

Theory Comprehensive Exam
Spring 2017

Day One

Instructions: For this section of the exam answer any two (2) of the following four questions. If more than two answers are submitted the committee will read only the first two and the third will not be counted in any way. All responses are to be turned in no later than 12:45.

Once a student takes possession of the examination, this will be regarded as an attempt to take the exam regardless of whether the student completes the exam, hands in any answers or remains for the full exam period.

1. Choose two of the following topics and discuss a central debate within those areas. Be sure to cite the major theoretical issues and empirical research to support your assessment.
 - A. Family and Crime
 - B. Economic Deprivation and Crime
 - C. Peer Influence and Crime
2. Discuss the role of the brain in relation to two criminological theories. In what ways does incorporating neurobiological processes add to these theories? In what ways does it pose a detriment to these theories? Rely on empirical based research to address these issues.
3. Minority threat theory has become an increasingly relevant perspective in the understanding of social control. Discuss the evolution of that theory and its principal contributions. Describe what you consider the key empirical evidence that exists in relation to the threat perspective.
4. Describe Sampson and Laub's age-graded informal social control theory. Explain how it differs from social bond theory. Present a critique of the theory that Gottfredson and Hirschi might make. Discuss why you agree or disagree with the critique.

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Day Two

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1. Discuss the historical evolution of social control from the perspective of Emile Durkheim.
2. There are many potential collateral consequences of incarceration. Describe three such consequences, the theoretical grounds for anticipating or explaining such consequences, and how one might devise a study to test your theoretical arguments.
3. Which theory or integration of theories is most useful for explaining trends in U.S. crime rates? Describe the rationale for your selection, including the relevant empirical evidence.
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. In this answer DO NOT USE any theory that you have discussed in response to any other question on Day One or Day Two of this exam.