

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

Spring 2019

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) Select one of the following types of deviance: workplace deviance generally, workplace deviance on the part of sworn law enforcement, or environmental crimes on the part of company leaders. Choose one criminological theory that you believe best explains the type of deviance you selected and discuss why you consider it to be the best explanation. Illustrate in detail how the theory you selected accounts for this crime and cite relevant research that supports your argument.

- 2) One of the persistent observations that can be made about street crime is the lack of variability in the social class/income of street offenders. In other words, research consistently shows that individuals in the lower class echelons are disproportionately represented among people who commit street crime. Identify and describe one theory that is among the best to explain this link between socioeconomic class and street crime and another theory that is relatively weak. Indicate how the second theory might be modified to better explain the link between socioeconomic status and street crime.

- 3) Identify and describe a theory that can explain why there was mass looting and violence following Hurricane Katrina, which hit New Orleans in 2005, and little or none following Hurricane Michael, which hit the Panhandle last year. Discuss the key elements of the theory and specifically indicate how it would correctly predict violence following Katrina and none following Michael. Describe the policy implications that emanate from the theory; that is, what according to the theory needs to happen in terms of policy and/or practice to reduce or prevent violence following hurricanes.

- 4) Robert Sampson writes “Criminologists have traditionally addressed the causes of crime by studying why some individuals and not others commit crimes, leading to between-individual comparisons and a well-known list of correlated attributes (sex, race, personality, family background, and so on). Although this research tradition is obviously important, a different way of approaching the problem is found in life-course criminology.” What is the research tradition in life-course criminology? What does it offer that is missed by traditional criminology? The biggest critics of life-course criminology are Gottfredson and Hirschi. What is the thrust of their criticism? What is your position regarding the Gottfredson and Hirschi and Sampson and Laub debate?

- 5) General theories of crime tend to ignore the importance of crime correlates widely reported in the criminological research literature. More specifically, general theories do not address, nor have they been modified to examine, variations in crime that relate to gender, race or social class – three factors that have been established as major crime correlates. Examine how race, class and gender might be incorporated into one of the general theories listed below, why this would be an improvement, and whether or not significant theoretical refinements might be required. Moreover, if such theoretical modifications are needed, can it still be claimed that the theory is a general theory?

General Strain Theory	Self Control (Hirschi and Gottfredson or Grasmick)
Social Learning	Developmental Criminology
Life Course	Control balance

- 6) 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.
- 7) During the past two decades, social disorganization theory has experienced a revitalization after several decades of relative obscurity. Explain why you think the prominence of social disorganization theory diminished in the first place and then discuss the basis for its resurrection. How would you characterize the empirical validity of the theory in light of both older and more contemporary research?
- 8) Many explanations have been offered for the dramatic reduction in US crime rates during the 1990s. These explanations generally have not made significant use of theory; they have instead emphasized single variables (e.g., the strong economy, increased incarceration). Identify a prominent criminological theory that you think is among the strongest in explaining the reduction in crime during the 1990s. Discuss the basic perspective and arguments of this theory– giving maximum attention to the concepts and hypotheses that explain why crime decreased in the 1990s. Additionally identify how this theory falls short in terms of fully explaining the crime drop.