

Qualifying Exam
Global and Transnational Sociology
Spring 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:

1. How does the focus on Empire, coloniality, and decoloniality, help us better understand Global and Transnational sociology?
 - a. In your answer, draw on at least two empirical and two theoretical texts to make your case/argument. Feel free to draw on any themes from the readings including but not limited to: health, development, gender, violence, war, knowledge production, sexuality, class, militarism, borders, immigration, land, territory, sovereignty, etc..
 - b. Would you argue that empire can only be studied as a historical formation that no longer exists? Be sure to explain your reasoning using the texts you engaged with above or others.

2. Global and Transnational scholars have provided us with new theoretical frameworks to understand the global color line.
 - a. Drawing on the following readings: Abu-Lughod (2013), Matlon (2016), Reyes (2015), and Patil (2011), and more if needed, explain their major contributions to the study of gender, sexuality, and how they are intertwined with global processes of racialization.
 - b. What lessons can non-transnational scholars studying the US learn from the readings above to better reframe how we understand race beyond being a variable.

Section B

Choose and answer one of the following questions:

1. Contemporary theories of the state challenge the idea that political authority is territorially fixed or nationally bounded. Evaluate how globalization has transformed state power, focusing on shifting forms of sovereignty, governance, and institutional authority. What do these theoretical approaches suggest about the reconfiguration of the state?
2. Theories of development argue that projects undertaken in the name of progress, modernization, or intervention are deeply entangled with global power relations. Analyze how development operates as a political and epistemic formation that shapes identities, institutions, and forms of governance across borders. How do critical approaches to development illuminate the uneven consequences of global intervention and the production of "the Global South" as a category of rule?

Section C

Choose and answer one of the following questions:

1. Globalization has caused an intense debate between its proponents and its opponents. Some enthusiastically have supported the process of globalization while others have strongly attacked it. Describe and discuss clearly the position of each side and explain why they take the position they do. And what do *you* think about their arguments; which position do *you* support and why?
2. Scholars often distinguish between “globalization from above” and “globalization from below.” What does each term mean? Do these two forms of globalization emerge from similar or different logics? What, if any, is the relationship between them? Discuss, providing examples.