

**Theory Comprehensive Exam
Fall 2010**

Instructions: For this exam, you are to select any four (4) of the following questions. All responses are to be turned in at 4:00 p.m. You may contact Margarita if you have any problems requiring faculty attention.

1. Three key facts of crime are their presumed relationship to age, race, and sex. Briefly summarize the empirical evidence relating these factors to crime. Pick one criminological theory that you think best accounts for these facts, and one criminological theory that fails to account for these facts. Review the theories, relevant research, and conclude why you think that theory holds promise.
2. A successful theory must meet both theoretical and empirical standards. In some detail, highlight the theoretical and empirical elements of a good theory. Which criminological theory does the best job of meeting these standards? What current criminological theory fails to meet these standards? Justify your answers to those who would disagree.
3. Recently, the number of persons released from state prisons annually in the U.S. began to outpace the number of persons admitted to prison annually. This phenomenon focuses attention on the possible consequences of imprisonment for those exposed to it. Discuss the relevant theoretical arguments for why the experience of imprisonment may affect individual behavior, and summarize what we have learned thus far from empirical studies of this issue.
4. Contemporary criminological theory and research has been dominated by sociological explanations. During the past decade, there has been a slight shift with more and more research examining the biosocial correlates to criminal behavior. Provide an overview of the biosocial perspective and discuss the literature examining the biosocial correlates to antisocial outcomes.
5. Discuss the origins, evolution, and contemporary relevance of social bonds as an explanatory factor in relation to juvenile delinquency and adult criminal behavior.
6. Social threat anticipates that interracial contact can have negative consequences and the “contact hypothesis” first articulated by Allport anticipates otherwise. Explicate each of these perspectives and discuss their potential relevance for criminological outcomes, citing relevant research to illustrate your arguments.
7. What is the established empirical relationship between employment and crime and what criminological perspectives are most relevant to its explanation?
8. The topic of inter-group crime has received ample criminological attention in recent decades. Within this body of work, scholars have focused on *interracial* crime offending. Explain in detail at least one theoretical explanation of interracial crime. In doing so, identify the underlying assumptions of the theory and its intellectual roots, and review relevant empirical research. Finally, provide a critical assessment of the work in that tradition.