Midterm Study Guide

Your midterm will be on Thursday, May 6. It is a closed-book, closed-note exam. It will have two sections. One is an objective section (about 15-20 questions, both multiple-choice and true-false questions may appear), and the other is a short answer essay section. Each section will be given approximately equal weight.

You do not need to bring a scantron or blue book to the exam.

Coverage: Everything from the syllabus up to and including April 29. Recall that you are not responsible for the Reskin and McBrier article, "Why Not Ascription..." Next Tuesday (May 4) will be used for review—no new material will be presented.

The most important material is that which was covered both in class and in your readings. However, you are expected to know major points and concepts from readings that were not covered in class—especially those from the Padavic and Reskin text. I will not ask obscure questions on the articles we have read (e.g., England's article on human capital theory and Huffman and Velasco's article on sex composition and earnings). But, read the articles, and make sure you know main points, arguments, and findings.

Sample short-answer essay questions. You will be asked to answer 3-5 questions like these. Preparing answers to these questions will be a good way to direct your preparation for the exam. Note that they are short answer essays—I much prefer short, concise answers that are completely responsive to all parts of the question. So, make sure you answer the question asked, rather than just writing everything you know about the concepts that appear in any given question.

1. How does the extent of sex segregation differ when the unit of analysis is the occupation versus the job? Provide numbers to exemplify the difference. As part of your answer, describe the difference between a job and an occupation, providing and example of each. What types of sex segregation are missed by studies that focus on occupational categories?

2. Padavic and Reskin (and other research) shows that jobs in predominantly female occupations are not especially compatible with women's family roles – female-dominated occupations are, on average, no more flexible and require no less effort than other occupations. Does this finding tend to support or fail to support a supply-side explanation of sex segregation? Be sure to discuss the fundamental features and assumptions of a supply-side account of segregation as part of your answer.

3. How do demand-side explanations of segregation differ from supply-side accounts, generally? Describe the supply-side account of segregation offered by S. Polachek (outlined in the Paula England article), and how it accounts for segregation. Then, choose one demand-side explanation and explain how it accounts for sex segregation.

4. Define the theory "statistical discrimination," and identify it as either a supply- or demand-side account of segregation. How might sex stereotypes heighten the propensity for employers to statistically discriminate?
5. Describe the difference between earnings inequality within jobs versus earnings inequality between jobs. Which contributes most to the overall earnings gap between women and men? If work done by women is devalued in the U.S. labor market, which type of inequality will be heightened? In your answer, relate the 1963 Equal Pay Act and the policy of comparable worth to the appropriate type of inequality.