

PRACTICE MID-TERM QUESTIONS

The following are some practice mid-term questions. Read them carefully and check your notes and review the reading for any background you feel you need. I would suggest that you write out a brief paragraph or a set of points for each of the questions as a way to get a fix on your own learning and to act as preparation for the mid-term exam, which will be somewhat similar in form, to be given out on November 8 and returned on November 15.

- In *The Sports Taboo*, Malcolm Gladwell makes the argument that “blacks like boys and whites like girls.” How would you summarize this analogy? In what ways, if any, do you agree with it? And, by the way, what “sports taboo” is he talking about?
- What is the social convention embodied in the so-called “one drop of blood” rule? If you think this is an inadequate or erroneous rule, what would you suggest in its place? (And if you propose that no rule be used, what would be your rationale and what would be the net benefits and costs, socially speaking?)
- Peter Berger’s model of the construction of social reality has three “moments” or components. Identify each one and trace the sequence in which any example that you chose gets constructed as a social reality.
- So what is an *eruv*? (In response to this question you should offer both a literal and a figurative definition.) Now, using your figurative definition, identify and describe an “eruv” of your own. How “real” is it?
- Ala Aruvabel, (in the excerpt from *The Fine Line*), for each of the following, identify an example out of your own day:
 - a Chunk of Space _____
 - a Block of Time _____
 - a Frame _____
 - a Chunk of (your) Identity _____
 - a Mental Field _____
 - a Ritual Transition _____
- The tides of European immigration to America have been described in terms of three main waves, usually based on from where the immigrants came and when they arrived. How would you describe these three main waves?
- The process of assimilation that has accompanied much of this immigration has also been described in terms of three, but in this instance three main phases in which the various immigrant groups were responded to quite differently, how they were expected to incorporate themselves into America. How would you describe these three main phases?
- America is exceptional – Yes? No? Maybe? Exceptional in what way? How? What does exceptionalism mean in terms of your response. Elaborate on your answer, giving

reasons for your choice. Has your understanding of “American exceptionalism” undergone a change recently? Is so, in what ways? If not, how has your understanding been affected by recent goings-on, both academic and political?

- How do you interpret the title of the article “Hispanics Don’t Exist”? What’s gained and what’s lost as a result of this interpretation?
- In what ways is Cornel West black? In what ways is he white? In what ways is he Anglo? What about De Alva—what color is he?
- Are races real—or are they unreal? What about gender—is that real or unreal? Perhaps this is a false dichotomy. Yet people are different, not just individually, but collectively as well. (Since we do find it both necessary and useful to categorize people. If you don’t think so, try thinking of not using any categories.) Can you offer and explain another set of categories or a continua that we could use instead of race and gender?
- What is the overwhelming perplexity that is attached to our American motto, *E Pluribus Unum*? Is multiculturalism “a cult,” an inevitability, an ideal, a dead end?
- Glazer argues that “we are all multiculturalists now.” What does he mean by that? How does this argument fit in with the question immediately above? Where are you in this discussion?
- What was Alex Haley’s *other* lineage?
- You’ve just found yourself in court about to be judged by a “jury of your peers.” Assuming you could make this happen, what statuses similar to your own would you insist that the jury members have in order to qualify as your peer.
- What makes a “people”? Where do the boundaries of one “people” end and those of another “people” begin? Who is to say?