**Criminology Comprehensive Exam THEORY**

**Doctoral Program in Criminology**

**School of Economic, Political and Policy Sciences**

**University of Texas at Dallas**

**May 8, 2021**

**Instructions**

You have six (6) hours to complete the Theory portion of the comprehensive exam.

Your answer will be evaluated on its organization, coherence, clarity, intellectual rigor, substantive validity, conceptual development, and application of relevant literature to the question at hand.

Answers must be emailed to scotch@utdallas.edu before 4:00pm today (11/7/2020). Please do not incorporate any identifying information on what you submit.

We wish you success!

**THEORY QUESTIONS**

**Answer ONE of the following:**

1. After a period of declining crime in the United States, many cities are observing an increase in violent offenses. In particular, gun-related crimes are on the rise. Criminologists are puzzled by the emerging crime wave. Select two criminological theories. Discuss each theory’s assumptions, concepts, and key causal predictions as they apply to the rise of gun-related crimes in the United States. In your view, which theory is better able to account for the crime wave and why?

2. One of the central issues in life-course criminology is not only why individuals choose to commit crime, but also why they decide to stop. Discuss why people desist from crime. In your answer: (1) define desistance; (2) select at least two theories, explain them, and discuss how they provide the strongest explanation for desistance; and (3) support your answer with a discussion of the empirical support for the selected theories.