

## COMPS QUESTIONS 2025

1. Based on Bourdieu's theory, explain the role of reflexivity in your research process. How do your own biases and academic habitus shape your findings?
2. Compare and contrast scientific realism and social constructivism. How does your research align with or challenge these perspectives?
3. Consider the following claim from Lakoff & Johnson (1999): "As embodied, imaginative creatures, we never were separated or divorced from reality in the first place. What has always made science possible is our embodiment, not our transcendence of it, and our imagination, not our avoidance of it." Expand on your interpretation of it and explain the implications of this for science in general, and more specifically for your research.
4. Define the steps of the PRISMA systematic literature review process and highlight what inclusion and exclusion criteria you used in your dissertation?
5. Describe the phenomenon you have chosen for your dissertation. Explain how you have identified the keyword for literature review?
6. Explain how sense making advocates plausibility rather than accuracy. Human experience is captured and transformed in narratives, which create "realities" for community members. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? In addition, if not, why not?
7. Explain how the illusion of understanding describes our views of the world and our expectations with regard to the future. Identify how you can apply this knowledge? And if not, why not?
8. Explain how you can work with secondary data in the problem solving process. In particular, choose one of the three approaches, and discuss in detail within the context of your own study: archival and documentary study; re-analyzing primary data collected by others; meta-analysis. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
9. Explain Polányi's famous manifesto, "we know more than we can tell," as the basis of tacit knowledge. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
10. Explain the basic concepts of emergence ("The whole is more/other than the sum of the parts"). Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
11. Explain the claim: "Metaphors and figurative expressions are pathways for the human understanding of the world, although not with strict truth-values attached to them. They are compressed wisdoms or shortcuts for cognitive processes". Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
12. Explain the data collection of an interview-based study, assuming a semi-structured interview. How would you determine the topics? What do you need to pay attention to during the interviews? Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
13. Explain the difference between multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary approaches. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?

14. Explain the meaning of “cultural conceptualizations” and how knowledge about them can enhance cross-cultural communication and, at the same time, how lack of knowledge about them can result in cross-cultural misunderstandings. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
15. Explain the meaning(s) of Lakoff’s “embodiment hypothesis”. What evidences of the “embodied mind” can be found in linguistic and non-linguistic representation? Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
16. Explain the tentative process of (creative) problem solving following Popper's approach. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
17. Explain Thomas Kuhn’s concept of paradigm shifts in scientific revolutions. How does this apply to your research field? Can you identify competing paradigms in your area of study?
18. Interpret the concept of a knowledge gap. Describe the steps you have taken to formulate the knowledge gap for your dissertation!
19. It has long been recognized that "correlation does not imply causation." However, often we are left with observational studies with no chance of carrying out randomized controlled experiments. Are we doomed or is there a chance to get some adequate causal explanations of non-experimental or quasi-experimental data? Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
20. Karl Weick’s sensemaking theory suggests that organizations construct reality through narratives and interpretations rather than objective analysis. How does this concept apply to decision-making in your research field?
21. Latour’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT) views social processes as networks of interactions between human and non-human actors, including technologies, institutions, and material objects. Considering your own research topic, how could ANT help you analyze the complex relationships between different actors in your study field?
22. Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison argue that objectivity is historically and culturally shaped. How do epistemic virtues (e.g., objectivity, accuracy, simplicity) influence your methodological choices?
23. The formulation of a problem is already an act of sense making, as there are no “problems” “out there” independent of interpretation. Expand on the idea of what “makes” a problem a problem. Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?
24. What is the role of conceptual metaphors in social discourse? Specify how you can apply this knowledge in your dissertation? And if not, why not?