

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION in Health & Mental Health**  
**Aug 19-23, 2024**  
**MAJOR OPTION**

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You are required to answer THREE (3) QUESTIONS (ONE QUESTION FROM EACH OF PARTS A, B & C). Each answer should be 10-12 pages (12-point Times New Roman font, standard margins, and double-spaced) in length. The complete exam should not total more than 36 pages in length (12-point Times New Roman font, standard margins, and double-spaced), not including references. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT READ PAST THE 36TH PAGE.

**\*You must copy and paste the questions you choose at the top of your written answers\***

**Part A**

1. What are the most important contributions theory can offer to sociological knowledge in order to better understand the stress process and the life course? Elaborate on the potential of at least two sociological theories relevant to social structure, the life course perspective, stress processes, epigenetics, or others that enrich research. Describe the constraints within which the theories you have chosen must necessarily work, and the limits of its potential.
2. What are the most important contributions that medical sociology can offer to sociological knowledge? Describe and discuss two ways that medical sociology can enrich sociological research more broadly. Describe and discuss two limitations of medical sociology.

**Part B**

3. What value does an interdisciplinary lens incorporating sociology and biology (e.g., genomics including epigenetics) provide for understanding health disparities? Additionally, what are some key challenges and future avenues for research?
4. Many Western countries are experiencing an aging population. Apply the life course approach to understand health and mental health inequities in these societies, including its strengths and any potential limitations.

**Part C**

5. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, and ended the Public Health Emergency of International Concern on May 5, 2023. Using the

reading list, what approach or approaches from the sociology of health and mental health would be useful for providing insights into any aspect(s) of the pandemic (e.g., infections, hospitalizations, vaccinations, deaths) and potential policy and public health recommendations?

6. Compare and contrast literature on health social movements? What are the implications of embodied health movements on two distinct aspects of the health care system in Ontario? How can health social movements enhance sociological understandings of time and place?