

**Theory Comprehensive Exam**  
**Fall 2014**

**Instructions:** For this exam, you are to select any four (4) of the following questions. All are responses are to be turned in no later than 4:00 p.m. You may contact Margarita if you have any problems requiring faculty attention.

1. Discuss how Emile Durkheim and G.H. Mead have influenced the development of criminological theory.
2. The relationship between immigration and crime is frequently described by claimsmakers as strongly positive, but the increasing weight of evidence contradicts that assertion. What theoretical insights from criminology best explain the pattern of claims on the one hand and the pattern of evidence on the other?
3. What do you see as the strongest correlate of delinquency? Summarize the major theoretical rationale(s) for this correlate and highlight the most germane empirical studies that form the basis of your assessment.
4. What do you regard as the most significant theoretical contribution of the past two decades? Describe the contribution you identify and defend your choice.
5. Criminological theories have been advanced to explain both stability and change in antisocial behaviors over the entire life course. Present a detailed discussion of the research examining behavioral stability and change as it relates to criminological research. Then, provide two explanations from the literature that can be used to explain behavioral stability and/or behavioral change.
6. There is a growing literature seeking to understand the victim/offender overlap. Which theories or theoretical framework best explain(s) the above association? Please cite relevant literature and studies.
7. Criminological research consistently finds evidence of racial and ethnic disparities in social control outcomes. Some argue that racial disparity is due to differential offending, while others suggest that it is the product of discrimination. Select any three decision points in the criminal justice process and discuss the current state of empirical research. In your discussion, please identify both the theoretical and methodological tensions that pose challenges to both sides of this debate.
8. Describe three theoretical perspectives that can be used to explain the unusually punitive approach to crime control observed in the United States (when compared to other industrialized nations). Thoroughly describe the empirical evidence on this issue, identifying the perspective that appears to be the most supported.
9. The eminent theoretical physicist, Max Planck, once argued that, "A scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it." Discuss the merits of this statement as it relates to biosocial criminology. In doing so, be sure to focus on the role of empirical evidence, ideology, and the publication process.