CRIMINOLOGY COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION—DAY ONE

Answer questions 1 and 2. Then answer ONE question from among questions 3, 4, or 5.

1. Consider rape. Identify and discuss how different theoretical paradigms in criminology would explain why rape occurs, the incidence of rape, who rapists, and who gets raped. In what ways does existing evidence about rape confirm or refute these theories? Which approaches would we combine if we wanted to create (1) a general theory of rape and (2) an understanding of how we might prevent rape from occurring?

2. What do we know about the relation between unemployment and crime? Does unemployment cause crime? Discuss the relevant findings in the literature. How would Agyen's General Strain theory explain these findings and what strengths and weaknesses do you see in this explanation?

3. What are the key causes/correlates of the incarceration boom in the United States? What have been the key consequences of the boom? Has an increase in incarceration been effective and in what sense? In your view, what are the long term consequences of such heavy reliance on incarceration as a primary correctional strategy? What if anything, has the incarceration boom taught us about deterrence and incapacitation?

4. One of the most consistent findings in criminological research is that women have lower offending rates than men. What are the main explanations for this finding? Please assess the relative merits of the different explanations.

5. The life-course perspective has dominated criminological research for more than a decade. Can we say that we now understand more about crime than we did before the life-course paradigm arose? If so, what?