

### **MIDTERM EXAM STUDY QUESTIONS**

The midterm will consist of **two parts**: SEVEN short essay questions and ONE long essay question. I will give you ten short essay questions; you will choose seven to answer. I will give you three long essay questions; you will answer one.

The exam questions will be taken from the questions below. There will be no questions on the exam that do not appear below. Since you have the questions ***ahead of time***, I expect that you will be able to answer them with more than just a superficial response. Be sure to include as much specific evidence as possible to explain and support what you assert – that is, **show** me what you're saying is true and how you know that it's true, don't just tell me something is true.

1. Randolph Bourne believed that “youth” was not exclusively a function of age; it was therefore possible to live in a state of “perpetual youth.” According to Bourne, how might one achieve “perpetual youth”?
2. For Bourne, what is the difference between “conservative youth” and “radical youth”? What causes young people to become conservative? How can they stay radical?
3. Why does Bourne dismiss the value of “experience” (or “wisdom”), but nonetheless insist that youth be open to and embrace as many “experiences” as possible?
4. Why does Jane Addams see the emergence of urban commercial amusements as a social problem? How has the rise of commercial amusements undermined parents’ ability to raise their children in accordance with traditional values?
5. Why does D. James Romero say we are a “nation of siblings”?
6. What were reformers in the early 1900s referring to when they spoke of the “boy problem”? How did the “problem” differ depending on whether one was talking about middle-class or lower-class boys?
7. How does Julia Grant’s article, “A ‘Real Boy’ and not a Sissy,” demonstrate that proper gender norms are not universal and timeless, but socially constructed and subject to change?
8. How were admen of the early 1900s able to “de-sissify” consumerism while “masculinizing” their own profession?
9. Why did boys prove to be “remarkably influential salesmen” in middle-class families? What attributes did admen see in boys that made them believe that marketing to boys was a good idea?
10. Many historians have argued that working-class attitudes about female sexuality were far less strict than those of middle-class Protestant reformers. What evidence does Mary Odem’s article, “Teenage Girls, Sexuality, and Working-Class Parents” introduce to refute this view?

11. What does Odem mean when she says that working-class adolescent girls were far from the “helpless victims” portrayed in reformers’ accounts? How did young women use their sexuality to get what they wanted?
12. How did the urban environment, changes in the economy, and the availability of “cheap amusements” weaken the traditional morality that working class families and communities had tried to instill in adolescent girls?
13. According to Shoshanna Erlich’s article, how did new laws – such as “contributing to the delinquency of a minor” – reflect shifting attitudes about youthful female sexuality?
14. According to Erlich, why were boys considered easier to “reform” than girls? Why were white girls considered easier to reform than African American girls?
15. According to Erlich, during the Progressive era, a girl was considered “delinquent” for different reasons than a boy would have been considered “delinquent.” How does this reflect the existence of a sexual double standard or “gendered morality”?
16. Why did young boys want to become “newsies”? How did one achieve success as a “newsie”?
17. According to David Nasaw, why did girls who lived in early 20<sup>th</sup> century cities have less freedom than boys?
18. Why was having money important for the children of the city? How did it shape their daily lives but also influence how they saw the world around them?
19. According to James Wechsler, how did disillusionment stemming from World War I shape youthful rebellion during the 1920s?
20. According to James Wechsler, how did the economic good times of the mid-1920s *both* fuel some forms of youthful rebellion and undermine other forms?
21. The 1920s are often portrayed as a period of cultural liberation and growing tolerance, particularly among youth. How does Vincent Sheean’s description of the University of Chicago campus undermine this portrait?
22. How did the image of the Gibson girl both facilitate growing public acceptance of college-educated women but also reinforce (rather than challenge) traditional gender roles?
23. How did popular magazine articles about “college girls” and the “ideal college man” help to “contain” societal fears about the “New Woman” and reassure readers that college men were not becoming too “feminine”?
24. How did athletics, particularly football, enable College men to blend their “primitive” and “civilized” sides? Why was such a combination considered “ideal” during this period?
25. What does F. Scott Fitzgerald’s “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” suggest about men’s power (or lack of power) over women during the 1920s?
26. Fitzgerald’s portrait of “flaming youth” in “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” is rather ambivalent. What are some of the more attractive qualities of the young people in his story? What less admirable traits undermine these qualities?
27. According to Kevin White, why did changing sexual mores during the 1920s leave most middle class men feeling confused (and sometimes broke)?

28. Paula Fass argues that adults of the 1920s were wrong to believe that the “wild” younger generation lived in a “state of anarchy” and did not adhere to any social standards or rules. What evidence does she cite in her article to demonstrate that this view was incorrect?
29. As portrayed in the film “Our Dancing Daughters,” are the wealthy young men and women of the 1920s completely liberated from the old values or do they retain some traditional attitudes regarding how men and women should relate to one another?
30. Why does Thomas Hine argue that, initially, the New Deal did little to help youth (and even may have hurt them)?
31. Eventually, how did New Deal programs like the CCC and NYA help young people – both financially and in shaping their world views?
32. Why did many American adults believe they had good reason to fear young people during the 1930s? Why did such fears prove unwarranted? What kept young people in the 1930s from becoming “revolutionaries”?
33. What challenges did schools face during the Depression? Why does Thomas Hine argue that middle-class educators dealt poorly with working-class students?
34. According to Hine, why was “hanging around the filling station” a “more effective educational experience than going to high school” for many male teens? How did the “car culture” prepare teens for their future?
35. Why did so many teens “ride the rails” during the Depression? How did the experience itself differ from what they hoped or dreamed it might be like?
36. How did their experiences “riding the rails” during the Depression shape the worldviews of these teenagers for the rest of their lives?
37. How did World War II affect the emotional lives of families? In what various ways were young children in particular affected?
38. What “coping mechanisms” did family members use to sustain themselves when their fathers and brothers went off to war? How did they keep the memory of their loved ones alive?
39. Why did “V-girls” attract so much negative attention? How did this negative attention demonstrate the persistence of the “double standard” regarding youth and sexuality?
40. According to Robin Kelley, why could simply wearing a zoot suit, though not intended to be a direct political statement, still be read as politically “subversive” or “oppositional”?
41. Who and what were the members of the zoot suit “oppositional culture” opposing? What did they do (or not do) to show this “opposition”?
42. Why did zoot suiters like Malcolm X avoid wage labor and the draft and turn to “hustling”? Why was “hustling” and working for tips a double-edged sword?
43. Why was “dressing up” important to young working-class blacks like Malcolm X and his friends? How did it restore both a sense of individuality and community?
44. How does the story of the Catholic “SDS” undermine the claim that an “all-powerful marketing establishment” dictates what will be popular among young people?
45. How did SDS enable Catholic girls to be both religiously devout and good prom dates?

46. Why were advertisers and merchants initially reluctant to market directly to young people in the late 1940s? What convinced them to change their minds?
47. Who was Eugene Gilbert? What role did he and *Seventeen* magazine play in establishing the importance of the “youth market”?
48. Why did World War II and the onset of the Cold War get many Americans worrying about juvenile delinquency?
49. According to James Gilbert, why were Americans in the 1950s so concerned about the possibly adverse effects of mass culture on young people? What had happened during and after World War II that helped fuel this concern and make mass culture a scapegoat?
50. How were middle class parents’ fears about juvenile delinquency linked to their hostility toward working-class and minority culture and mores?
51. What was the central argument of the psychiatrist Fredric Wertham? Why was Wertham’s argument about the “seduction of the innocent” so compelling to many parents and community leaders during the 1950s? Why was it logically flawed?
52. How did Mark McCloskey of the Office of Community War Services (OCWS) bring a new approach to dealing with juvenile delinquency? What did McCloskey think caused delinquency? How did he propose to deal with the problem?
53. Why were figures like James Dean and Marlon Brando so attractive to young people during the 1950s? In what ways did the characters these actors played articulate what young people were feeling?