

**Comprehensive Ph.D. Exam  
Department of Sociology  
Criminology  
Summer 2015**

**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. Cultural issues have re-emerged recently as important areas of inquiry for criminological theory and research. Discuss briefly some of the major theoretical frameworks as well as the research in these areas. To what extent, if any, do you think culture contributes to our understanding of crime and to what extent do cultural analyses of crime place blame on the victim? Be sure to support your answer.
  
2. The major theories of crime and deviance can be described as emphasizing either “persistent heterogeneity,” “state dependence,” or perhaps both. Persistent heterogeneity emphasizes the importance of individual differences that are evident early in life, that remain stable, and that influence behavior throughout the life course. State dependence points to the salience of situational and/or structural circumstances that can influence behavior at various points throughout the life course.
  - a. For each of the following theories, indicate whether the theory is most consistent with a persistent heterogeneity model or a state dependence model of crime/deviance, or some combination of the two. Provide a BRIEF explanation for why you would classify them this way (limit to 2-3 sentences).
    - i. Self-control theory
    - ii. Sampson and Laub’s life-course theory (age-graded theory of informal social control)
    - iii. Moffitt’s developmental theory
  - b. Choose ONE of the two latter theories (either Sampson and Laub’s life-course theory or Moffitt’s developmental theory) and provide a more detailed discussion that addresses how this theory accounts for stability and change in offending over the life course.

**Special Interest Section: Social Disorganization and Macro-Level Strain Theories of Crime**  
**(answer this question)**

1. Compare/contrast different dimensions of social disorganization and macro-level strain theories (e.g., some of the specific concepts from these theories, relationships among those concepts, units of analysis, sources of their principle variables) as well the most recent theoretical developments happening in these approaches. Be sure to discuss any overlap or agreement across the two theoretical perspectives, differences and contradictions (if any) as well as whether the most recent developments in those theories bring them closer together or apart, and whether the possibility of their integration exists.

## 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. Choose one of the following topics in the field of criminology and discuss the most important research findings in this area. Be sure to include in your discussion any central debates within the area, the most recent developments in this area of study as well as the theoretical implications of the results from the past and current research.
  - a. race/ethnicity, immigration, and crime
  - b. parents/family and crime
  - c. peers and crime
  
2. The roles of biological/genetic factors for crime are once again receiving increased attention. What are some of the key factors that are the focus of this work, and what does the literature suggest about how and why these might be important for crime? How/in what ways can this focus on biological factors be reconciled with sociological criminological approaches to understanding crime?
  
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.