

**Doctoral Qualifying Examination
Theory Exam
Department of Criminology**

Fall 2017

Exam Rules:

The student's personal items will be kept in the office of the graduate director during the exam. The student will be provided with a writing pad, computer, pen, and exam.

During the examination period of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., the student must not utilize any outside resources. The student may not confer with any people or refer to any books, articles, etc. Students are on their honor to produce their own work on their exams. The University subscribes to a document-checking service that can be used to assess plagiarism; the Department of Criminology reserves the right to submit any examination to this service for evaluation.

Responses to exam questions may be typed; student should double-space and use a 12-point font. Students who use computers will save their exam as a single MS Word document to the notebook computer provided by the Graduate Director.

Students may not withdraw from the exam after receiving it; if the student does not complete and turn in the exam, it will be recorded as a failure. Exam responses must be submitted to the Exam Proctor by 5 p.m.

Security: The exam computers have been stripped. The computers were checked before the exam. All non-program files were removed, Internet access has been blocked, and the computers were locked up until exam time.

After the exam, the computers will be checked to determine if any flash drive has been inserted or if the internet has been accessed. **DO NOT ACCESS THE INTERNET FOR ANY REASON.** The Graduate Director will have visual/audio contact with the room for the exam period.

There is a single Word file on the desktop with the exam. Write your answers IN that document (which includes the exam questions). You, your computer and your exam have a number that identifies you. Do not change the name of the file; do not include your name IN the exam file. You may print to the printer in SOC 351.

When you are finished, submit your completed exam to the Graduate Director.

Exam Instructions: You must pick at 4 questions from the 8 questions listed below.

In total, you will answer 4 questions. For each, write an essay the scientific style of which resembles that found in scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles. Students should provide in-text citations to the best of their abilities; a reference list is not required.

There are no minimum or maximum page limits.

1) Describe the current state of labeling theory. In doing so, be sure to emphasize (1) the definition of labeling, (2) the factors that should increase one's exposure to labeling, (3) the reasons why labeling should affect later crime, and (4) the factors that may amplify or diminish its effects on crime. Where relevant, discuss empirical evidence on the accuracy of labeling theory's predictions.

2) Research has found that a small number of juvenile and adult offenders account for over 50% of crime attributable to a birth cohort and 80% of the violent crime. Write an essay in which you discuss and apply a specific theoretical explanation for these "chronic" offenders. Be sure to fully explain the theory, describe the theoretical foundations of your theory, and identify the empirical literature that supports your use of this theory to explain chronic delinquent and criminal behavior.

3) Recently, Robert Sampson has published a series of related articles in several prestigious journals that demonstrate and argue there is now, across cities that persistently experience crime, a "landscape of cumulative adversity" which can be connected to crime. Whether or not you have read the series of articles that lead to this conclusion, construct an explanation of crime consistent with Sampson's conclusion that cities that experience crime have developed a landscape of cumulative adversity. Your argument does not need to be the same one offered by Sampson, but needs to make sense, and be supported by relevant observations. In taking up this argument, be sure to clearly identify what you mean by "a landscape of cumulative adversity" and the factors that contribute to cumulative adversity.

4) One of the persistent observations that can be made about street crime is the lack of variability in the social class and income of street offenders. In other words, people who commit street crime are disproportionately likely to be from the lowest social classes in society, and to come from a narrow income range. Discuss the relevance of that observation to criminological theories. Provide examples of theories that pay attention to and/or ignore that observation. Using a specific example, provide a modification of a theory that currently fails to include social class, and explain how it might do so.

5) Contemporary social disorganization theory identifies several structural correlates of crime rates across communities but acknowledges that other structural factors affect this relationship. First, discuss in detail those structural factors that contribute to neighborhood crime rates, as well as those that mediate the relationship between neighborhoods and crime. Second, review the research that examines these relationships. Third, take a position on whether or not variation in crime rates across communities can be explained by variation in the community's level of disorganization. Be sure to defend your answer thoroughly.

6) When students are asked to discuss “subcultural” theories of crime, they usually dredge up theorists like Walter B. Miller, Lloyd Ohlin, Richard Cloward, and maybe even Franco Ferracuti and Marvin Wolfgang. There seems, however, to have been a recent renaissance in subcultural theory in the study of crime. This new thinking has primarily come from Elijah Anderson and Sampson & Bartusch. Compare and contrast the classic and contemporary subcultural theories. What improvements/refinements—either conceptually or empirically—have these contemporary subcultural theorists made over the years? Do you think these contemporary subcultural theories hold promise? Why or why not?

7) Developmental/life-course criminology has witnessed substantial growth in the recent years. Two of the more recognized theoretical frameworks are that of Moffitt (1993) and Sampson and Laub (1993). Specifically, Moffitt (1993) has provided a typology where she describes adolescent-limited and life-course-persistent offenders. Comparatively, Sampson and Laub (1993) have proposed an age-graded theory of informal social control. For this essay, (a) discuss the central propositions of each of the two theoretical frameworks, (b) highlight the distinctions between the two, (c) review the evidence in support of or against their central propositions, and (d) indicate which one of these theoretical frameworks you think is most promising as an explanation for crime.

Moffitt, T.E. (1993). Adolescent-limited and life-course-persistent antisocial behavior: A developmental taxonomy. *Psychological Review*, 100, 674-701.

Sampson, R.J., & Laub, J. (1993). *Crime in the making: Pathways and turning points through life*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

8) Some criminologists have argued that criminological theories should not be integrated because the theories being integrated are based on opposing assumptions, while others have argued that theory integration is essential for the betterment of the field. You have been appointed by the President of the American Society of Criminology to prepare an essay investigating the issue. In this essay you have been asked to (1) discuss the main arguments given by criminologists for and against theory integration; and (2) write up your opinion of whether criminologists should integrate theories or not. In doing so, provide evidence based on theoretical works to support your opinion.