

**MIDTERM EXAM  
SOCIOLOGY 205  
OCTOBER 1, 2003**

Instructions: Answer all questions in the space provided (or go on to the back if necessary). There are 100 points total.

1. (10) A survey conducted by the Literary Digest in 1936 sent postcards to about 10,000,000 people asking how they would vote in the upcoming election for President. Most of the 2,000,000 people who returned the postcards said that they would vote against Franklin Delano Roosevelt. In the election, Roosevelt won by a large margin, getting over 60% of the votes. Discuss the things that might have caused the Literary Digest survey to go so badly wrong. (Note: there are several things, not just one).

2. (8) Identify the variables in the following hypotheses:  
a. "Americans have more sense of national pride than citizens of most other nations"

b. "As education increases, support for 'traditional' gender roles declines."

c. "Looking at nations around the world, democracies have less income inequality than nations with other forms of government."

d. "Children of single mothers are more likely to be poor than children living with both parents."

3. (10) Suppose that you were planning to do a study of wars around the world since 1900--what causes wars, how long they last, how they are settled. Discuss how you would conceptualize and operationalize war. If possible, propose a definition of war.

4. (6) What are panel surveys? Why do researchers sometimes use them even though they are more time-consuming and expensive than cross-sectional surveys?

5. (6) What are the similarities and differences between cohort and trend studies?

6. (2) If a researcher began with a theory about society, and conducts research intended to discover whether that theory is correct, that is:

- a. inductive research
- b. applied research
- c. deductive research
- d. experimental research

7. (6) What are the advantages and disadvantages of in-person compared to telephone surveys?

8. (8) In survey research, what is pre-testing? What would be done in a pre-test? Who would be involved? What could you learn from it?

9. (8) In surveys, interviewers are given no choice about the way they ask questions or the order in which they are asked--they just follow the survey form. What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach compared with allowing interviewers to use their own judgment in conducting the interview?

10. (6) What is the difference between open-ended and closed-ended questions? Which type is more common in surveys, and why?

11. (8) What is the difference between cluster sampling, stratified sampling, and simple random sampling? What, if anything, do they have in common?

12. (6) Suppose that a social scientist doing research on the causes of subjective happiness decides to measure happiness by an index. What is an index, and why might he have decided to use one to measure happiness?

13. (4) Suppose that we find that gender affects a person's attitudes towards abortion. In this finding, what is the independent variable and what is the dependent variable? Why?

14. (12) Here are some possible survey questions, along with the answers that people are given to choose from. For each one, discuss whether it is a good or bad question according to the principles discussed in class and the book. If necessary, suggest how it could be changed to improve it.

i. Do you agree that religious faith is one of the things that has made America great?

- a. yes
- b. not sure
- c. no

ii. Do you favor or oppose corporal punishment for children?

- a. favor
- b. depends
- c. oppose

iii. How would you rate the Bush administration's performance in the war against Iraq and the reconstruction since the war?

- a. excellent
- b. good
- c. fair
- d. poor

iv. Have you ever engaged in binge drinking?

- a. yes
- b. no