

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
DEVIANCE, LAW AND SOCIAL CONTROL
WRITTEN PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

August 2001

PART I. MORNING

A. ANSWER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS:

1. You are a new faculty member and you have been assigned the undergraduate course in the sociology of deviance, law and social control. Create a brief course outline. Either in the outline or in accompanying notes, explain your motivation for structuring the course as you have. Your outline should:

- a. Identify the topics that you would cover and the order in which you would cover them. Briefly describe the concepts that you would wish to convey in your presentation of these topics. You may wish to indicate key texts or pedagogical exercises (discussions, field observations, films, etc.) that you would use to accompany specific topics, but you do not need to create a full reading list.
- b. Explain the logical or practical connection between topics, and identify underlying themes.
- c. Compare the relevant merits of this structure with other structures that one might use.
- d. Highlight the key insights/conundrums that you would want students to take with them at the end of the semester.

Hint: This is a bigger task than you might initially think. Pace yourself by creating a general outline first, and then fill in as many details as time allows.

2. It has been roughly a decade since the latest wave of criminological theory (i. e., Agnew's General Strain Theory, Gottfredson and Hirschi's Self-control Theory, and Sampson and Laub's Age Graded Theory of Crime) first appeared in print.

- a. Briefly characterize each theory; what are the key ideas/concepts in each one?
- b. Compare and contrast these three theories; has one proven to be better/more useful than others?
- c. What have these theories contributed to the scholarly discourse about crime? How have they affected the empirical study of crime?

(See page 2 for question 2)

B. ANSWER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS:

1. In most studies of crime in the United States, the dependent variable comes from one of three sources: the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), the National Institute of Justice' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), and self-reports.

a. Explain how each measure of crime is constructed and give examples of research using each.

b. Critically evaluate the quality of each source for the purposes of research on crime. How are the strengths and weaknesses discussed in your critique evident in the research you discussed in part a?

2. Formulate an interesting proposition about a contested or otherwise problematic issue in the sociology of deviance, law and social control, and outline a practical research design to explore it. Whatever else your essay does, it should:

a. Identify why the issue you address is problematic and why your proposition would advance understanding of this area.

b. Identify empirically testable implications of your proposition.

c. Describe (in general terms) a research design that would produce data relevant to the issue and to your proposed resolution.

d. Explain how your research design would adjudicate between your proposed explanation and other competing accounts.