

Comprehensive Exam in Gender, Labor and Technology

Qualifying Exam Spring, 2020

Please answer these questions as instructed. Good luck!

Answer either question 1 or question 2:

1. In 1937, Davis discusses the sociology of prostitution in terms of deviance, employing interpretive frames of sexual gratification and coitus aimed at something other than procreation in addition to others. Years later, Weitzer's investigation of the sociology of sex work delved into issues of gender variation, location and institutional context, attempting to broaden our understanding of areas often categorized as "vice". Even more recent work has focused on issues of exchange and moved studies closer into the Sociology of occupations.
 - A. Please summarize your perspective on how approaches to sex work have changed in Sociology since the early 1900s, noting important theories, methods, and their proponents. How have analytical approaches evolved? Has this evolution provided a more solid basis for approaching sex work as Sociologists? What issues or framings remain problematic today?
 - B. Which areas within Sociology are best equipped to inform the study of sex work? Why?
 - C. How does the complex relationship between sex work and legality challenge the study of sex work as an occupation or industry? What potential theoretical insights might be gleaned from the contentious relationship between sex work and the law?

2. In the study of sex work, what potential methodological challenges do 1) the unique division of legal and illegal settings and 2) the rise of digital technology pose? Think broadly and focus on the 3 or 4 issues you view as most important (operationalizing sex work, research ethics, measuring value and income, approaching sex work on either side of the legality division similarly, open and "dark" digital landscapes, etc.)

Please answer questions 3 or 4:

3. Consider the intersection of STS and feminist theories of science/technology. How well are scholars navigating between the dangers of technological determinism and gender essentialism? How do these overlapping discourses (STS and feminist theories of science/technology) inform contemporary understandings of the significance of technology in gender power relations? What might this mean for the design of our working relations and organizations?

4. How are *cyborgs* "different"? How are such differences or beings shaped by gender roles and class structures? How might Marxian and feminist critiques inform our understandings of such monsters? How important is the emergence and development of *digital* technologies to our interactions with cyborgs at home, at work, and elsewhere?

Please answer questions 5 or 6:

5. Theories of gender inequality in the workplace have a fairly long and established pedigree. Take three prevailing theories of gender inequality in the workplace and describe how these theories are affected by the introduction of advanced technologies not necessarily foreseen by the original authors. Does the introduction of new technologies add new dimensions to the study of gender inequality or reinforce older patterns of gender inequality in the workplace?

6. Using the reading materials on technology and work, who is the new precariat now and who is likely to be the new precariat in the future? Whose labor is technology replacing, if any? Whose labor is likely to be replaced in the future? If possible, separate your authors into those who think technology will be liberating and those who believe that technology will produce even more inequality than we see now.