

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

Fall 2018

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. Clearly indicate which questions you are answering by providing the question number or quoting the text of the question on the exam.

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. 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.

If you would like to print your exam, bring your computer to the Graduate Director or Graduate Coordinator.

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

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. Travis Hirschi, Robert Agnew, and Ron Akers were stranded together in an airport one evening (probably JFK in New York). They gathered in the coffee shop around a table and the conversation turned quickly to a discussion of the particularly high violent crime rate in Chicago. Each individual shared how he explains this phenomenon and supported his own arguments with empirical evidence. As the coffee flowed, the discussion became ever more animated. Fortunately enough, you were also stranded in the airport, were seated at the adjacent table, and were able to overhear the entire discussion. Laptop ever at-the-ready, you captured the conversation. Please describe it here, to the best of your recollection.

2. Some criminologists argue that differences in neighborhood crime rates simply represent the tendency for individuals with certain social, psychological, and demographic characteristics to live in different parts of the city. From this perspective, it is not necessary to consider the role of neighborhood structures and dynamics at all, for they are simply aggregated proxies for processes that actually unfold at the individual level. That is, for example, observed relationships between the level of community deprivation and the crime rate actually represent the relationships between the economic status of individuals and the level of their criminal involvement. Do you agree or disagree with this proposition, and what theoretical and empirical evidence can you provide to support your position?

3. A growing body of research suggests that genetic factors play an important role in the etiology of criminal behavior. Briefly summarize what we have learned to-date about the link between genes and crime, describe the theoretical processes thought to explain this link, and discuss the implications of the existing empirical evidence for individual-level theories that omit genetic differences.

4. In your estimation, which criminological theory is the best at explaining crime in the United States and why? First, describe the theory, including concepts and propositions. Consider each of the criteria in your answer: scientific merit, empirical support, breadth of coverage (traditional and white-collar crime; violent and property crime). What reasons would someone use to counter your choice?

5. Travis Hirschi has held an esteemed role in criminology for decades, and been a major theoretical influence. He developed social bonding theory (1969), and then co-developed self-control theory. Despite the successes of self-control theory over nearly two decades, Hirschi (2004) has recently called for a modification of how self-control is conceptualized and measured. First, compare and contrast the two versions of self-control theory – the 1990 and 2004 versions. Second, provide your opinion as to which version reflects the better theory and explain why.

6. Consider the issue of police deviance in the workplace. Choose one criminological theory that you believe best explains this deviance and discuss why you consider it to be the best explanation. Illustrate in detail how the theory you selected accounts for this form of deviance and cite relevant research that supports your argument. Describe an intervention program to address police deviance based on your theory.

7. There are great gender differences in criminal involvement. Drawing on your knowledge of criminological theories, explain why men are more criminally involved compared to women. In providing your explanation, indicate whether the causes of female crime are the same as or different from the causes of male crime.

8. Describe the established empirical relationship between employment and crime and identify two criminological theories that best explain this relationship. Compare the major tenets and empirical support for each of these perspectives and provide your view of which one is most theoretically and empirically viable for explaining the relationship between employment and crime.