

Theory Comprehensive Exam—August 25-27, 2022

Exam Committee: Abby Fagan (Chair) and Becca Hanson

1. Feminist theory has a 50+ year history in criminology. In this response, describe the development of this theoretical perspective. Drawing on works by feminist theorists, explain why feminist theory can be considered a critical theory and discuss the major issues and questions it seeks to address in regards to crime, victimization, and the criminal justice system. Then, describe what you consider its most important contributions to criminology, as well as its primary flaws and limitations. Last, provide recommendations for how feminist theory should be refined so that it continues to enrich criminological theory.
2. Empirical evidence demonstrates a strong individual continuity of offending, with prior offending consistently predicting later offending and most adult offenders initiating crime during adolescence. Yet, different theories explain the continuity or persistence in crime in different ways. In this response, select **two** theories from different theoretical perspectives, describe their major tenets and propositions, and discuss how each can explain the continuity of offending, being sure your discussion highlights differences between the two theories. Last, identify which theory you think provides the strongest theoretical explanation of continuity/persistence, and provide a justification for your answer based on theory and evidence.
3. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, rates of some crimes increased while others decreased. In this response, select **two** theories from different theoretical perspectives and explain how each would predict change(s) in crime following a pandemic like COVID-19. To begin, summarize the primary tenets and propositions of each theory, then apply them to explain whether they would hypothesize an increase in crime during a pandemic, a decrease, or increases or decreases, depending on the type of crime and/or type of perpetrator. Be sure your response clearly demonstrates how the two theories differ from one another, as well as any areas of overlap if they exist.
4. In recent years, calls to abolish the prison system have become increasingly common by both academics and policy makers. First, review arguments in favor of prison abolishment and empirical studies examining the collateral consequences of mass incarceration for society. Second, identify one criminological theory that you believe would support the abolishment of prisons and one you believe would not. Explain how each theory and its empirical evidence would argue for or against abolishing prisons. Finally, identify which theory provides the most compelling argument on prison abolishment and provide a justification for your answer based on theory and evidence.