Globalizing Theory Examination

Department of Sociology

University of Maryland, College Park

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Overview:

When the faculty voted to form the Globalizing Theory area from the former Theory and Comparative areas, they endorsed a particular format for the area examination. That examination would be organized around a paper written by the student under examination reflecting a specific stance of their choice within Globalizing Theory and submitted to a committee of faculty members selected from among the Globalizing Theory area.

Format of the Examination

The examination consists of two interconnected parts: the first written, the second oral.

For the written part, the student will (a) prepare and submit a formal paper making a particular argument of the student’s choice regarding some phenomenon, process, development or other subject of interest within Globalizing Theory; and (b) prepare and submit a reading list that locates his/her work within the set of concerns that define the field of Globalizing Theory.

For the oral part, the student will meet with the examining committee to explore the formal paper and address the connections between the paper and the designated areas of the reading list.

Examination Procedures:

1. In the semester preceding the examination, the Department will form a three-person committee who will conduct the examination of all students sitting for the exam in that particular semester. Students sitting for the exam should submit an outline of their paper and a preliminary version of the reading list for review to all committee members. Students should submit these materials approximately two months before the date of the exam.

2. The final paper and the final reading list should be submitted to the Graduate Office by the deadline for the Globalizing Theory exam.

3. The examining committee will conduct the oral component of the exam within two weeks of receiving the formal paper and final reading list from the Graduate Office.
4. Based on the combined assessment of the written and oral components, the students will receive a final evaluation of their exam results. The examining committee will weigh the components of the examination as follows: written paper (50%); reading list (25%); oral component (25%).

**Preparing for the Examination:**

*The Formal Paper*

The paper should take the form of an article. Many varieties are appropriate, from original empirical research engaging theory to extended discussion and evaluation of theory (that may also seek to add to theory). While it almost certainly will involve some review and discussion of literatures, the paper is not to be a simple literature review, but must instead make a sustained argument. The paper should employ clearly identified and specified methods and draw on evidence, appropriate to the subject matter and theoretical underpinnings of the paper. The paper should be clearly rooted in the relevant literature(s), and include a complete bibliography of all references.

*The Reading List*

The reading list compiled by the student should locate their work within the set of concerns that define the field of Globalizing Theory. The areas drawn upon to constitute Globalizing Theory include but are not limited to Theory, Comparative and Historical Sociology, Political Sociology, Collective Behavior and Social Movements, and Global and Transnational Sociology. When composing the reading list, the student should select appropriate works from three different areas or fields, being sure to offer adequate coverage and to display knowledge of each.

The reading list should include two kinds of works: (i) central readings from the sociological literatures that help define Globalizing Theory AND bear on the student’s paper; and (ii) readings that help forge useful links from cornerstone works to the concerns of the paper submitted by the student. In selecting works of the second kind, the student should keep in mind how to draw out important connections between the central works they have identified in each designated field and the paper they have written. There may be duplication of some references between the paper and reading list, but the presumption is that the reading list will further contextualize the central, orienting or other works that might be cited in the paper.

*Oral Component*

The second part of the examination consists of an oral evaluation conducted by the examination committee with each student individually. The oral evaluation will be conducted shortly after the due date for the written component, and will last approximately one hour. The themes covered in the oral evaluation will draw from the written component, and will include the linkages specified by the student in their reading lists between the paper and the areas they have designated in their reading list.