Tasmanian Certificate of Education

SOCIOLOGY

Senior Secondary

Subject Code: BHS315111

External Assessment

2015

Time: Two Hours

On the basis of your performance in this examination, the examiners will provide results on each of the following criteria taken from the course statement:

**Criterion 4**  Analyse and evaluate ideas and information related to sociology.

**Criterion 5**  Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of sociological terms and concepts.

**Criterion 6**  Construct an argument that includes alternative theoretical explanations.
CANDIDATE INSTRUCTIONS

You **MUST** make sure that your responses to the questions in this examination paper will show your achievement in the criteria being assessed.

You must answer **ONE** question from each section.

It is recommended that you spend a total of **60 minutes** on each section.

Answer each section in a **separate** answer booklet.

All **THREE** criteria are assessed on each question.

**All** written responses must be in **English**.
In essay form, answer **ONE** question from this section, in response to the material in **any** one or more of the extracts provided.

It is recommended that you spend a total of **60 minutes** on this section.

This section assesses **Criteria 4, 5 and 6**.

Use a **separate** answer booklet for this section.

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**Stimulus 1 – Socialisation: What shapes us?**

Socialisation is the process whereby the helpless infant becomes a self-aware, knowledgeable person, skilled in the ways of the culture into which he or she was born. Socialisation among the young allows for the more general phenomenon of social reproduction—the process whereby societies have structural continuity over time. During the course of socialisation, especially in the early years of life, children learn the ways of their elders, thereby perpetuating their values, norms and social practices. All societies have characteristics that endure over long stretches of time, even though their numbers change as individuals are born and die... The family is the main agent of socialisation. [Later] other agents of socialisation take over some of the responsibility from the family. Schools, peer groups, organisations, the media and eventually the work place become socialising forces for individuals.

(Source: Adapted from Sociology (5th edition) Giddens 2006, pp. 163, 166)

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**Section A continues.**
Section A (continued)

**Stimulus 2 – The Self as an Individual**

A common saying goes, ‘Don’t judge a book by its cover’.

In making a conclusion about a person or other thing, we are influenced strongly by initial appearance, and this sets the scene for any suppositions we might make about their nature.

Take people, for instance. It is not unreasonable to be influenced by the first impression their appearance gives, which often categorises them into a genre.

Superficial first appearances will very often be accepted unless there is the desire, motivation, or time to analyse that person more deeply. This could depend on whether they have fat faces, suggesting over-indulgence in food or lack of exercise .. [or] whether they are people with bright sparkling eyes set in happy features, or those whose hairstyles tend to be a personal classifier particularly in the case of women.

Speech will often be another revealer which helps to define the sort of person uttering the words; whether or not they speak clearly, quickly and incomprehensibly, the style of their speech, and whether they drop word endings or slur nasally-rendered vowels. Speech style can often be a reliable indicator of socio-economic status.

(Source: Adapted from Judging by cover Ian Nance, On-line opinion – Australia’s e-journal of social and political debate. 29 December 2014)

**Stimulus 3 – The Concept of Deviance**

(Source: https://www.pinterest.com/pin/5184066070780665098/)

Section A continues.
Stimulus 4 – Gauging the morality of your consumer behaviour

A Queensland University of Technology researcher has embarked on a study to discover how Australian consumers rank acceptable, questionable, and unacceptable behaviour.

It’s no surprise that using stolen credit cards for internet shopping was considered a major no-no. But Paula Dootson also found that people regarded some illegal activities more acceptable than other things that could be considered dishonest.

Lying about the age of a child in order to get a discount and failing to mention that the waitress had miscalculated the bill in your favour were frowned upon more than illegal internet downloading.

According to her study of more than 300 Australian consumers, Ms Dootson said about 50 per cent believed illegal downloading was unacceptable. However, in some cases, holding that belief didn’t stop people from going ahead anyway. ‘Illegal downloading was justified on the basis that organisations weren’t giving people access,’ Ms Dootson said. ‘They felt it was the organisation’s responsibility, and if they weren't going to give access it was completely acceptable to illegally download it’.

The legality of other behaviour was less clear, such as signing up for an American iTunes account to get cheaper downloads and access material not sold on the online Australian store. Doing that is actually illegal. ‘They justified it because the organisation was still getting money, so it’s better than illegally downloading but they weren’t sure the number of laws they were actually breaking,’ she said.

Ms Dootson said she believed tougher laws were not the solution to make customers more honest, but companies needed to find ways to convince people not to steal. In other words, take them on a guilt trip.

Ms Dootson uses the analogy of buying tomatoes at the supermarket self-check out. What could prevent someone from sneakily entering in a cheaper type of tomato to get a discount? ‘Maybe something needs to come up on the screen of the self-check out saying you’ve just denied this supplier this many dollars that should have gone to them,’ she said.

Ms Dootson said every person had a different ‘deviance threshold’.

‘The problem with most consumer deviance is it goes undetected so people don’t really feel like they’re getting punished for it, which in turn is re-enforcing their behaviours,’ she said.

Section A (continued)

In essay form, answer **ONE** question from this section. Use the material in any one or more of the extracts (stimuli) provided in Section A, as well as information from the course. Use sociological terms and concepts in your answer.

**Question 1**

Norms are internalised during socialisation as we socially interact within our culture. Social forces shape us. Using the stimulus material and information from the course, discuss and evaluate alternative views about the process of socialisation and mechanisms of social control.

**Question 2**

Explain the role socialisation plays in determining how an individual’s sense of identity is presented. Using the stimulus material and information from the course, evaluate alternative viewpoints in relation to the development of self.

**Question 3**

Deviance as a concept is difficult to define. Using the stimulus material and information from the course, explain why this is so. Discuss what is meant by the relativity of deviance. Evaluate alternative views that arise when trying to describe why deviance occurs.

**Question 4**

Explain and evaluate alternative sociological theories as to why some people are more likely to be involved in unacceptable or illegal consumer behaviour in contemporary Australian society. Use the stimulus material and information from the course.
In essay form, answer ONE question from this section in response to the material in any one or more of the extracts provided.

It is recommended that you spend a total of 60 minutes on this section.

This section assesses Criteria 4, 5 and 6.

Use a separate answer booklet for this section.

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**Stimulus 5 – Power and Politics**

Australian culture has often been defined as open and dynamic. It has celebrated the myth of a ‘fair go’, promoted egalitarian values, and scorned elites. These populist myths have helped construct an image of Australia that appears to be distinct from its colonial heritage but at the same time obscures the dominance and privileges that have become increasingly concentrated in the hands of a powerful minority. Although the myth is that Australian people are ‘easy going’, intolerant of ‘tall poppies’, and loyal to their ‘mates’, the reality is that society is structured by cultural, sexual, and economic division.

(Source: Adapted from Sociology: Place, Time & Division Beilharz & Hogan 2006, p. 337)

**Stimulus 6 – Work**

**What do you do?**

When introduced to someone for the first time, we often ask, ‘What do you do?’ In today’s society, work is seen as a major influence on our lives and a defining characteristic of who we are. What assumptions or expectations would you make if someone answered that she or he was a surgeon, an accountant, a nurse, an engineer, a labourer, a factory worker, or a teacher? Not only do we expect most people to be in paid work, but the type of work we do broadly indicates our income, education level, likely interests, and social status. Those not in paid work are often stigmatised or undervalued, such as unemployed retirees, or those responsible for doing domestic work (the majority of whom are unpaid women, commonly referred to as housewives rather than houseworkers). In fact, work remains highly gendered in both the paid and unpaid spheres, in terms of the type of work performed, the extent of remuneration (if any), and the status attached to particular occupations.

(Source: Adapted from Public Sociology: An Introduction to Australian Society (2nd edition) Germov & Poole 2011, p. 398)
The number of same-sex couples in Australia counted in the 2011 Census has risen significantly in recent years, with a 32% increase in the five years since 2006. In the 15 years between 1996 and 2011, the number of same-sex couples more than tripled. The increasing number of people identified as being in a same-sex relationship may reflect growing social acceptance.


**Stimulus 8 – School: A day in the life**

It is mid-morning at a state coeducational secondary college serving a working- and lower middle-class community on the edge of a large Australian city. A group of year 9 girls is struggling with mathematics: their teacher regards them as not very engaged, as not really putting in much effort ... He thinks they will not last the distance at school. The girls themselves do not like the teacher much, as they believe he thinks they are dumb and bad at maths, and that he does not really try to help them understand. When asked why they do not ask more questions, the girls simply shrug their shoulders and say, ‘What’s the point? He’d just ignore us, or make us feel even dumber’, and, ‘He doesn’t really respect us.’

In the staffroom, the teachers talk about the kids coming from families that do not really value education. ‘They’re not your professional background type of parents.’ The teachers lament the attitudes of some of their students, wishing they could be more ambitious or adventurous, perhaps even finding ways to get out of the local area—an area that many teachers find depressing and from which they hurriedly escape at the end of the working day. The teachers also feel abused and ‘put down’ by the kids, who do not seem to show much interest in the classes they have been preparing or the assignments they have spent all weekend correcting.

(Source: Adapted from Public Sociology: An Introduction to Australian Society (2nd edition) Germov & Poole 2011, p. 438)
Poverty is hard work, and demands difficult decisions. It means waiting for the real chill of evening in July before turning on the fire, because you can’t afford gas bills. It means not buying food so you can pay all of the rent, or eating toast for dinner so your children have lunches for school. It means constant anxieties about money. To imagine living in poverty, imagine that nervous fortnight when the phone bill and the loan repayment leave you with $50 for everything else. If you envy rich people anything, it’s not their possessions, it’s all the things they don’t have to worry about.

In a rich country, poverty also means foregoing the choices everybody else has. It means living a life you know others don’t have to live. You wait in the longest queue because you can’t buy your way out of it and your time isn’t worth anything. Housing that you might live in is a problem for everyone else, because it will lower the value of their properties and import the ‘wrong element’ into their streets. You will be resented, and your lack of resources will be taken as measure of your value. You’ll get the poorest quality education, and the lowest standard of health care, because it’s not fair to make other people make sacrifices to support ‘lazy’ people.

(Source: Adapted from Sociology: Place, Time & Division Beilharz & Hogan 2006, p. 399)

Stimulus 10 – Media and Work

 Australians are some of the most active social media users in the world – be it because of our inherently social nature, friendly approach or thirst for new technology. Firstly, many of us use social networking tools for business purposes. Commonly this involves LinkedIn, Twitter and the use of Facebook Fan pages to build an online audience that socially interacts with your brand or organisation. Having an online following gives businesses a fast and effective method to send messages to their target audience and followers. These tools have also become an important customer service and feedback tool. Many Australian companies now monitor their online reputation – much of the time on networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Popular users may even be approached by brands and companies with offers of work. Who would have thought that expressing your views online could actually lead to a full-time job with very attractive monetary rewards?

Finally, social media has enormously impacted traditional media. Now when news breaks, we often hear about it first on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Traditional media reach out to online users to verify stories, find out more information and also spread their own content. TV programs run Twitter hashtags to entice people to discuss online whilst watching a particular show. We even see news reporters promoting their Twitter accounts during the main news segments in the evening news.

Section B (continued)

In essay form, answer ONE question from this section. Use the material in any one or more of the extracts (stimuli) provided in Section B, as well as information from the course. Use sociological terms and concepts in your answer.

**Question 5**

Power, or the ability of people or groups to exert their will over others, is exercised in societal institutions (family, education, work, mass media).

Using this meaning of power, the stimulus material and information from the course, construct an argument that evaluates alternative theoretical explanations regarding the dimensions of power and politics in at least two of these institutions in contemporary Australian society.

**Question 6**

Sociology theorises that social stratification is created and maintained in social institutions (family, education, work, mass media).

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, construct an argument that evaluates alternative theoretical explanations for the role that at least two of these institutions play in stratification in contemporary Australian society.

**Question 7**

Institutions (family, education, work, mass media) do not exist in isolation. They interrelate with each other.

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, construct an argument that uses alternative theoretical explanations to discuss the interrelationships between two or more of these institutions in contemporary Australian society.

**Question 8**

Institutions (family, education, work, mass media) are not fixed. They transform over time.

Using the stimulus material and information from the course, construct an argument that evaluates alternative theoretical explanations of the ways at least two of these institutions have changed over time in contemporary Australian society.