

University of South Carolina
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice
Theory & Methods Comprehensive Exam, Doctoral Program
January 2018

Instructions

The exam consists of four questions: two theory questions and two methods questions. You must respond to one theory question and one methods question. Make sure you carefully read and respond to all parts of each question.

The January 2018 exam will be distributed on **Friday January 5, 2018 between 9:00am and 12:00pm** by the Department's administrative specialist, Shamauri Jenkins. Both a paper and electronic copy of your completed examination must be submitted to her on **Friday January 12, 2018 between 9:00am and 12:00pm**. Late examinations will not be accepted and will result in a failing score. Please note that once you receive the comprehensive examination questions, you are required to submit an examination by the deadline; otherwise your exam will receive a failing score. If you experience extenuating circumstances that interfere with your ability to complete your comprehensive exam, you should notify the graduate program director immediately. *Please make sure your exam complies with the following submission requirements:*

- ☐ You have written a response to one of the theory questions (10-15 pages not including the cover page and reference list).
- ☐ You have written a response to one of the methods questions (10-15 pages not including the cover page and reference list).
- ☐ You do not identify yourself anywhere within the document other than on the two cover pages.
- ☐ You have a separate cover page for each answer with your name, a clear indication of the question you have chosen to answer, and the identification code you have been assigned for that question.
- ☐ You have a separate identification code for each answer that is typed on both the cover page and header or the top right-hand corner of each page of your answer.
- ☐ You have separate reference sections for each answer that contains a list of references and source material that you have cited in your answers (APA style format).
- ☐ You follow the APA format, with 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spacing, and 1-inch margins throughout your answers.

- ☐ You have checked your document to ensure that you have not plagiarized. Any finding of plagiarism will result in a failing score on the exam. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please see resources including:
<http://professionalism.law.sc.edu/docs/plagiarism.pdf>
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/3/33/>
<http://guides.library.sc.edu/citation>
<http://plagiarism.org/>
- ☐ You provide a signed honor pledge indicating that you neither gave nor received assistance with the comprehensive examination.

A committee of the entire regular graduate faculty (excepting faculty members on leave or on sabbatical) will grade all examination questions. To pass the exam, at least 2/3 of the grading faculty members must give each of your responses a passing score (pass or high pass). To earn a high pass, at least 90% of the grading faculty must assign a grade of “high pass” to each of your responses. If you fail the examination, you will be permitted to retake it one additional time.

Theory Examination Questions:

1. Opportunity theories of victimization place importance on the routine activities and lifestyles of persons that influence their accessibility and attractiveness as targets. These theories, however, largely ignore the social forces that generate criminal motivations, while traditional theories of offender motivation tend to ignore routine activities and lifestyles. First, trace the development of routine and lifestyle theories of crime/victimization. Then, review past studies that have combined opportunity theory with elements of traditional theories that emphasize motivations. Provide a summary of the studies and their findings. Does the research literature support the addition of motivational factors to opportunity theories of crime and victimization?
2. Criminologists have long recognized that crime varies in important ways both across and within communities. Write an essay in which you argue for or against the proposition that our field's major theories have appropriately honored and attended to this empirical regularity. Regardless of the position you take, consider areas where future theoretical work should take greater account of community dynamics in the explanation of criminal behavior.

Methods Examination Questions:

1. Surveys are a common means for collecting data on crime, victimization, and CJ practitioner views and experiences. Using a particular substantive area/issue of your choice as an example, discuss the factors that you would consider when making the following key decisions for your project: (1) your target population and what sampling method to use, (2) how to operationalize relevant and crucial concepts into concrete measures, and (3) what procedures to use when administering your survey and collecting data.
2. Longitudinal data collection is becoming more and more common within criminology. What are the benefits and drawbacks of longitudinal designs? What methodological considerations must be taken into account when designing a longitudinal study?