

Criminology Comprehensive Exam: Fall 2009

REQUIRED QUESTIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

1. One of the central methodological issues in any study of crime and delinquency is the quality of the data that one is using to answer a specific research question. In this answer compare the advantages and disadvantages of the three major sources of data (UCR, NCVS, and self-report) with respect to quality. Include in your answer a thorough discussion of reliability and validity as they relate to these types of data.
2. Take the stand of a feminist criminologist. How would you critique social learning theory? Now take the other side: How would you defend social learning theory to address the critiques of feminist criminology. Include in your answer *for both sides* theoretical arguments/justifications and relevant empirical evidence.

QUESTION CHOICE FOR THOSE STUDENTS “MAJORING” IN CRIMINOLOGY: Answer two (2) of the following questions:

1. Discuss the best way to conceptualize and study White Collar crime. Theoretically, how is it defined and differentiated from other types of crime? In addition, discuss why this type of criminal activity has drawn less public and scholarly attention than other types of crime. Be sure to cite specific readings on the list to support your answer.
2. U.S. imprisonment rates have quadrupled over the last three decades. Compare and contrast the following three rationales for punishment: retribution, general deterrence, and rehabilitation. Which rationale is the primary driving force behind our current crime control policies? What does the evidence suggest for each approach (that is, which perspective seems to be most effective in reducing crime?)
3. Any piece on your reading list could arguably be said to have made an important contribution to criminology. Select two readings, one empirical and one theoretical, that you believe have made an especially strong impact on the field. In this answer you must:
 - a. Discuss the specific criteria you used to select each reading and explain why criminologists should care about your criteria.
 - b. Explain how the readings that you selected meet your criteria.