

**THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES
BA DEGREE PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL SCIENCES
LEVEL III (SEMESTER I) – 2016/2017
FINAL EXAMINATION
SSU 1251- UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY AND CULTURE**



DURATION: THREE HOURS (3 HOURS)

Date: 12th Nov 2016

Time: 9.30am to 12.30 pm

This paper has two parts, Part A and Part B. Please answer one (1) question from Part A and four (4) questions from Part B. Please indicate the relevant part and the question correctly in your answer scripts.

Part A (40 Marks)

- **Please answer one (1) question only.**

1. We often hear the idea that Sri Lanka is or should be 'one nation' with a shared culture. Using the different understandings of culture, discuss what this means. In your answer, focus on what this means in a plural society where there are a diversity of cultural practices.
2. According to recent media reports, a well-known boys' school in Colombo has established a dress code for women who visit the school. Using your knowledge of feminist theories, analyse what this means in terms of women's roles in society and forms of social control.
3. Using Weber's ideal types of legitimate power, discuss the power and influence of a political figure that you admire. In your answer, discuss the characteristics of this person that has allowed him or her to obtain power and how it was recognised as legitimate power by the people.
4. The medical degree offered by SAIM has become a very controversial topic in society today. Discuss the different positions that have been taken with regard to SAIM and explain and justify your own position on this debate using a relevant theoretical perspective on education.

Part B (60 Marks)

- Answer 4 questions only.
 - Each answer carries (15) marks.
1. Discuss the various marriage practices that are practiced among different cultures.
 2. Explain what Clifford Geertz means when he says that 'religion is a social construct'.
 3. Describe the philosophical discussions that fuelled the modern economic system.
 4. What is social stratification? Why is it an important area to be studied by anthropologists and sociologists?
 5. Discuss Eriksen's approach to explaining ethnicity and ethnic relations.
 6. Write short notes on **three (3)** of the following:
 - a. Socialisation
 - b. Social Change
 - c. Symbolic interactionism
 - d. Binary thinking

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