

Criminology Comprehensive Exam

6 Hours – In House

Spring 2022

General Instructions:

1. You must answer three questions: **two questions from Part I** and **one question from Part II**. You may answer the questions in any order you wish, but identify your answer by both set and number (e.g., II, 1).
2. You are allowed to bring in food and drink and to take individual short breaks as needed.
3. Save your work on Google Drive, and e-mail your answer to Tammy Simpson-Turner (tsimpson@udel.edu) and Aaron Kupchik (akupchik@udel.edu) separately. You may want to email yourself the file as a backup. You should not email the file to anyone else.

PART I. Answer two of the following questions:

1. Candace Kruttschnitt's 2015 ASC Presidential Address suggests that gender scholarship has contributed to our understanding of victimization and offending. Select a theory of your choice and demonstrate to what extent it is generalizable across gender in explaining crime. In addition, discuss whether there are areas where gender-based solutions or policies can have a real impact on criminal behavior
2. A recent *Time* magazine report describes intimate-partner violence (IPV) as a pandemic within the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the persistence of this social problem. Some criminological theories help explain IPV, but may or may not account for how the pandemic can be factored into theoretical explanations and empirical examinations of such violence. In your essay, identify a theory that you think is appropriate to account for changes in rates of IPV during the pandemic. Specifically, discuss the theory as well as how situations associated with the pandemic can be conceptually integrated into the theoretical propositions of the theory. Then propose a study to test the impact of these pandemic-related factors on changes in IPV. Make sure you discuss how the theory fits within the existing literature and the methods you would use in the study.
3. Criminological scholarship reveals that individuals are actors (i.e., have agentic choice/agency) and are acted upon, but often these choices and circumstances are influenced and/or constrained by culture and social structure. Choose a criminological theory that uses such a multi-level analytic structure, and describe how it does so. Be sure to discuss how culture, social structure, and agency each help explain criminal behavior within this theory, and how this is apparent in the empirical scholarship.
4. Russian skater, Kamila Valieva, tested positive for a banned substance before the Olympics began this month. Doping scandals have occasionally made headlines, including the Lance Armstrong debacle at the Tour de France. What criminological theory, in your opinion, best explains why athletes continue to break the laws of their sporting organizations. In your answer describe how the tenets of this theory explain this behavior, describe the extant empirical literature that supports your contention, and discuss what policies and or practices (based on this theory) can better prevent doping in competitive sports.

PART II. Answer one of the following questions:

1. Recent high-profile police-public deadly encounters have led many observers to assert that the U.S. police are experiencing a legitimacy crisis, particularly in the eye of people of color. Tom Tyler's original work on procedural justice takes the "invariant" position, positing that the impact of procedural justice and legitimacy hold for all regardless of their background characteristics, including race and ethnicity. In this essay, discuss the potential sources and consequences of legitimacy in policing, with special attention to the impact of race/ethnicity. First, you should delineate theoretical frameworks accounting for racial/ethnic differences in perceived police legitimacy. Then, discuss empirical evidence showing racial/ethnic differences or similarities in perceptions of police legitimacy. Finally, do racial/ethnic distinctions exist regarding consequences (e.g., public compliance and cooperation) of police legitimacy?
2. From the 1990s on, scholars of punishment offered several different explanations of what was called mass incarceration. But for about the past 10 years, incarceration rates have been declining in the U.S. Do current explanations for mass incarceration also help us understand decreases in incarceration rates? For this essay, summarize two arguments that helped explain mass incarceration, and analyze how well each of these arguments might also help explain recent decreases in incarceration.
3. In recent years, the use of police body-worn cameras has increased. These cameras are believed to achieve several aims including: reducing police use of force and complaints against officers, enhancing police legitimacy, and enhancing transparency, among other things. First, what theory best explains why such goals would be achieved by body-worn cameras? Second, does the research on this theory in applied settings leave you confident that police body-worn cameras might be effective in meeting their intended goals? And finally, how would you design a study that would validly determine the efficacy of body-worn cameras if you had no restraints on law enforcement cooperation or funds.