

MIDTERM EXAM #2 (2012)
Sociology 190: Life and Death in the USA

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please use two blue books for this exam, one for the short answers and one for the essay. Please be absolutely sure to put your name on both books (do it now!). For the essay question, please put the number of the question you answer on the cover. For the short answer questions, please put the three numbers of the questions you answer on the cover. Please be sure to return this exam sheet itself in your essay blue book.

ESSAY (30 minutes, 55 points)

Choose ONE of the following essay topics to address. A good answer will refer to readings or lectures where relevant (you can mention an author or the title or just the article's topic). Your essay should be as organized and clear as possible. A good essay will advance an argument, making the case for a point of view rather than merely summarizing the readings. Feel free to draw a figure if it is helpful. Answers will probably range in length from 400-700 words or so.

- (1) (a) Contrast a disease-based versus risk-factor-based conceptualization of the “causes” of death.
(b) Why do McGinnis and Foege [McGinnis JM and Foege WH. Actual Causes of Death in the United States. *JAMA* 1993; 270: 2207-2212] call their conceptualization the “actual causes”?
(c) How does adopting an actual-causes-of-death approach affect how policy-makers might respond to the burden of illness in our society?
(d) Name three “causes” according to the McGinnis approach.
(e) Briefly discuss some of the policies the lectures or the article mentioned to address these three causes.
- (2) (a) Explain what income inequality is, and articulate whether it is an individual or collective property.
(b) How is income inequality associated with health?
(c) Using evidence, briefly describe the debate surrounding the role of income inequality in predicting health outcomes. What might account for variation in findings across studies?
(d) What are *three* mechanisms by which income inequality might come to be associated with health?

SHORT ANSWERS (25 minutes, 45 points)

Please answer THREE of the following questions. Discuss the meaning or significance of the term or concept. Your answers should be a brief paragraph (and typically less than one blue-book page) and may include a pertinent reference (if relevant or reasonable).

- (1) What is the difference between human capital and social capital? Briefly define both of these concepts and give an example of each of them.
- (2) Define methodological individualism and methodological holism.
- (3) What is the “friendship paradox” and in what way might it be useful with respect to health care?
- (4) What is the handle on the Broad street pump, literally? What underlying idea does the “handle on the Broad street pump” refer to, and why was it important? That is, what is the handle a symbol for?

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