

# TOPICS FOR the Final

FALL 2008

On the final you will have to answer five questions from a narrow selection picked from the following. Stress will be placed on the questions in D – F, and you will not be able to answer more than one question in each of A-C. Even if the questions do not explicitly mention particular authors, bring up any author you think is relevant to the issue. If you don't mention *any*, you're probably in trouble. **Bring this sheet and a blue book (AND a typed-up answer to question 16 already written if it applies to you) to the final**, which is on Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, starting at 4:15.

## SECTION A: SEX/GENDER

1. People (like Spanish hurdler Maria Patino) who have Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome (AIS) appear outwardly female (breasts, female body shape, vagina) but have XY chromosomes and undescended testicles. For each of the following views, **first** explain what the view is, **then** explain what answer the view gives to the question: "Is an AIS person **male**, **female** or **neither** (and if neither, what?)?" The views are **genital biological essentialism**, **chromosomal biological essentialism**, **social constructivism**, and **subjectivism**. Which view (if any) is right, and why is that one right and not the others?
2. Consider the following case of a male-to-female transsexual: born "biologically male" (penis, testicles, XY chromosomes) but who from early childhood insisted that they were a girl not a boy, and eventually as an adult was psychologically assessed as transsexual and had sex-reassignment surgery and accompanying hormone treatments (to grow breasts and stop facial hair). For each of the following views, **first** explain what the view is, then explain what answer the view gives to the questions: "What sex (if any) were they at birth, and why," "what sex (if any) are they now, and why," and "have they successfully changed their sex so that they could now fill in "F" on any legal documents"? The views are **genital biological essentialism**, **chromosomal biological essentialism**, **social constructivism**, and **subjectivism**. Which view (if any) is right, and why is that one right and not the others?

## SECTION B: SEXUALITY

3. Explain (using examples) the following contrasting pairs of views about sexual orientation: **essentialism/anti-essentialism**, and **realism/antirealism**. Which view would you have to hold to believe in each of the following (explain what each is, and your answer in each case): (a) male lesbians, (b) a "gay gene", (c) the labeling theory, (d) fully closeted homosexuals, living their "passing" as heterosexuals. What is the correct member of each pair, in your view? What is it to be gay or lesbian on your view?
4. Explain what the armed forces' "don't ask, don't tell" policy (DADT) is, and why it was seen by Clinton as an improvement on the original policy barring homosexuals completely from the military. What are the grounds for dismissal from the military? What are the grounds for a *defense*, if you are found guilty of one of the foregoing grounds for dismissal? Explain the army's distinction between homosexual orientation and homosexual acts, and why some homosexual acts are not committed by homosexuals. What does this mean about homosexuality? What, in effect, is DADT banning? Explain whether or not you think DADT is a good policy, and in so doing give and defend your own definition of homosexuality.

## SECTION C: RACE

5. List some biological features that are taken to be "race traits" – that is, determining of your race. Explain what a **biological essentialism** about race would say about them. How would that kind of biological essentialism answer the following questions: "what races are there," "what race is the child of two parents of different races," and, "how many races could there be if there were many generations of mixed-race procreation"? Discussing those answers, criticize the biological essentialist view you have given. Present an alternative view that appears to be better and either defend it against the average person who is biological essentialist or say why it is wrong and biological essentialism is right.
6. What is "**whiteness**"? Explain the difference between being white and being another race, according to whiteness theorists. Do whiteness theorists believe race is "real"? If so, in what sense? What would they say to a white person who says "I just see people, I don't see races, so therefore racism doesn't exist any more"? What is a "race traitor"? Was Anatole Broyard one? Give two contrasting attitudes to race traitors and explain which view is right and why the other is wrong.

7. What does *Puddin'head Wilson* teach us about race and the races in America? Be detailed and precise, using examples from the book. Did Roxy do right to switch the babies? Why or why not? Would you have done so in her position? Explain.

#### **SECTION D: RACISM AND SEXISM**

8. Explain (using examples) Appiah's terms: **racialism**, **intrinsic** racism, **extrinsic** racism and **racial prejudice**. All of these kinds of racism depend on facts about specific individuals: for some of these it is possible for *the same individual* to exhibit them in one situation but not in another – give examples where this happens and explain why. Does that mean that that individual is not to blame? Can any of Appiah's criteria explain the environmental phenomena described by Bullard as racist? Why or why not? If not, does that mean there isn't racism here or instead that we shouldn't just look at individuals' attitudes and beliefs when we talk about racism?
9. Explain (citing examples based on her three cases) the various ways Crenshaw argues that black women are uniquely disadvantaged, what the **"but for"** model of discrimination is and why it contributes to this situation, and what a better approach to fighting discrimination would be. (You will probably find it useful to use and explain her analogies of the doctor/ambulance/basement.)

#### **SECTION E: HOMOPHOBIA, HETEROSEXISM AND MORE SEXISM**

10. Give Cudd's four **criteria of oppression** and explain why each is a necessary component of oppression. Using these criteria, are gays oppressed in the US? Explain your answer with examples (take them from other readings if you like or current events).
11. What is wrong with the term **"homophobia"** according to Hopkins? Why, then, does he want to keep it to distinguish from **heterosexism** (explain the different kinds of thing each covers according to him)? How are homophobia and heterosexism *related* on his view? What do gender roles and the **"essence of manhood"** have to do with either? Explain. Why does Hopkins think that simple education is not the answer to homophobia or heterosexism, and what does he think *is* the answer?
12. Is it wrong or unhealthy for someone homosexual to be **"closeted"**? Suppose it is true that most people who oppose gay marriage claim not to know or be related to anyone gay, while most of those in favor of it say they *do* know or are related to someone gay: does that mean that closeted gays have a duty to out themselves for the good of all? Is homophobia maintained by gay people hiding their orientation? Explain Mohr's claim that orientations are not private even if sex acts are – is he right? Does that make it okay to "out" somebody? Why or why not? When is it okay to out someone and why?
13. Explain what is inadequate about the following definition of **rape**: "when a man violently forces his penis into a woman's vagina despite her protests and struggles." Give and defend your own definition of rape. Is rape sex or violence? What are the pros and cons of each view? Can someone rape without knowing it? Can someone be raped without realizing? Explain both answers. Rape seems to be regarded as worse for women than for men. Why is it so regarded? *Is it worse?* Is rape worse than assault? Does the answer depend on cultural standards? What would the answer be in an ideal society? Explain.

#### **SECTION F: EVERYTHING!**

14. Each of the following writers discusses stereotypes and gives an explanation (a) why the stereotype is not based on fact, (b) where it actually originates from, and (c) what its real function is. Give all three explanations for each case.  
(I) Hill-Collins: name and discuss *one* of her four "controlling images"  
(II) Mohr: either gays as sexual predators or gays as ridiculous and confused  
(III) Davis: black man as rapist  
Finally, give an example of a derogatory stereotype that you are familiar with, but that has not been discussed in the readings, and give your own analysis of its function (or say why you don't think it has one).
15. Several writers we have read have advocated the elimination of racial, sexual and sexual orientation categories. Give some reasons for and against the elimination of each categories. Do you think such a proposal is practical? Do you think a utopia would or would not have such categories? Explain your answers.
16. **Take-home question for members of the Human Diversity Suite – bring your answer to the final.** You have been enrolled in three courses (ANT100, ANT105, PHL/WGS167) that all deal with the topic of **Human Diversity**. Each of these courses consider this topic in different ways, using different theoretical orientations, approaches, and information. Describe what you have learned about Human Diversity with reference to a **philosophical perspective**, the over-riding approach in this course. What did you learn about Human Diversity in this course that was missing in the other two courses? What did this course teach you that was useful in conceptualizing and understanding the other two courses?