

Criminology Comprehensive Ph.D. Exam
Department of Sociology
September 2020

PART I

Answer one question from the Theory section and the question from the Special Interest section for a total of two questions for Part I. Be sure to answer all parts of the questions. It is suggested that you take about one hour per question, and about one hour for editing and reviewing your answers, for a total of about 3 hours of exam time. Once you have completed Part I of the exam, turn in your materials and take your lunch break. Once you have completed your lunch break, you may pick up Part II of the exam.

Theory Section: (select and answer one)

1. Choose any two theories of crime/delinquency (from such theories as social learning, social control, self-control, situational action, subcultural, anomie, general strain, or others of your choosing) and discuss some of the specific concepts and/or relationships among those concepts that may or may not place the theories in conflict with each other. Be sure to discuss any overlap or agreement across the two theories, as well as differences and contradictions (if any).
2. Describe the evolution and most recent developments in life course/developmental theories of crime and delinquency. Make sure to discuss the origins of contemporary life course/developmental theories, main concepts and propositions, and how life course/developmental theories improve on previous explanations of delinquency. What are some unsolved problems in this theoretical tradition and what you think could be done to improve contemporary life course/developmental theories?

Special Interest Section: Strain Theories (answer this question)

1. Describe democratic policing, its history and advantages and disadvantages. Then discuss the major findings from the literature on democratic policing and its specific models such as community policing in the context of Latin American and other countries. What are some of the issues in policy transfers of Western models of this kind of policing to international contexts? How can cross-national applications of those policing strategies be improved based on the current research in this area?

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PART II

Answer two questions from the section on Research in Crime and Delinquency for a total of two questions for Part II. Be sure to answer all parts of the selected questions. It is suggested that you take about one hour per question, and about one hour for editing and reviewing your answers, for a total of about 3 hours of exam time.

Research in Crime and Delinquency: (select and answer two)

1. In recent years there has been a surge in studies of communities/neighborhoods and crime. Describe the state of knowledge in this area including general directions of the research in this area, novel theoretical ideas (e.g., new concepts and mediating mechanisms), and important methodological issues, such as types of research designs, units of analysis, measurement issues, and specific analytical techniques employed to analyze data. Be sure to mention major shortcomings of this body of work as well as outline some important research questions that could provide direction for future research.

2. Crime rates have fluctuated over time, and understanding such changes is an important area of criminological inquiry. Discuss the nature of changes over time in crime rates. What are some of the major explanations posited for such changes over time, and what does the empirical literature suggest concerning them? Given the very recent changes in the economy in the U.S., including due to COVID, what do you hypothesize may occur with crime rates in the next few years?

3. Discuss the most important research findings concerning the relationship between individual involvement in crime/delinquency and one of the following variables. Be sure to include in your discussion the most recent developments in this area of study as well as the theoretical implications of the results from the past and current research. Also note theoretical and empirical weaknesses of this field of research and possible ways of advancing further this line of inquiry.
 - a. gender
 - b. race/ethnicity