

Cultural/Intellectual History

Preliminary Examination for

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Please answer *one* question in each of the following *three* sections. Be sure to illustrate your answer with specific examples and references to the historiography and pertinent theory.

I. Answer *one* of the following:

1. A central theme of cultural studies scholarship has been the meaning of "culture" itself, as it has informed various programs of social control and social critique throughout the modern era. Provide a survey of what you regard as the most important meanings for "culture" that have emerged from this scholarship, considering such issues as responses to mechanization and commodification of social relations, efforts to define and improve "the people", commentaries on structures of social authority, and valorization of "public" or "private" experience.

2. Discuss how cultural studies informed by such theorists as Gramsci and Foucault have transformed the relations between "the cultural" and "the political." Where do such cultural studies scholars look for the "political" within the culture? What are some of the most important insights and methods for studying culture recommended by their approach?

II. Answer *one* of the following:

1. Many theorists of the "modern" and the "postmodern" have identified different sensations of time and history as central to their conceptualization of these eras and epochs. What does it mean to say that time and history have changed in the course of the passage from the modern to the postmodern? What are some of the social sources of such changes?

2. The emergence of "postmodern" scholarship is premised on a definition of "modern." Review the idea of modernity in light of postmodernity and assess the applicability of this idea in terms of the cultural activity that took place in Europe in the period 1890-1930.

III. Answer *one* of the following:

1. On the basis of three pertinent historiographical examples, discuss the ways in which a cultural studies approach has enhanced the historiographical understanding of Victorian England. Be sure to discuss the major historiographical assumptions or problems that a cultural studies approach

illuminated. Be sure to take account of aspects of the cases you choose that cultural studies may not have proven helpful.

2. What contributions has "cultural studies" made to the study of the modern nation (since 1789); in light of these contributions, to what degree is the idea of the nation still a useful category of analysis?

Choose one of the questions in each of the following two sections. Be sure to illustrate your answer with specific examples and references to the theoretical or critical theory.

A. Answer one of the following:

1. The concept of "culture" itself is derived, in part, from the concept of "cultures" itself, as it has referred to the religious practices of people, especially ancient peoples, throughout the modern era. Provide a definition of "culture" that has been important in the history of "culture" that have emerged from the scholarly tradition, connecting such issues to questions of epistemology and the organization of social relations, efforts to define and improve the concept, epistemology as structures of social authority, and valorization of "public" or "private" experience.

2. Discuss how cultural studies informed by such theorists as Gramsci and Foucault has transformed the relations between "the cultural" and "the political." Where do such cultural studies scholars look for the "political" within the culture? What are some of the most important insights and methods for studying culture recommended by their approach?

B. Answer one of the following:

1. Many theorists of the "modern" and the "postmodern" have identified different understandings of time and history as central to their conceptualization of these eras and epochs. What does it mean to say that time and history have changed in the course of the passage from the modern to the postmodern? What are some of the social sources of such changes?

2. The emergence of "postmodern" scholarship is premised on a definition of "modern." Review the idea of modernity in light of postmodernity and assess the applicability of this idea in terms of the cultural activities that took place in Europe in the period 1890-1930.

C. Answer one of the following:

1. On the basis of three personal life-geographical examples, discuss the ways in which a cultural studies approach can challenge the dominant ways of understanding "Western" history. Be sure to describe the major methodological assumptions that inform the cultural studies approach.

