

**KENT STATE UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITY OF AKRON**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**GENDER COMP QUESTIONS**  
**Fall 2008**

CORE QUESTIONS

1) Following West and Zimmerman (1987), sociologists of gender have embraced the view that gender should be understood as something people do. Yet mainstream research on gender inequality remains focused on outcomes such as wage differentials and the distribution of household labor.

- (a) Compare the perspective of “doing gender” to other conceptualizations of gender.
- (b) Explain why you think this does or does not represent a disjunction between how gender is conceptualized and how it is studied. For this part of the question you need to use the literature from TWO of the following areas; 1) Family & Gender, 2) Economic Inequality & Work, and 3) from the combined literatures on Masculinities and Sex & Sexuality.
- (b) Explain what YOU see as the best way to use the concept of gender and WHY you prefer this approach.

2) Proponents of standpoint theory (such as Patricia Hill Collins and Dorothy Smith) have argued that attempts to explain inequality are doomed to fail unless we begin with the experiences and knowledge of marginalized and oppressed people.

- (a) Explain what it is that standpoint theorists believe can be, and must be, learned from people in such groups.
- (b) This theoretical approach has implications for how sociologists do what we do. Connect the theoretical to the methodological. In other words, what are the implications of standpoint theory for gender scholars? How does this perspective influence not only the types of methods we use but even the questions that we ask and how we present findings?