**Criminology Comprehensive Exam THEORY**

**Doctoral Program in Criminology**

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

**University of Texas at Dallas**

**November 5, 2022**

**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](mailto:scotch@utdallas.edu) before 4:00pm today (11/6/2022). Please do not incorporate any identifying information on what you submit.

We wish you success!

**THEORY QUESTIONS**

Answer **ONE** of the following:

Question 1

This question is about the role of motivation in criminological theory. In your answer, be sure to consider not only motivations to commit crime, but also motivations to refrain from crime. Begin your answer with a general discussion of the role of motivation in criminological theory. Then, compare and contrast two specific motivational theories. Comparisons/contrasts should include discussions of the underlying theoretical assumptions of the theories (e.g., assumptions regarding human nature, the attraction to crime, etc.), the major theoretical concepts, methodological advances, and findings from existing empirical research. Finally, complete your answer with a discussion on applying one of the motivational theories to a topic of your choosing. In doing so, outline how major theoretical concepts of the motivational theory of your choice apply to your topic and design a study in which you can empirically test your ideas.

Question 2

Several theorists have put forward general theories of crime. Such theories claim to be capable of explaining all crime, many deviant behaviors, and various established empirical facts regarding the relationships between demographics and crime. In this question, we first ask you to discuss the advantages and the limitations of general theories of crime by citing the appropriate literature. Second, relying on empirical research, choose one general theory to examine its empirical validity, address methodological/statistical issues commonly found in the prior literature, and then draw conclusions about the theory’s ability to explain crime. Finally, complete your answer by applying one of the general theories to a topic of your choosing and design a study in which you can empirically test your hypothesis(es).