

Theory Comprehensive Exam—April 21-23, 2022

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Instructions: Choose *TWO* questions from the following list, one from each part. Your two responses must differ in content, meaning that you cannot discuss the same theories in your two responses.

Part One (answer ONE of the following questions)

1. Both macro- and micro-level theories can be used to explain differences in criminal offending based on social class, race/ethnicity, and gender. Choose **one theory from each perspective** and explain how its tenets describe the relationship between crime and **social class, race/ethnicity OR gender (i.e., choose only one of these areas)**. Then, summarize the degree to which empirical studies have shown support for each theory's predictions about the relationship between crime and the area you have chosen (social class, race/ethnicity, or gender). Last, describe weaknesses and critiques of each theory's ability to explain the relationship you have chosen and, based on the evidence and the critiques, state which theory you think provides a better explanation.
2. Choose **two** of the following criminological theories and describe in detail how each theory explains criminal offending. Then, discuss the degree to which each theory has been adequately tested and how much progress has been made in understanding the tenets and propositions of each theory. Provide specific examples from the empirical literature to illustrate your claims. Last, provide recommendations for future research regarding the gaps that remain to be tested or understood for each theory and if or how each theory may need to be revised based on the research findings.
 - General strain
 - Social bond
 - Self-control
 - Social learning
 - Biosocial
 - Routine activities
 - Labeling

Part Two (answer ONE of the following questions)

1. You have been asked by the local school district to help them understand and prevent juvenile delinquency in schools. First, identify **one** criminological theory you would use to respond to their request and describe in detail how its propositions and tenets explain juvenile delinquency. Next, identify a prevention program or policy based on this theory, describe how its content and delivery are based on the theory, and explain how you would recommend it be implemented in the local school district. Finally, evaluate how this program and the theory it is based on would need to be modified considering feminist, queer, OR conflict and race perspectives, which take into account how gender, sexuality, and/or race inform explanations for engaging in delinquency and impacts of policies and programs across different groups.

2. Most etiological theories of crime and delinquency implicate **peers and families** in one way or another. Describe the role of **either** peers **or** families (**choose one area only**) in **two** of the following theories:
 - Hirschi's social control theory
 - Akers' social learning theory
 - Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory
 - Gottfredson and Hirchi's self-control theory
 - Agnew's General Strain Theory

Fully explain their tenets and how the two theories differ from one another in how they describe the role of peers or families in crime and delinquency. Summarize the results of empirical studies that have tested each theory and use these findings to evaluate each theory's claims about the peers/families. Finally discuss critiques of these claims made by other theorists and/or researchers. Based on the evidence and the critiques, describe the general conclusions we can reach concerning how each theory conceptualizes the role of peers/families and crime/delinquency.