

Non-Thesis Track M.A. Comprehensive Exam

Fall Semester 2015

Instructions

You must address one of the following three questions in your policy paper. Generally, each topic requires you to review, analyze, and synthesize the literature as it pertains to a particular policy area and draw conclusions or make recommendations based on your findings. Please be sure you read the entire question and address all parts of it.

A hardcopy of your completed examination must be submitted to Carmen Davis in 100D Currell College by Monday November 9th at 5:00pm. Late papers will not be accepted and will result in a failing score. An electronic copy of the exam should also be emailed to Carmen at cldavis@mailbox.sc.edu. Once the comprehensive examination has been distributed, you are required to submit a paper by the deadline; otherwise it will be considered “late” and assigned a failing score. Your submission should contain four parts: (1) an *Executive Summary* (2-3 pages briefly outlining contents of the paper); (2) a *Policy Paper* (20-25 pages in length, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and 12-point font); (3) a separate *List of References*; and (4) a signed *Honor Pledge*. Please note that students receiving assistance from the University’s writing center is considered a violation of the Honor Pledge.

Your comprehensive examination must conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style guidelines, contain appropriate citations to authority and sources, and include a separate reference section. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE – this will result in an automatic failing score (if you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, see <http://plagiarism.org/>). Be sure to use a well-developed list of academic sources (i.e., no Wikipedia and if necessary, a very limited number of popular media sources such as newspapers, magazines, etc.).

Please do not identify yourself anywhere in the submitted exam. You will be given a code number to include in the upper right hand corner of each page. Be sure to include this code number in the executive summary, policy paper, and reference list. The unique code number will link all of your submitted works. Also, make sure you sign and return (with the policy paper) the pledge sheet indicating you neither gave nor received assistance

with the comprehensive examination.

Your comprehensive examination will be graded in a double-blind manner – neither you nor the faculty graders will know each other’s identities (though the graders may be identified after all grades have been submitted). A committee of three faculty members will grade all papers. Your assigned grade on the exam will be a “high pass,” “pass,” or “fail” from each of the faculty graders. In order to pass the comprehensive examination, at least 2 of the 3 faculty members must give your paper a passing score (pass or high pass). A paper receiving three “high passes” will be scored as a “high pass.” If you fail the examination, you will be permitted to retake the examination one time.

Your Exam Identification Code _____

Exam Questions (Please Answer One):

- It has been argued that public opinion influences policy such that “how the public thinks creates boundaries and opportunities regarding what policies might be implemented” (Piquero et al., 2010, p. 189). For this reason, studies often rely on public opinion to gauge support for certain policies. In particular, a significant amount of research has focused on the adoption of punitive policies in response to offending among juveniles. What does this research say about public support for punitive policies targeted at juveniles? What have been identified as key factors in influencing support for these punitive policies?
- Each year men and women enter the prisons in your state leaving behind children to be cared for by other family members, friends, or the state. There is a concern in your state that the children of incarcerated parents are themselves at an increased risk for ending up in the criminal justice system. The Governor has asked you to review the existing literature on the topic and write a report that addresses the following: (1) describes what we know about the impact on a child of having an incarcerated mother and/or father; (2) identifies and discusses the types of programs and services that are being used in communities around the country to improve outcomes (both CJ and non-CJ) for these children;

(3) highlights what U.S. prisons are doing to maintain and improve the connections between children and their incarcerated parent(s); and finally (4) makes recommendations as to what your state should do to address the issue.

- Retired New York City police commissioner Raymond Kelly recently noted that “if you have a propensity to carry and there’s a policy to de-emphasize stop and question and frisk, it’s only common sense you’ll see more people carrying guns and more crime.” Write an essay in which you trace the origins of so-called stop-and-frisk policing, discuss the relevant empirical literature about the crime reduction capacity of such policies, and express a well-argued view of whether such policies should be permitted to continue or abandoned.

Non-Thesis Track Masters Program Comprehensive Examination

Sample Instructions, Spring 2015

Three topics are given on the following pages. You must address one of the questions/issues in your policy paper. Generally, each topic requires you to review, analyze, and synthesize the literature as it pertains to a particular policy area and draw conclusions or make recommendations based on your findings. Make sure you read the entire policy issue/question and be sure to address all parts or aspects of it.

A hardcopy of your completed examination must be submitted to Carmen Davis in Currell 100D on **Monday, April 6th by 4:30pm**. Late papers will not be accepted and will result in a failing score. An electronic copy of the exam should also be emailed to Carmen at cldavis@mailbox.sc.edu. Once the comprehensive examination is distributed to you, you are **required** to submit a paper by the deadline; otherwise it will be considered “late” and therefore receive a failing score. Your submission should contain **four parts**: (1) an **Executive Summary** (2-3 pages briefly outlining contents of the paper), (2) a **Policy Paper** (20-25 pages in length, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and 12-point font), (3) a separate **List of References**, and (4) a signed **Honor Pledge**. Please note that students receiving assistance from the University’s writing center is considered a violation of the Honor Pledge.

Your comprehensive examination must conform to **APA style guidelines**, contain appropriate citations to authority and sources, and include a separate reference section. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE**—this will result in an automatic failing score (if you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, see <http://plagiarism.org>). Be sure to use a **well-developed list of academic sources** (e.g., no Wikipedia and if necessary, a very limited number of popular media sources such as newspapers, magazines, etc.).

Please **do not** identify yourself in the policy paper, the executive summary, or the reference section. You will be given a **code number** to include in the upper right hand corner of each page (e.g., in the upper right-hand header indicate, Code Number 01 or Code Number 08). Be sure to include this code number in the **executive summary, policy paper, and reference list**. The unique code number will link all of your submitted works. Also, make sure you sign and return (with the policy paper) the pledge sheet indicating you neither gave nor received assistance with the comprehensive examination.

Your comprehensive examination will be graded in a double-blind manner—neither you nor the faculty graders will know each other’s identities (though the graders may be identified after all grades have been submitted). A committee of three faculty members will grade all papers. Papers will receive either a “high pass,” “pass,” or “fail” from each of the faculty graders. In order to pass the comprehensive examination, at least 2 of the 3 faculty members must give your paper a passing score (pass or high pass). A paper receiving three “high passes” will be scored as a “high pass.”

If you fail the examination, you will be permitted to retake the examination one time.

Spring 2015 Questions

1. The Richland County Government has contacted you to assist in reducing juvenile delinquency within the County. You have been asked to develop a preventative program to stop delinquency before it occurs. Discuss what type of program you would implement, including its target population and the main elements of the program. Be sure to identify and describe how your program elements connect to relevant theory and research literature.
2. Recent events involving police officers and citizens across the U.S. (e.g., Ferguson, MO, Cleveland, and New York City) have garnered widespread media and public attention focused on police-citizen relationships. Drawing on theoretical and empirical research, write a policy paper that describes and evaluates: (1) the importance of strong police-community relations (i.e., what beneficial outcomes occur for the police and public alike?), (2) the theoretically salient factors that contribute to positive public perceptions of the police, (3) the state of empirical research regarding such factors, and (4) the policy implications for police organizations based on this line of research.
3. The Governor of South Carolina has appointed you to a special task force on imprisonment. The focus of the task force is on reducing prison populations. Prepare a report that (1) reviews the historical and contemporary extent of incarceration in the United States, (2) discusses the consequences of mass incarceration, and (3) reviews contemporary efforts across the country to reduce incarceration. Be sure to draw on empirical research as well as policy discussions. Conclude your report with recommendations for South Carolina.

Fall 2014 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

The National Research Council's 2007 report on prisoner reentry states that 600,000 people are released from prison each year. There is national interest in expanding efforts to support released prisoners who are reentering society. Review the scope and nature of reentry programming nationally and discuss the available evidence on the effectiveness of current reentry programming efforts. In your answer be sure to address reentry program implementation, effectiveness, and ongoing challenges.

Policy Issue 2:

The recent fatal shooting of an unarmed teenager by a Ferguson (MO) police officer sparked a string of sometimes violent protests that lasted more than a week, setting off a national debate about racism and the militarization of police forces. Drawing on empirical research, write a policy paper that describes and evaluates: 1) the evolution of the militarization of police forces in the United States; 2) the relationship between police militarization and use of force by the police; 3) how the militarization movement impacts communities; and 4) the quality and availability of data pertaining to the adoption and importation of military tactics and equipment in contemporary policing. Finally, based on your review, make an argument for or against the continuation of the militarization of police forces.

Policy Issue 3:

Currently, 23 states and the District of Columbia allow marijuana for medical purposes, and two states (CO and WA) allow the distribution of marijuana for recreational purposes. There are numerous competing claims about the consequences of this major policy shift on public health and safety outcomes. For example, some say youth marijuana use, drugged driving, and drug-induced psychoses will increase; others claim that criminal justice resources would be used to greater effect to reduce other crimes. If marijuana and alcohol are substitutes, then the net effect of marijuana liberalization policies may be to lower alcohol-related harms in society. Your task is to thoroughly review the empirical evidence on the effects of marijuana liberalization laws (i.e., decriminalization, medicalization, legalization) and summarize the evidence for the various outcomes that have been examined in the literature (e.g., youth marijuana use, hard drug use, prices, treatment admissions, potency, crime, etc.). What are the strengths and weaknesses of the literature? Is there variation across outcomes, demographics, data sources, years, etc. that might explain heterogeneity in results? What are the gaps in current knowledge?

Spring 2014 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

In recent years there has been a lot of discussion in policing and corrections concerning evidence-based policy. On the one hand, there are advocates and on the other hand there are detractors. Provide an overview, explain the role of evidence-based policies and decisions in criminal justice, and advocate for or against greater integration of evidence into practice.

Policy Issue 2:

Sex offenders, perhaps more than any other type of criminal offender, have become the pariahs of the criminal justice system and of society. High-profile cases have raised public concerns. While politicians have implemented a series of increasingly punitive public policies aimed at the control of both sexual offenses and sex offenders, others have advocated a more tempered approach. Prepare an analytical essay exploring the evolution of criminal justice policies aimed at sex offenders. In this essay, discuss the genesis of changes to sex offender legislation and policy, critically evaluate the nature of these policies, and draw on the available empirical research to assess their impact and acceptance. What does your reading of the literature suggest as the best path forward?

Policy Issue 3:

The basic functioning of the US criminal justice system is based in deterrence theory. Within this essay, you should do the following:

1. Discuss the key assumptions and propositions of deterrence theory.

2. Discuss how deterrence theory guides the actions, policies, etc. of each of the primary components of the criminal justice system (i.e., policing, courts/sentencing, and corrections).
3. Discuss the empirical literature surrounding deterrence theory. Does research support the framework? Are there certain aspects of deterrence that work better than others?
4. Based on the empirical knowledge of deterrence theory offer policy recommendations for each of the primary components of the criminal justice system (i.e., policing, courts/sentencing, and corrections). These recommendations should be centered on what policies/strategies should continue to be used and which should be abandoned within each of the components. Your recommendations must be grounded in research and logically defended.

Fall 2013 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

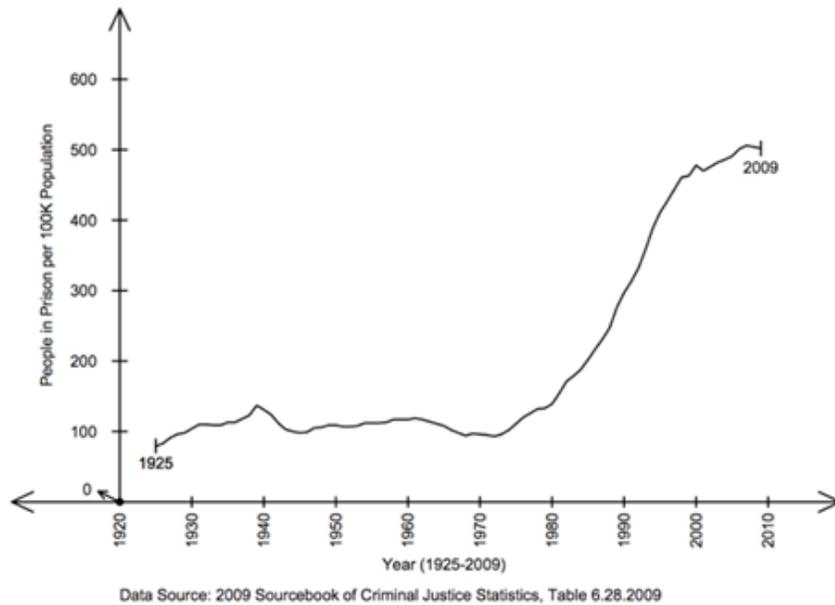
“Evidence-based” practice and policy has emerged as a central framework in criminal justice. Evidentiary bases for anti-crime activities may be most useful when they are also grounded in criminological theory. Choose a major criminological theory and discuss one or more programs or policies that the theory suggests would be effective at addressing crime. In addition to showing the logical connections between theory and policy or practice, also include in your answer a discussion of the evidence base. That is, to what extent does the empirical evidence support the theory you selected and the policies that may derive from it?

Policy Issue 2:

There is some skepticism about the ability of criminological research to impact criminal justice policy or practice. Write an answer in which you provide examples of how (a) research has affected policy/practice and (b) research has not affected policy/practice. Your answer should provide specific examples of research falling on each side of the issue.

Policy Issue 3:

From the mid-1920s until the mid-1970s, the rate of persons incarcerated in state and federal prisons in the United States hovered around 100 inmates per 100,000 population. Beginning in the mid-1970s, however, incarceration rates began a dramatic increase to their current levels of over 500 inmates per 100,000 population. The following figure presents a graphical summary of this trend.



The expansion of the imprisoned population in the United States raises important questions for criminological theory and criminal justice policy. In theory, incarceration increases public safety through incapacitation effects and deterrence effects (and perhaps even through rehabilitation). As a practical matter, incarcerating such a large and growing portion of the US population comes at a great cost.

Write an essay in which you:

1. Describe the forces and/or criminal justice policies that have given rise to the increase in the US incarceration rate over the past few decades.
2. Consider the cost of the current incarceration policies/practices to the US, both in terms of its financial costs and its social costs. Regarding the latter, discuss the research (if any) on the negative social repercussions offenders and their families may face in connection with the offenders' incarceration. "Negative social repercussions" might include (but is not limited to) family disruption, barriers to employment/education, and future involvement in criminal activity.
3. Explain the theoretical impact the current incarceration policies/practices should have on crime. Here, you should discuss "deterrence theory" and "incapacitation effects," as well as the empirical research regarding how effective they both are at lowering crime in society.
4. From a methodological perspective, (1) discuss the strengths of the empirical studies on deterrence and incapacitation, (2) discuss the weaknesses/limitations of these research studies, and (3) offer suggestions for improving the methodological rigor of these studies as necessary. Based on your methodological critique, what can we confidently conclude (if anything) from the deterrence and

incapacitation literatures regarding the effects of rising incarceration rates? What questions remain (if any) regarding the efficacy of deterrence and incarceration rates?

Spring 2013 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

The NRA recently proposed placing armed police officers in secondary and primary schools across the country to enhance school security. While questions have been raised about the NRA proposal, President Clinton implemented his \$60 million “COPS in Schools” grant program in 1998 to promote community policing and reduce crime and violence in and around primary and secondary schools. Although this program was cut in 2005, the federal government has since spent over \$753 million to hire more than 6,500 school police officers. As a policy analyst, your job is to: 1) review the existing empirical research regarding the effects of the placement of officers in primary and secondary schools and, 2) assess the feasibility of the NRA proposal. In your response, be sure to address the following:

1. What are the primary roles and responsibilities of contemporary school police officers?
2. Review the extant research regarding the benefits and drawbacks of school officers, paying particular attention to their ability to reduce and prevent crime.
3. Based on your review of the research on school officers and given the nature of past school shootings, make an argument for or against the NRA proposal. Be sure to support your argument.

Policy Issue 2:

Over the past few years a handful of states have passed legislation to have state and local law enforcement officers enforce federal immigration laws, exemplified by Arizona's SB 1070 and South Carolina's SB 20. The underlying arguments for these acts have been the presumed connection between crime and immigration, essentially the underlying assumption that immigrants have a heightened degree of criminality. What has often been missing in the presentation of these legislative acts is a discussion of empirical research that either supports or refutes the immigrant-crime connection. The purpose of your paper is to review the research on the crime-immigrant link. Address the following considerations in your response:

1. Provide a review of the immigration act in South Carolina, specifically focusing on the responsibility of state and local law enforcement under this act.
2. Provide a review of criminological theories have been used to explain or refute the immigrant-crime connection.
3. Review the recent empirical literature exploring the link between immigrant status and crime, noting if the research differentiates between legal and illegal immigrant status.
4. Based on your review of the recent empirical literature, would you say there is support for the assumed immigrant-crime connection that is the basis to the recent legislation?
5. Regardless of the impact on crime, are there any potential negative impacts of these state immigration legislative efforts?

Policy Issue 3:

Recent mass shootings (e.g., Sandy Hook, CN; Aurora, CO; Virginia Tech; Northern Illinois University) heightened concern about the link between mental illness and violent behavior. Although similar incidents have occurred in the past, the Sandy Hook shooting in particular revived calls for more effective identification and treatment of persons with mental illness to prevent such shootings and other violent behaviors. Your job is to address the following:

1. What has been the impact of the recent recession on the availability of services and treatment of persons with mental illness?
2. What is known about the relationship between mental illness and violent behavior?
3. Is it possible to reliably predict which individuals with mental illness will become violent?
4. What are the legal controversies regarding the treatment of persons with severe mental illness (e.g., forced medication; involuntary commitments)?
5. How feasible is it to keep firearms out of the hands of persons with mental illness?

Based on your review, suggest policy recommendations that you believe can best prevent mass shootings by persons with mental illness, supporting your recommendations based on empirical evidence. (Note: Although you may draw upon recent media coverage of some of these issues and events, but sure to primarily rely on the academic literature and/or government reports.)

Fall 2012 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

Domestic violence is a serious problem in the United States that has resulted in increased contacts between victims and offenders and the criminal justice system (police, courts and corrections). Consequently, communities have increasingly sought innovative solutions to more effectively address the problem, particularly given the funding available from the 1994 Violence Against Woman's Act. One such potential solution has been the development of domestic violence courts. For your policy paper:

1. Briefly describe the history of domestic violence courts, i.e., why they were established and their structure, function and process.
2. Describe the major components of domestic violence courts, noting any similarities and differences across domestic violence court "models."
3. Review the empirical research on domestic violence court outcomes (e.g., effectiveness, ineffectiveness, unintended consequences) and identify the program or design factors that contributed to these outcomes.
4. Based on your findings from above, identify the elements that you believe are necessary for a highly successful domestic violence court.

Policy Issue 2:

The corrections department in your state is submitting a grant proposal to help fund and implement new parenting programs for inmates in the prison system. You have been asked to contribute to the proposal by looking at the issue of incarcerated parents and their children—generating a policy paper that explores the scope and nature of the issue, including the impact of incarceration on the parents, the children, other family members, and the state. Your paper should also review existing programs for incarcerated parents and/or their children, highlighting “what works” and then make suggestions for the types of programs that should be considered for funding and implementation in your particular state system for male and female prisoners.

Policy Issue 3:

The police in a democratic society are given the authority by the citizenry to enforce the law and provide public safety with the expectation that they will do so in a lawful and ethical manner. Unfortunately, misconduct by police officers has a long history in the United States (as well in many other countries), and it continues to be a problem to the present day. The focus of your policy paper is to develop a comprehensive program for addressing police misconduct that is based on sound research related to the causes of misconduct and practices for addressing it. Your recommended program should be created as if you are trying to address the problem in a single law enforcement agency, which we will hypothetically call the “Washington Police Department” (WPD). Your policy paper should provide and/or address the following:

- A brief review on the history of police misconduct in the United States, which includes defining this concept and providing examples of such behavior (note - you should be able to distinguish the concepts of misconduct versus corruption, and how they relate).
- Theoretical arguments as to what causes or contributes to misconduct.
- Empirical research on the prevalence and causes of misconduct.
- Approaches that have been used to address misconduct in police agencies, and empirical research support regarding their effectiveness.
- Your proposed comprehensive program for improving the response to misconduct in the Washington Police Department. Your response should be based on the research evidence you provide above and it should contain more than one component for addressing misconduct as you are proposing a "comprehensive program."

Spring 2012 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

The corrections department in your state is submitting a grant proposal to help fund and implement new parenting programs for inmates in the prison system. You have been asked to contribute to the proposal by looking at the issue of incarcerated parents and their children. Your policy paper should:

1. Discuss the impact of incarceration on a) the parents, b) the children, c) other family members, and d) the state;

2. Review existing in-prison programs for incarcerated parents and/or their children, and specify if the programs are geared to male or female prisoners, or both;
3. Review what programs have been empirically shown to “work” to reduce negative outcomes for incarcerated parents and their children; and,
4. Make suggestions for what types of programs should be considered for implementation in your particular state system for male and female prisoners.

Policy Issue 2:

South Carolina recently banned the sale of alcohol-laced energy drinks (e.g., Four Loko, Joose), citing evidence that they are being marketed to teens and young adults and that the flavor and caffeine content of these beverages masks the taste of alcohol and makes over-intoxication more likely. Reducing the availability of such beverages is one of many types of policy changes that may be enacted by states and/or communities to reduce the availability of and demand for alcohol among older adolescents and young adults.

- Review evidence demonstrating the harmful impact of alcohol use among individuals aged 18-25, including harms to individuals and to society as a whole.
- Then, identify the types of laws, policies and practices that seek to reduce alcohol access and demand in this age group.
- Summarize the extent to which these various strategies have been demonstrated in high quality research trials to reduce alcohol availability/demand **and** actual rates of drinking and drinking-related problem behaviors (e.g., drinking and driving, alcohol-related car crashes) among individuals 18-25.
- Based on this evidence, what strategies would you recommend that South Carolina consider adopting if it wishes to reduce alcohol use and its negative consequences among individuals aged 18-25?
- Finally, summarize the major challenges you believe would be faced in instituting these types of laws, policies and practices.

Policy Issue 3:

Over the last decade or so two main concerns have been raised about law enforcement line-of-duty deaths in both the media and law enforcement. The first concern was that the United States was witnessing a staggering increase in the number of law enforcement officers murdered. The second was that for the first time, accidental line-of-duty deaths began outpacing murders of police officers.

1. Using empirical evidence, determine whether there was, in fact, a staggering increase in murders of police during the last decade, or whether the staggering increase was socially constructed. If it was socially constructed, describe in detail how and why this construction occurred, and identify particular individuals, groups, or other sources responsible for this claim.
2. Using empirical data, describe trends in accidental deaths over the last decade, and how these trends compare to the murders of police officers.
3. Last, describe what is known about the etiology of accidental line-of-duty deaths and suggest changes in policies and practices to reduce their incidence

Fall 2011 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

Correctional policy can be guided by several philosophical orientations, including deterrence, incapacitation, retribution, rehabilitation, and restoration. Each philosophy suggests that crime will be reduced via different mechanisms. Keeping in mind the feasibility of implementation, cost, and effectiveness in reducing crime associated with each philosophy, which do you think should guide contemporary corrections in the United States? In your essay, specifically:

- a) Discuss the theoretical arguments for each of these philosophies – describe how each suggests that crime will be reduced and how they all differ from one another in making these arguments.
- b) State which philosophy you think should be used to guide corrections in the United States. In doing so, review its pros and cons relative to the pros and cons of two of the other philosophies.
- c) Discuss the empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of the philosophy you have chosen in reducing crime. How successful has this philosophy been in reducing crime in the US?

Policy Issue 2:

The City of Columbia, like many jurisdictions across the country, has recently passed a juvenile curfew law aimed at reducing juvenile involvement in offending. The law has received varying levels of support from the community, but despite some unfavorable feedback, the City is considering expanding the law's focus from the Five Points area to the rest of the City.

- a) Curfew laws all have the goal of reducing juvenile offending, but the specific details of these laws vary across the country. Describe the Columbia law, in terms of its targeted population, specific restrictions, how it is enforced, and the penalties for violating the law. Then, compare these restrictions to at least 5 other curfew laws passed across the country and describe whether the Columbia law is more lenient or more punitive than others.
- b) What is the evidence that curfew laws reduce juvenile offending? Summarize the empirical literature that has examined the effectiveness of these policies in reducing juvenile offending.
- c) Briefly summarize the position of those who argue against curfew laws. What are the drawbacks to these laws?
- d) Now, summarize the position of those who argue for curfew laws, and, based on your research of existing curfew laws and the empirical evidence regarding their effectiveness, create the 'optimal' curfew law that you might ask the City of Columbia to adopt.

Policy Issue 3:

Over the last several decades law enforcement agencies adopted a number of initiatives designed to improve police operations, including CompStat, crime analysis/mapping, and intelligence-led policing. A recent innovation is so-called "predictive policing."

- a) Fully describe predictive policing, including its evolution, its strengths, and its limitations (including any related controversies).
- b) Provide a discussion of how predictive policing is different from or similar to CompStat, crime analysis/mapping, and intelligence-led policing.
- c) Discuss whether or not you believe the adoption of predictive policing will be an improvement over the CompStat, crime analysis/mapping, and intelligence-led policing initiatives. Defend your answer by discussing the pros and cons of each initiative.

Spring 2011 Questions

Policy Issue 1:

Domestic violence continues to be a significant issue in the United States. First, describe the history, scope and nature of the domestic violence problem here in the U.S. Second, identify at least two policy responses (e.g., from law enforcement, courts/sentencing, treatment, victim services, etc.) to the problem and discuss how well these initiatives have worked in addressing the D.V. issue.

Policy Issue 2:

Discuss in detail the “What Works”/Evidence Based Practices movement in corrections. In your answer, address the role that Martinson’s “Nothing Works” argument had on the development of the Principles of Effective Intervention (PEI, popularized by Don Andrews, Paul Gendreau, and other “Canadian Criminologists”). What are the principles of effective intervention? What are some organizational and institutional barriers that can hinder the successful implementation of the PEI within correctional agencies? Finally, based on the evidence regarding the PEI, what are the most important principles that you would suggest that correctional facilities within a particular state adhere to in order to practice evidence-based policies? Provide specific suggestions regarding how correctional facilities would implement these practices.

Policy Issue 3:

The local police department has recently had a change in leadership with a new chief and two new assistant chiefs. One of the key issues on their agenda is addressing areas of concentrated criminal activity and disorder in the city. Develop a proposal for the new administration that draws on the policing literature that directs them on how to assess these problem areas and a model for their response. In your proposal, provide the following:

- A literature review of evidence-based practices for the effective policing of areas with concentrated crime and disorder.
- Make sure this review includes literature that provides empirical support for the various practices you discuss.
- Then develop recommendations for evaluating and responding these problem areas based on the above review of the literature.

Fall 2010 Questions

POLICY ISSUE 1:

Arizona's illegal immigration law SB 1070, which requires local police to inquire about the immigration status of suspected criminals and noncriminals suspected of being in the United States illegally, has ignited substantial debate among proponents and opponents of the law. One of the major concerns among opponents is that it will lead to rampant racial profiling by police. Review and discuss what is known about racial profiling, paying particular attention to the empirical research. Based on your review, argue whether or not SB 1070 is likely to lead to racial profiling. Be sure to support your argument.

POLICY ISSUE 2:

In June of 2010, South Carolina enacted legislation that, among other things, required Probation, Parole, and Pardons (PPP) agents to use more data and evidence-based practices for assessment and supervision of probationers and parolees (Sections 49, 50). You are working for PPP and have been

asked to be part of a committee that determines how PPP can use more data and evidenced-based practices for the assessment and supervision of offenders under their supervision. As a part of your responsibility to the committee, you have been asked to prepare a report that examines the relevant empirical literature to determine what types of assessments and supervision practices are most effective in reducing recidivism. In your report you should **a)** briefly describe the historical development of offender assessment and supervision, **b)** summarize the evidence regarding the effectiveness of various assessment tools and types of supervision, and **c)** state your recommendation regarding which type of assessment and approach to supervision PPP should implement.

POLICY ISSUE 3:

Scholars have been very critical of the War on Drugs era for its ineffective and disparate policies. Identify the major policies and criticisms of the War on Drugs as they relate to sentencing issues, paying particular attention to the consequences of this “war” for racial minorities. Additionally, discuss the “secondary effects” of the War on Drugs for racial minorities in terms of their communities, employment prospects, education, etc.

Spring 2010 Questions

POLICY ISSUE 1:

Restorative Justice (RJ) is an increasingly popular strategy for processing both juvenile and adult offenders. However, evidence of its effectiveness in reducing recidivism is mixed. Assume that the State of South Carolina is considering increasing its use of RJ practices and has asked you to provide a policy recommendation as to whether or not such expansion is warranted. As part of your proposal to the State, **a)** briefly describe the historical development of and theoretical basis for RJ, **b)** summarize the evidence of its effectiveness, and **c)** state your recommendation as to whether or not RJ should be expanded (be sure to consider the conditions under which and population for whom RJ is best implemented).

POLICY ISSUE 2:

During arraignment a judge may decide to remand the accused to jail, release them on their own recognizance (ROR), grant them bail release, or release them on pretrial supervision (supervised release). Recently, bail bondsmen have lobbied successfully to restrict local pretrial/supervised release programs in some jurisdictions and have pushed for legislation in several states to limit pretrial's resources. Describe the pros and cons of the four decision options judges have and based on your review make an argument for or against limiting pretrial/supervised release programs.

POLICY ISSUE 3:

The United States leads the world in the rate at which it incarcerates its citizens. This level of mass incarceration produces a host of collateral consequences for society and for individuals. Some have even gone so far as to argue that prisons have reached a tipping point where they actually cause more crime than they prevent. Review and discuss the literature on the collateral consequences and crime control effects (or lack thereof) of mass incarceration. What are the negative consequences of mass imprisonment, who is affected, and how? In what ways, if at all, have prisons become criminogenic? Based on your review and analysis, what policies or laws would you recommend as remedial action?

Fall 2009 Questions

POLICY ISSUE 1:

In 1970, with passage of the Controlled Substances Act, Congress abolished all existing mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. However, Congress reinstated many of these mandatory minimums with the Sentencing Reform Act of 1984. Then again, following passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Acts of 1986 and 1988, Congress significantly expanded and enhanced mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. These laws have had both vociferous detractors and proponents—the former pointing to the incredible injustices perpetuated by these laws and the latter to their important crime control benefits. Recently, Senator Jim Webb of Virginia introduced The National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009, which will create a blue-ribbon commission to look at every aspect of our criminal justice system with an eye toward reshaping the process from top to bottom. This reevaluation “will require a major nationwide recalculation of who goes to prison and for how long and of how we address the long-term consequences of incarceration.”

Imagine that you are advising this commission on the use of mandatory minimums. Specifically, you have been tasked with answering the following question: Should Congress repeal, keep, or modify existing mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses? In making your recommendation, you should define the nature and extent of the problem, survey existing literature, apply clear evaluative criteria (e.g., efficiency, justice, etc.) in comparing the possible outcomes of these alternative policy options, and explore any related trade-offs between them.

POLICY ISSUE 2:

More than 25 states prohibit convicted sex offenders from living within close proximity (500 to 2,500 feet) of locations where children congregate. Residency restrictions are designed to prevent sex offenders from gaining access to potential victims and appear to make sense from a public safety perspective. Review what is known about the effects of sex offender residency restrictions and make an argument for eliminating, retaining, or modifying them. Be sure to draw on what is known about sex offender behavior and the assumptions underlying residency restrictions.

POLICY ISSUE 3:

The League of Women Voters is advocating to the Director of the Department of Corrections in a particular state that “gender-responsive” (i.e., “gender specific”) programs and policies be adopted for female offenders by the state corrections system. First, discuss what is meant by the concept gender-responsive programming and policies (i.e., its relevance to both juvenile and adult female offenders). Second, discuss the significance of this perspective for state-level corrections systems, including the benefits and costs/concerns. You may include examples that are currently in existence. Finally, make a recommendation as to whether or not this particular state should provide gender-responsive programming/policies to girls/women within its system.