

Crime and Justice Comprehensive Exam—May 2017
University of Florida, May 4-6 (10 am-4 pm each day over three days)
Exam Committee: Jodi Lane (Chair) and Dick Hollinger

Directions: **You will answer 3 questions total.** You have a maximum limit of 10 double-spaced pages per answer (not including references). Please remember to double space your answers, add page numbers, and put the question number (or question itself) before each of your answers. You should also put your name on each page. Also, please add a references list. You should 1) upload your answers to Canvas and 2) email your answers to the committee **no later 4 pm on the day you receive the question** (jlane@ufl.edu, rhollin@ufl.edu).

Day 1 (May 4) (Choose one question to answer)

- 1) Policymakers are placing a growing emphasis on slowing and reversing the rate of incarceration in the United States. Explore the research evidence for and against lowering the rate of incarceration. Can the incarceration rate be reduced without harming public safety? What other benefits or costs should be considered when making such decisions?
- 2) President Trump has recently argued for policies to reduce immigration, including building a wall on the Mexican border to “crackdown” on illegal immigration, in part as a way to reduce crime. He has said he wants other countries to “take back their criminals.” 1) Review the evidence on what we know about who commits street crime in this country, including the role that immigration plays in our crime problems. 2) Make an argument for whether a) you think the Wall will reduce immigration *and* crime and 3) for what would be the best policy Trump could endorse and fund to reduce crime in the United States and why, which may be efforts to reduce immigration or something else.

Day 2 (May 5) (Choose one question to answer)

- 1) Some commentators have suggested that the “punitive turn” of the late 20th century has given way to a new era of criminal justice policymaking, characterized by a greater willingness to consider more rehabilitative and preventative approaches to crime and offenders. Do you agree? Discuss why this has (or has not) occurred.
- 2) Why is discretion such an important topic in criminal justice research? What do we know about its operation? What are the costs and benefits of the way discretion currently operates? What research should be done that would significantly advance our understanding of the need for and the impact of discretion?

Day 3 (May 6) (Choose one question to answer)

- 1) Scholars often note that a disconnect exists between criminological research and the policies that are created by policymakers. Pick one example that you feel best evidences the disconnect between research and policy. Explain (1) what the topic is, (2) what research has revealed about the topic, (3) what the current policies are (i.e., what is

currently being done?), and (4) what research suggests would be a good policy (or how current policies should be reformed). When addressing parts 3 and 4, make sure you highlight the differences between what research says should be done and what is currently being done by policymakers.

- 2) A legislature in a southern state will be debating a moratorium on the death penalty. Based on research studies, opinion polls, and published data/facts, what are the most important issues should they consider? And, what decision should they reach?