

College of Criminology & Criminal Justice  
Florida State University  
Ph.D. Theory Exam  
Fall, 2007

Please answer any four of the following questions. Responses should be turned in to Margarita Frankeberger by 4:00 p.m. Several faculty have been assigned hours to be available in their office to clarify any questions that may arise. Their schedule is:

|                   |                 |          |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------|
| 8:00 – 10:00am    | Carter Hay      | Room 320 |
| 10:00am – 12:00pm | Sarah Bacon     | Room 322 |
| 12:00 – 2:00pm    | Ted Chiricos    | Room 304 |
| 2:00 – 4:00pm     | Patricia Warren | Room 302 |

1. Discuss the major substantive (i.e., empirical) works that have contributed to our understanding of the race/crime relationship. In your discussion, trace the historical development of this literature. In addition, describe the efforts to explain this relationship, including those who have challenged the assumption that any relationship exists. Finally, identify voids in the research literature and what steps can be taken to better understand the race/crime relationship.
2. Deterrence theory and labeling theory offer two contradictory positions on the effects of legal punishment. Please describe these two positions and for each one, systematically review the empirical evidence and assess which theory most accurately captures the effects of legal punishments.
3. Identify what you regard as the most important theoretical dispute in the area of criminology today. What is the nature of the debate and what are the positions of the various parties involved? Be sure to cite relevant literature. Review the empirical findings pertaining to this dispute. What are your ideas for the resolution of this debate?
4. The feminist critique of criminological theorizing claims that extant theory is male-centered and generally does not account for female experiences (including participation in crime and delinquency). Briefly summarize the main points of this critique, assess the empirical evidence around these claims, and evaluate a theory that purports to account for gender differences in crime. What are the implications of your evaluation for future theory and research?
5. What factors explain the massive expansion in the use of incarceration and community based sanctions of the past three decades. What empirical evidence is there relative to the effectiveness and consequences of incarceration as a crime control strategy?

6. Desistance from crime is one of the major aspects of a criminal career that all major theoretical perspectives try to explain. Briefly review the explanation of desistance from crime offered by one major criminological theory. In specific detail, describe how this theory might explain desistance. In your opinion, is this theory in harmony with Akers' position that the desistance process is essentially onset in reverse? Speaking broadly, do you think there is any reason (theoretically, methodologically or empirically) to consider desistance as conceptually distinct from onset?

7. Donald Black's (1976) *Behavior of Law* has generated a great deal of discourse in criminology and has been the subject of numerous empirical tests. Explain Black's conceptualization of law, describe his key propositions about the relationships between dimensions of social life and law and discuss the current status of the theory based on evidence from the available literature.

8. Mark Warr (2002:124) recently commented that "in a society beset by the hard realities of crime, a theory of crime causation ought to be something more than an intellectual exercise of mere armchair speculation. It should be pressed to offer some means to prevent or control crime in the real world."

With this in mind, consider the implications of Gottfredson and Hirschi's self-control theory for crime control policy. Thoroughly describe (1) the arguments of this theory, (2) what it suggests about the most effective approach to controlling crime, and (3) what new research is needed to further shed light on how this theory may inform crime control efforts.