## Short Essay Exam

Assignment for sociology class

This short essay will ask you to demonstrate your comprehension of key ideas by explaining them in your words, using examples from class, both the lectures and the readings. The essay is open-book and open-notebook and you may take as much time as you need to answer the question.

Please remember that you are being tested on your understanding of ideas from class—focus on them, not things from other classes or material you found on-line. Please be sure to **cite *all* written material you use, including both material from this class and any outside sources you use**. The burden is on you as the author of your paper to make your point clearly, not to leave the rider trying to decipher what you might mean.

**You should submit the paper electronically to the Assignments section of Sakai, which will run it through the databases of Turnitin.com, a service that checks for plagiarism**. You may turn the paper in to Sakai/ Turnitin.com early to check for unintentional plagiarism and then resubmit it if you discover that you are using language that may violate norms of academic integrity. When submitting a paper to Turnitin.com, please use Microsoft Word, Word Perfect, Rich Text Format (RTF), plain text or PDF format; other formats, such as Pages or a zip file, will not work.

**The essay should be short, only two to three paragraphs (roughly 500 words)**. Given that you are simply defining and explaining a concept briefly, there is no need for a formal introduction, thesis statement or conclusion.  **You must cite at least two of the readings assigned for the class and provide quotes from them** (with page numbers for the quotes)as evidence you’ve done the readings in writing your essay.

### The Question

Please explain one of the following theories of cross-cultural contact: 1) culture wars; 2) hybridization; or 3) homogenization. As part of explaining the theory, please give specific, real world examples that illustrate the theory’s arguments. You may contrast your chosen theory with another one—and, if done well, this may strengthen your paper—but you are not required to. You do not need to agree with the ideas you explain nor do you need to pick the “right” one--you just need to be able to show you understand and can explain the perspective.

### Learning Outcomes

* You should be to recall and state in your own language the main idea of at least one of the three theories we studied this week.
* You should be able to show an understanding of at least one of the theories we studied this week by giving examples of phenomena we have studied that fit it.

## Grading

**Each paper will be assigned an overall grade on the following scale**:

* 5: Excellent
* 4: Good
* 3: Satisfactory
* 2: Needs Work
* 1: Unsatisfactory
* 0: Not turned in

This grade will be calculated based on the percentages listed below for 1) quality of writing; 2) comprehension of the material; and 3) use of sources. Late papers will have their grades capped as indicated below.

**Punctuality**

Was the paper turned in on time? If the paper was turned in late, how late?

* 5: On time
* 4: 1 day late
* 3: 2-4 days late. Your total grade for the paper is capped at 4.
* 2: 5-7 days late. Your total grade for the paper is capped at 3.
* 1: 8+ days late. Your total grade for the paper is capped at 2.
* 0: Not turned in

**I will accept late essay exams up until the very end of the semester, when I have to have your grades in.**

**Quality of Your Writing (20%)**

**Your writing should follow proper grammar, use proper spelling, and be easy to understand**. While some respected thinkers write in a way that is difficult to understand, you should not imitate them in that regard. Unclear writing is usually reflective of unclear thinking and will be treated as such.

* 5: Excellent: No significant problems with your writing. You can have a few very minor errors and still get this.
* 4: Good: A few grammatical or spelling errors, but nothing serious. Some awkward phrasing or organization of the essay, but nothing serious.
* 3: Satisfactory: Your paper is understandable, but better writing—more clear phrasing, better organization of the essay—would have made it clearer.
* 2: Needs Work: There are enough problems with your writing that it is actively distracting in trying to follow your paper. Or there are parts of the paper that are completely unclear.
* 1: Unsatisfactory: The paper is extremely difficult to understand.

**Comprehension of the Class Material (30%)**

This is based on how well you explain the material the question asks about. You must include **a clear definition and explanation of the theory**: Do not assume that I am familiar with and understand the concepts you are using. Instead, assume the opposite--explain them as if to someone unfamiliar with the ideas. While this may seem artificial, this is the best way to convey to me whether or not you understand the ideas. **Please use your own language to explain these concepts**—if you simply repeat the language from my lectures, the slides, the readings, etc. it does not necessarily show a clear understanding of the material.

* 5: Excellent: The paper shows an outstanding grasp of the material, though making minor errors does not preclude getting this grade.
* 4: Good: The paper shows you have the main idea and you don’t make any significant errors, but your understanding of the material is not outstanding in any clear way.
* 3: Satisfactory: The paper shows you have the main idea, but you make some significant errors in explaining the details of the ideas or your explanations are overly brief and sketchy.
* 2: Needs Work: The paper shows that you are significantly off-base in your understanding of some the key ideas you are looking at.
* 1: Unsatisfactory: The paper shows you are wildly off-base in your understanding of the concepts, getting nearly every major aspect of the idea wrong.

**Choice of Examples (30%)**

This is based on the degree to which you **go beyond simply summarizing the theory in the abstract and choose appropriate examples to illustrate it**. This includes:

* **Appropriate, concrete, specific, real world examples of the concept, preferably from the class material**, with a clear discussion of how they illustrate the concept: You must provide actual examples of the concept--that is illustrations from the real world. Just being able to define a concept in the abstract does not necessarily show you understand it. Being able to apply the concept to actual examples is what really shows how well you understand the ideas.
* **The depth of your explanations**: While you should keep things brief, you should provide enough detail in your definitions and especially your examples to show you have a good idea of how these things actually play out in the real world—this is part of showing you can apply the concepts and theories. Less is more—covering fewer examples in more depth generally makes for a stronger paper than covering many examples in less depth. You can also potentially strengthen your paper if you bring in additional, related concepts, assuming that they are well integrated, well explained and linked to specific, real world examples. Doing a poor job of this, however, can weaken your paper, making it seem scattershot. Be sure to define and explain all concepts you use.
* 5: Excellent: The paper involves very well chosen examples, that fit well with the argument the theory makes, and you do a good job of explaining them in some degree of depth.
* 4: Good: Your examples are appropriate and you explain why they fit, but not in as much depth as you could.
* 3: Satisfactory: Your examples are appropriate, but they may be a bit of a stretch; OR you don’t really explain why they fit the theory in any depth.
* 2: Needs Work: Your examples are not totally inappropriate, but definitely a stretch in terms of how well they fit.
* 1: Unsatisfactory: Your examples do not fit with theory’s arguments at all.

**Use of Sources (20%)**

* **You should use of a variety of sources** from class in writing your essay. You should reference both the class lectures and the assigned readings, showing that you are both familiar with and understand the material. Your grade will depend in part upon how well you use the readings you cite--using a reading that only deals with the core topic of the essay in passing will result in a lower grade than readings to which the core topic of the essay is central.
* **You should properly cite your sources**. The purpose of such citation is to make it easy for the reader to track down the source for themselves should they have questions about it or want to read it themselves. For online, non-class sources, you must include the date you accessed the webpage and the *full* web address. When quoting something, provide a page number for the quotes.
* 5: Excellent: You make particularly outstanding use of your sources and cite them properly.
* 4: Good: You choose appropriate sources and use them well.
* 3: Satisfactory: The sources you use are appropriate, but your integration of them into your paper is awkward, seeming to reflect a shaky understanding of them. AND/OR Minor problems with your citations, making them unclear.
* 2: Needs Work: The sources you use are something of a stretch, with the main thrust of the article not really related to what you are citing.
* 1: Unsatisfactory: You completely misunderstand the sources you are working with. AND/OR There are major problems with your citation format, such that it is not clear where you are getting your information from.

### Citing Material

Please be sure to **cite *all* material you use, including both material from this class and any outside sources you use**. For reading from class, it is generally enough to identify the sources by author and title (and page number for any direct quotes). Be sure to get these correct--if the reading is from an edited book, do not cite readings by the editors, but by the individual authors’ name. Failure to do so both is disrespectful to the authors and makes it more difficult for me to identify the reading and will result in penalties.

Sometimes when students are having trouble understanding material, they turn to sources outside of class for clarification. This is not a bad practice, but if you draw on such sources, you should properly cite them. If you do not do so, this is plagiarism. Additionally, if something seems a bit off from how I explained it in class, I will be able to see where you are getting your understanding from. For material from outside class, you must provide a full, proper citation; if this is a web address, this must include the date you visited the web page and the *full* web address. If you are citing a professor’s lecture from another class, cite the name of the professor, the class number and title and the date of the lecture.

### Extensions

**If you need an extension on the paper** such as an essay exam or the sociological autobiography, **please ask**. I am willing to be flexible in when your papers are due--but you must plan ahead. I ask that you **request an extension well ahead of time**; the later you ask for an extension, the less likely I am to say yes. I will make exceptions to all these rules in the case of a medical or personal emergency. When handing in a paper on which you received an extension, please follow the procedures for late papers given above.

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