**Criminology Comprehensive Exam THEORY**

**Doctoral Program in Criminology**

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

**University of Texas at Dallas**

**April 30, 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 (4/30/2022). Please do not incorporate any identifying information on what you submit.

We wish you success!

**THEORY QUESTIONS**

Answer **ONE** of the following:

Question 1

Crimes of violence, juvenile delinquency, the gender gap in crime, and the age-crime relationship are common areas of research in criminology. Biosocial theory, self control theory, strain theory, learning theory, and the life-course perspective are popular theories of crime causation. Pick one of the research areas and one of the theories. How would someone subscribing to the theory explain the research area? Describe an empirical study that that would apply the theory to the research area you have chosen. Your description should include a research question, constructs of interest, and a research design (including quantitative vs. qualitative, cross-sectional vs. longitudinal, and the ideal sample).  It should also include one limitation of your proposed study design that would affect confidence in your results and conclusions. Citing relevant and recent research literature, provide a detailed response to the aforementioned question while explaining the fundamentals of the theory and recent developments therein.

Question 2

Criminology, like many fields, evolves. Describe one criminological theory, identifying its assumptions and propositions. Then, describe one major development in the theory that has occurred in the last 30 years. Why was this development meaningful with respect to the original theory? Finally, describe an empirical study that could assess the development compared to the original theory. Your description should include a research question, constructs of interest, and a research design (including quantitative vs. qualitative, cross-sectional vs. longitudinal, and the ideal sample). It should also include one limitation of your proposed study design that would affect confidence in your results and conclusions. Throughout your response, you should incorporate the relevant literature to help illustrate the importance of the advancement and the relevance/adequacy of your proposed study.