

Criminology Comprehensive Ph.D. Exam
Department of Sociology & Criminology
October 2021

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, email it to XXXX. You may then take your lunch break and then complete Part II of the exam.

Theory Section: (select and answer one)

1. Due to the wide-scale economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, crime rates (especially violence) have increased, yet crime rates remain at levels well below the highest crime rates in the 1990s. Why is it that crime rates have only marginally increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly violent crime rates, but have not returned to 1990 levels seen in the U.S. and other countries? In your answer, describe how these trends are congruent/incongruent with macro-level criminological theories and why are why not? Be specific in terms of the theory/theories discussed, providing concrete examples to support your claim(s).

2. Choose one of the following theoretical traditions in criminology and outline its evolution noting the major weaknesses and criticisms of the earlier theories in this tradition. Then discuss the most recent theoretical and empirical advances in this tradition and whether any of those help overcome the weaknesses that you have noted earlier. Finally, describe what major directions could be taken to develop this tradition further and what kinds of research you would suggest to accomplish this.

- a. strain
- b. social learning
- c. rational choice/deterrence

Special Interest Section: Macro-Level Theories of Rape Rates (answer this question)

1. The study of rape and sexual assault, especially at the macro level, is relatively fragmented. What do major extant theories argue concerning macro-level explanations for rape, both within the U.S. and internationally? What are the major gaps in the existing theories and research? What are the major data limitations in attempting to study rape and sexual assault? What are the major needs (theoretical/methodological) to extend knowledge in this area and how can they be developed/implemented?

Criminology Comprehensive Ph.D. Exam
Department of Sociology & Criminology
October 2021

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. Email the completed exam to XXX.

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

1. As of 2021, the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR, or Summary Reporting System) are being phased out as the nation's "official" data source, and the system is being replaced by the National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS). Why is this change being made? What are the potential benefits of this change? What are the current and potential long-term challenges of this change? In addition, discuss the immediate implications of the shift in terms of knowledge about the extent and nature of crime.

2. 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 response the discussion of major theoretical tradition(s) that address the role of the selected variable for criminal and delinquent involvement as well as the most recent developments in this area of study. Also note theoretical and empirical weaknesses of this field of research and possible ways of advancing further this line of inquiry.
 - a. peers
 - b. parents/family of origin

3. Describe the essential characteristics of experimental designs as compared to non-experimental survey designs. Point out the strengths and weaknesses of both approaches for research on crime and deviance using the examples from the recent criminological literature.