

**Florida State University College of Criminology and Criminal Justice**  
**Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination in Theory, Fall, 2022**  
**Day One of the Exam**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Answer two questions. Please notify the proctor when you are finished. Please note: Once a student takes possession of the examination at the start of the exam period, this constitutes an attempt at taking the exam, regardless of whether the student completes the exam, hands in any answers, or remains for the full exam period.

1. Describe the history of social bond theory and how that history can help in understanding the theory. Discuss the core causal argument of social bond theory. Evaluate the state of evidence on each of the elements of the social bond. Identify what you believe to be the most important critiques of the theory; explain your reasoning and incorporate extant scholarship to ground your argument.
2. Deterrence theory and labeling theory offer two contradictory positions on the effects of legal punishment. Please describe these two positions, and for each one, systematically review the empirical evidence and assess which theory most accurately captures the effects of legal punishments on future criminal behavior.
3. Criminologists have long emphasized the pivotal role of culture in predicting crime. Discuss a theory that is the most useful for explaining this role. In doing so, be sure to a) describe the origins and main premises of this theory, b) evaluate its major strengths and weaknesses, and c) critically appraise the value of the empirical evidence. What future developments should be undertaken to push this area of research forward?
4. Biosocial research has underscored the role of nonshared environmental influences on crime and delinquency. Discuss what is meant by the nonshared environment and how it differs from the shared environment. Then discuss the literature bearing on the influence of the nonshared environment versus the shared environment. Finally, discuss the various ways that the nonshared environment could be integrated into criminological theory and research.

**Florida State University College of Criminology and Criminal Justice**  
**Ph.D. Comprehensive Examination in Theory, Fall, 2022**  
**Day Two of the Exam**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

Answer two questions. Please notify the proctor when you are finished. Please note: Once a student takes possession of the examination at the start of the exam period, this constitutes an attempt at taking the exam, regardless of whether the student completes the exam, hands in any answers, or remains for the full exam period.

1. Life course transitions have played a prominent role in the last few decades of criminological research. Using full-time employment as an example, discuss two different theoretical explanations for why employment should or should not be related to crime. Assess the empirical evidence in support of each theoretical explanation.
2. Describe two theories that explain differences in offending among women and men, respectively. Discuss arguments for and against gender-specific theories of offending. Defend which arguments you find to be most compelling. Explain your reasoning and discuss empirical research that supports your view.
3. Compare and contrast two theories of prison misconduct. Discuss and evaluate relevant research that would support your argument.
4. Pick one of the theories below and describe its key history, hypotheses, and the reliable empirical conclusions that can be drawn. Then, describe its most notable limitation—one that significantly hinders its empirical accuracy—and explain how that limitation should be addressed.
  - a. Social disorganization theory
  - b. Strain theory
  - c. Social learning theory