**UCM – Sociology**

**Qualifying Exams**

**Questions**

**HEALTH AND ILLNESS EXAM**

**COMMITTEE QUESTIONS:**

**Q1. Framework and Methods**

Identify and explain three models or frameworks used by social scientists to understand mental health outcomes, including the strengths and weaknesses of each?

Discuss theories of medicalization, labeling and stigma as it relates to health and illness. How do these theories contribute to the understanding of the social construction process of illness? How can these theories be useful in guiding future empirical research concerning a marginalized group’s health status, and what methodological approaches might you use to measure this type of study (explain based on methodologies used in past studies and their strengths and weaknesses such as surveys, interviews, ethnography etc.)? (Draw from multiple readings using specific examples).

**Q2. Stress Process Model**

Define stress and types of stressors? Discuss some of the pathways that help explain how stress impacts health? How does stress relate to maladaptive coping behaviors for some people? What is the stress process model and how is it useful in explaining the stress-health relationship? Explain the buffering hypothesis and include factors that may help buffer or moderate the effects of stress on health. Regarding the stress process model, provide three examples of research studies that demonstrate how demographic factors (race/ethnicity, sex, gender, culture, poverty etc.) and/or social placement are associated with one or more health outcomes. Identify any limitations of these studies, if any, and provide suggestions addressing how to fix those limitations. (Synthesize multiple literatures and cases, especially examples that consider multiple and intersecting groups. Do not just rely on readings that examine Latinos only, or that discuss the black/white binary, Mix it up!).

**Q3. Social Distribution of Health/Health Disparities**

To what extent are racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care linked to socioeconomic inequalities? Discuss SES differences in mental health and/or physical health among three distinct groups (Asians, Blacks, Latinos). What types of psychological problems and physical problems is SES associated with? What are the some of the patterns and explanations in the effects of SES on health disparities for these groups? What factors of SES are associated with psychological or physical well-being and seeking medical care? Do SES factors explain all the difference in morbidity and mortality between Blacks and whites? Sociologists now recognize that systems of stratification are inextricably intertwined. What are the benefits of an intersectional approach to study the nature of the stress-health relationship? (Consider intersectional dimensions of identity and race/ethnicity – e.g. race and nativity, or gender and class).

**Q4. Culture and Coping (Personal Subarea)**

Define psychosocial resources and discuss how they relate to coping. How can cultural resources intervene (mediate) or interact (buffer/moderate) the relationship between stress and well-being? How are these forms similar or distinct from each other? Provide at least three empirical studies in the U.S. that have examined how cultural resources impact stress and forms of well-being. Identify any limitations of the model observed and suggest potential fixes to existing research or how future work might improve prior research (suggest potential mediators and types of coping that may help better inform the stress-health relationship within the models used in each study).