

Qualifying Exam
Global and Transnational Sociology
Fall 2026

The questions below constitute the qualifying exam for Global and Transnational Sociology. To complete the exam, you must answer one question from each of the three sections below in an essay format. Each answer should be a self-contained essay approximately 8–10 pages long (i.e., 2,000–2,500 words). Although you must cite to referenced work in each essay, one comprehensive bibliography for all three questions will be sufficient. You may consult materials from the reading list you've been provided, as well as any other scholarly sources you've read during the exam period.

Section A: Choose and answer one of the following questions

Question 1

Empire and colonialism are important concepts and structures that shape how we understand the social world. In this essay, please answer the following:

- a) Choose **3 key texts** from the reading list and explain how they define and use empire and colonialism in their works.
- b) Some people would argue that empire and colonialism are “events” from the past that are no longer relevant. How would you respond to that? Make sure to use at least **2 different texts** from the above, to back up your answer.

Question 2

How would you explain transnational sociology and transnational methods to someone who doesn't know what it means? In this essay, please answer the following:

- a) Define transnational and global sociology. In your definition, choose three major components to focus on, from the texts in **the reading list**, that makes a study transnational.
- b) Pick **three ethnographies** and illustrate how they use the transnational whether methodologically or theoretically to analyze their topics at hand. You can choose to focus on any topic, but you are encouraged to think about gender, class, race, migration, or health, through a transnational lens.
- c) Finally, briefly reflect on how transnational analyses reshapes our sociological imagination?

Section B: Choose and answer one of the following questions

Question 1

A longstanding claim in the globalization literature is that the nation-state has lost power because of global integration. Scholars have disagreed, however, about what has actually happened: whether states have been weakened, bypassed, constituted from outside, or reorganized into new forms of authority.

- Choose at least three texts from the reading list that give different accounts of what globalization has done to the state. For each, identify the force that drives the transformation and say where political authority ends up.
- Do these accounts disagree with one another, or are they describing different things? Explain your reasoning.
- Assess the debate using at least one empirical case from the reading list. You may also bring in a contemporary example of your own if it sharpens the argument. Has state power declined, expanded, or been distributed more unevenly, applying differently to different people and places? Tell us which position you find most persuasive and why.

Question 2

Does globalization make the world more alike, or does it generate new forms of difference? Scholars have answered this question in very different ways.

- Choose at least three texts from the reading list and explain how each understands cultural globalization. Be precise about the concepts. Homogenization, hybridization, glocalization, disjuncture, and friction are not interchangeable, and your answer should say what distinguishes them.
- Accounts of cultural mixture often carry a celebratory tone. What do such accounts risk missing about power, about who moves freely and who is represented by whom? Draw on at least one text that raises this problem.
- Assess your argument using at least one empirical case from the reading list. You may also bring in a contemporary example of your own if it sharpens the argument. Is hybridity an adequate description of what happens when global forms meet particular places? Tell us what you think and why.

Section C: Choose and answer one of the following questions

Question 1

“The global” is often depicted in binary relation to “the local.” In this conceptualization, the global is often depicted as the source of change, and the local is the object of such change. But not everyone agrees with this binary. And some have sought to draw attention to the agency of local communities and their transformative potential vis-a-vis globalization. Provide empirical examples of how “the local” shapes the process of globalization or is constitutive of it, rather than simply resisting or adapting to globalization.

Question 2

The upsurge of religious fundamentalism and ethnic nationalism in the world since the 1970s have often been attributed to globalization. Discuss how plausible is this attribution? Explain clearly how the argument is made. What, if any at all, is the place of the 'clash of civilizations' thesis in this argument. And what is your own position and why?