Comprehensive Exam in Crime, Law, and Deviance - Day One

Answer questions 1 and 2 and either 3 or 4

1. A longstanding tradition of criminological research traces the origin of crime to community-level factors. Please describe the different theories that emphasize the importance of community characteristics. Make sure to discuss recent examples as well as the classic theories from which they draw. What kinds of methodological problems do researchers face in examining the role of community factors? How would you design a project to investigate the effect of neighborhood characteristics on the incidence of crime?

2. What three books do you think have had the greatest impact on the field of criminology during the past fifteen years? Describe the essential argument(s) and evidence offered in each book, and discuss how the book has affected the way criminologists think and do research.

3. Every so often, researchers in criminology are able to undertake randomized experiments to test a given hypothesis (e.g., whether arresting batterers deters them from repeating their behavior). What advantages does one gain with this design? What limitations are inherent in randomized field experiments when utilized in criminology? What ethical questions arise?

4. What kinds of insights do traditional criminological theories offer with regard to terrorism (domestic and international)? Which theories do you think are most useful to understand terrorism and why? What policy implications can be derived from them?