culture, Development/Globalization. Consult directly.

With you I build a reading list from a 280 taught either by myself or someone else in the Department. It is essential to have some familiarity with main figures, debates and concepts in the field, as well as how it has evolved over time. I like to meet with students 3 or so times in the lead up. I want a 2-3 page memo on a set of readings before these meetings. We will review the memos and I may suggest additional readings or topics. I tailor the prep around topics and readings that will be important to the dissertation but within the context of the entire field. I also think the QE prep (more than the exam itself) is a great way to build a syllabus you can use if/when you teach a course on this field.

GOODMAN, Leo

Fields/QE Preparation: Consult directly.

HARDING, David

Fields: Education, Methods, Poverty, Urban Sociology, Stratification, Criminal Justice

QE Preparation:

I work with each student to develop a process that will meet the student's needs and goals and will prepare the student to conduct original research related to the field. In general, this involves working together to create a reading list and then writing and discussing a series of memos or short essays. The goal of this process is for the student to demonstrate mastery of the key questions, theories, and debates that motivate research in the field, the primary pieces of empirical evidence and core findings of the field, and the main unanswered or unresolved (or unasked) questions in the field. For more details, please arrange for a meeting in office hours.

HAVEMAN, Heather

Field: Organizations, Social Movements, Economic Sociology

Orals versus tutorials? Because I require students to write essays of moderate length (15 pages each), students who choose the tutorial option for QEs proceed in exactly the same way as students who choose the oral option: you read extensively in the field, take a 1-week take-home exam consisting of 4 questions, write answers to 2 of them, and when I've read these and deemed them acceptable, you can take the oral exam, during which I will mostly ask you how your knowledge of this field will be used in your proposed dissertation project.

Working with other students. It helps to be working toward QEs in conjunction with other students. If you know people who are thinking of your field as one of their own, you should coordinate with them on the timing. That way, I can give you all the same exam, which not only lightens my workload but also ensures a more equitable examination standard.

How to prepare for a QE in Organizations

- ◆ Take my organizations course – Soc 280D.
- ◆ Read the material on my QE reading list. This list, which includes everything from the most recent syllabus for 280D, evolves as new work is published. I am happy to email the current version of the list to any student who wants it.
- ◆ Meet with me during office hours to talk about your proposed areas of research. I'm happy to meet with you over the time you spending reading, whenever you have questions, whether related to the exam or to a possible dissertation idea.
- ◆ When you think you've developed a firm grasp of the field from your readings, email me.

How to prepare for a QE in Social Movements or Economic Sociology

- ◆ Take the appropriate introductory field course – Soc 280S for social movements or Soc 280Q for economic sociology.
- ◆ Work with me to develop a field-wide reading list that extends this syllabus to cover the entire field.
- ◆ I'm happy to meet with you over the time you spending reading, whenever you have questions, whether related to the exam or to a possible dissertation idea.
- ◆ When you think you've developed a firm grasp of the field from your readings, email me.

QE Procedure for All Fields

- ◆•I will send you a list of 4 questions. Each question will focus on a general theme, issue, puzzle, or controversy in the sociological study of organizations.
- ◆•You will have 1 week to answer 2/4 questions. Each essay answer should be no more than 15 pages long (double-spaced), plus complete references and (if any) tables and figures.
- ◆•I will grade your essays and comment on them.
- ◆•If your answers meet my standards, we can then schedule the oral exam meeting. During that meeting, I will ask you questions about your answers, but I may also ask you questions about other areas within the field of organizations and about your proposed dissertation project.
- ◆•If your answers do not meet my standards, I will ask you to revise them, based on my comments. I will give you 4 days to do revisions.

JOHNSON-HANKS, Jennifer

Fields: Area-Studies: Africa, Culture, Demography, Family, Gender & Feminist Theory.

Guidelines for Oral and Field Exams

I generally supervise exams culture, demography and family. On occasion, I may also supervise exams in the sociology of Africa or methods. I offer these guidelines if you want to do exams with me.

Our work together begins with a conversation. Come speak to me early in the process of putting together your exams. If I am teaching a seminar pertinent to your exam, I will expect you to take it. The centerpiece of your exam prep is your reading lists. I will expect you to produce a first draft of the list. To build your reading list, you can use my syllabi, other syllabi, other reading lists, or create one from scratch. You should organize the reading list around debates and/or substantive topics. You need to show breadth, but can subsequently concentrate in a particular area. We will work together to revise the list. Based on the way you group your readings, you to write a few **short** memos (2-4 pages single-spaced) identifying the debates, discussing how they fit in the field and offering some thoughts on where research and thinking must go. This is not a literature review, but a synthesis across readings. I may also ask for one final synthetic memo, combining the prior memos, to provide an overview of the field as a whole. This memo would be less than 10 pages. We will discuss these memos in my office hours. At our last meeting before your exam, we will discuss possible exam questions. If you have done all the work this far, I fully expect you to pass the exam.

LARA-MILLAN, Armando (new faculty member)

Fields: To be posted

Guidelines for Oral and Field Exams: To be posted

LIE, John

Fields: Area Studies: Asia, Comparative-Historical, Culture, Development, Economic Sociology, Environmental Sociology, Political Sociology, Science/Sociology of Knowledge, Theory. Consult directly.

LOVEMAN, Mara

Fields: Area Studies: Latin America; Comparative-Historical Sociology; Development; Race and Ethnicity

QE Preparation: Consult directly.

LUCAS, Samuel R.

Fields: Social Stratification, Sociology of Education, Methods.

Procedure for Securing Passage of the Oral Examination from Professor Lucas as of June 2013

The Deal: Any student who passes Professor Lucas' closed book, closed note written exam has passed as far as he is concerned, and he will show up and ask them questions at their oral exam to confirm that. To aid QE performance, the student should prepare and deliver to Professor Lucas an undergraduate syllabus for the area one week before the oral QE.

Areas: Professor Lucas has offered written exams in two areas, Social Stratification, and Sociology of Education. He is also willing to examine students in Methods.

Exam Details: The exam totals six hours—three hours for Part I, and three hours for Part II. Parts I and II may be taken on the same day or on different days, at each student's discretion.

Helpful Resources: Past exams are posted on Professor Lucas' web-site under "Gateway to Previous Prelim Exams." If no past exam in an area exists, Professor Lucas provides a practice exam for the student(s) taking the exam for the first time.

Non-Native English Speakers: Students whose native language is not English may submit a translation dictionary one week before the exam which will be returned to them for use during the exam, and may have 3.5 hours for Part I, and 3.5 hours for Part II. Failure to make such arrangements before the exam will not be considered in grading the exam.

Frequency: Exams are offered in August/September, December/January, and April/May **ONLY**. PLEASE NOTE: Students are **STRONGLY** discouraged from scheduling their oral exam in the same 2-month window as the written prelim. An exam in an area is offered only once per 2-month window. Actual exam dates are coordinated with the Professor and other students taking an exam.

Crude Statistics on Student Performance: Students have failed the written exam in the past. A student who fails an exam may take it again later. Some have re-taken the exam, others have not. Those who have re-taken the exam have passed.

Reading List: There is no list of readings—Professor Lucas regards areas of research as defined by questions, not by readings. Two observations need be made at this juncture. First, students are not in the complete dark about what readings might provide a useful point of departure. The syllabi for the courses taught in the department for a particular area serve as *de facto* starting points. A student who ignored those syllabi would be at great risk of failing the exam simply because the syllabi are designed to cover an area broadly, but not necessarily as deeply as one might like. Second, because there is no canonical reading list, there is no battle between professor and student about what will and will not be allowed. Instead, Professor Lucas encourages students to read what they want. Students just need to be able to address the questions, and past exams (see helpful resources above) coupled with course syllabi can be valuable guides to the questions that constitute an area of study. If a student is able to link readings that are not on a departmental syllabus to the question in an enlightening and self-critical way, so much the better

MORA, Cristina

Fields: Race and Ethnicity, Immigration. Consult directly.

MULLER, Christopher (new faculty member)

Fields: To be posted

Guidelines for Oral and Field Exams: To be posted

PETERSEN, Trond

Fields: Organizations, Social Stratification, Industrial Sociology/Work, Economic Sociology, Economic Sociology. Consult directly.

RAY, Raka

Fields: Gender, Theory, Social Movements

I do QEs primarily in gender, but also in theory and occasionally social movements.

Preparation Process: I meet as a group with students (usually groups of between 2 and 4) and discuss readings every three weeks or so. Prior to the group meeting, students send me a memo of about 2-3 pages about the readings. These memos include key arguments and any analytic questions that occur to the students while they are reading. The memos are written not so much for me but for the students themselves, so they have the core arguments of key authors and works in a succinct form which they can then look at before the QE.

Preparation length varies from student to student but generally include a summer and a semester.

Reading list: There are core reading lists which are then tailored to meet the interests of individual students. For example, in the gender list, some students may want more transnational readings and other may want more readings on race. Lists can be modified accordingly. In addition, each student who takes a Gender QE with me is expected to come up with a specialized sub-field. These can be anything from "masculinity" to "health and science" to "the state". The idea is that students should be able to teach two courses on the basis of the reading list -- a general course on the Sociology of Gender, as well as a seminar on the specialized sub-field.

Those who do theory with me usually have a focus on postcolonial and/or feminist theory in addition to the classics.

RILEY, Dylan

Fields: Theory, Political Sociology, Comparative Historical Sociology, Science/Sociology of Knowledge. Consult directly.

SANCHEZ-JANKOWSKI, Martin

Fields: Urban Sociology, Poverty, Race and Ethnicity. Consult directly.

SCHNEIDER, Danny

Fields: Family & Life Cycle, Social Stratification. Consult directly.

SMITH, Sandra

Fields: Race, Social Stratification, and Poverty

Orals preparation begins with a draft reading list, which I provide. The student and I work together to revise the list to the student's specific interests while also addressing the major questions that motivate the subfield. The final reading list can consist of anywhere between 7-10 sections—roughly 8 pages of readings—depending on the student's interests. The student is expected to read each section closely and write analytic memos between 4-5 pages, single-spaced. Section memos are motivated by a set of questions that I provide. Memos should not just summarize. Instead they should reflect the student's comprehension of materials (not to be taken for granted!), ability to engage debates in the field and to discuss with competence the strengths and shortcomings of different perspectives. After each section memo is completed, I read it, and we discuss during office hours visits. Rewrites are contingent on the quality of memos submitted. Upon the successful completion of all section memos, I am willing to sign off and schedule the Q.E. meeting. Students usually take one semester to prep with me.

SWIDLER, Ann

Fields: Culture, Development, Religion, Theory, Science/Sociology of Knowledge

I usually consider the required reading list for my 280I or 280M a reasonable core list for QE preparation in Religion and Culture respectively. Then I negotiate with the individual student to add readings that are of particular interest to the student, and perhaps to take some off my usual list. Most students will thus have done most of the reading already if they took one of my courses, but I expect them to read everything again (incorporating the new readings they have added) with greater care and specifically looking for important questions that could motivate new research in the field. If students have not taken the relevant 280 or have taken it from someone else, then I start with the student's list and add items I think are critical. Usually I expect students to prepare for QEs by meeting with me to discuss readings, and I strongly encourage students who are preparing in the same field to meet as a group to discuss each group of readings before they meet with me. I don't require memos, but some students prefer to write memos to clarify their thinking and help them focus on important arguments or unanswered questions in the field. I might also occasionally ask for a memo to clarify a particular issue.

TUGAL, Cihan Z.

Fields: Political Sociology, Theory, Social Movements, Religion, Area Studies: the Middle East
Consult directly.

VOSS, Kim

Fields: Labor, Industrial Sociology/Work, Social Movements. Consult directly.

WACQUANT, Loïc

Fields: Theory, Urban Sociology, Race and Ethnicity, Penalty/Law, Poverty, Body/Everyday Life

I don't have a standard reading list for any of these fields, but a set of core issues and readings around which I will help you construct your own list (taking into account the shape of the area, your prior knowledge, and your intellectual sensitivities and interests). Your readings will be organized around a few salient questions on which you will write short analytic memos, organize a course syllabus of your own, and respond during the exam. For more detail, consult with me.
