The PhD comprehensive examinations are an integral part of the PhD degree in Criminal Justice. They represent the part of the program that requires students to demonstrate their understanding of the central issues facing the discipline. It also requires students to have formed their own positions on these issues, to demonstrate that they have the ability to articulate and defend these positions. As such, they place an emphasis not only on what people know but also on how they can use what they know, and if they have developed an understanding of how what we know can be transformed through research, theory development, and action. The student is expected to demonstrate in the examinations their reasoned perspective on the literature in our field and their ability to integrate that literature to describe future developments.

Content
The Policing examination includes topics covering the history, social impact, management, and effectiveness of American police agencies. This includes knowledge of both historical and contemporary readings on police organizations, administration and management; community policing; police and race issues; and an assessment of the effectiveness of American police agencies. Students must also demonstrate adequate knowledge related to all theories identified in policing research specifically related to police organizations, as well as the social impact that the police have as they interact with citizens and other social agencies. In addition, this exam will require students to relate their knowledge of the methods commonly employed in policing research, including both quantitative and qualitative methods and analytical techniques in order to demonstrate an understanding not only of the state of knowledge on theses issues, but of the processes used to generate that knowledge.

Administration

All examinations are given twice each year (on the last Friday in January and the first Friday in August). Each exam will be six hours in length. Students will be given between 6 and 8 questions of which they will be required to answer four. At each offering, the Department will designate a specific tenured or tenure-track faculty member to proctor the exam process. Copies of past examinations will be kept in the Department and will be available to students to facilitate their understanding of the nature of the examinations and the expectations for their overall content.

All examinations must be word-processed. Students who elect to hand write their answers must leave the answers with the examiner at the end of the examination, then return to the Department on the next business day to key in the exact text they have handwritten during the examination. The text will be proofread by staff. Any variation between the two versions will be taken as a case of academic dishonesty and may result in failure of the comprehensive exam.
Preparation

Preparation for the Policing comprehensive examination is facilitated by taking required and recommended courses. These courses are not required of students before taking exams but are offered as guides to the kinds of materials that should be covered during the preparation. It must be understood that completion of these courses is not all that needs to be done to prepare for comprehensive exams. In addition to satisfactory performance in course work, the students must develop their own positions and organize the literature in a way that leads them to be able to “profess” the discipline.

For the Policing examination, students should consider taking courses offered as part of the Policing track (Community Policing, Police Effectiveness, Police and Race Issues, and Administrative Policing). Courses in research and statistical methods will also be useful in preparing for this exam (Quantitative Methods, Qualitative Methods, Applied Statistics, Applied Regression Models, and Program Evaluation).

In addition to coursework, students have access to a suggested reading list compiled by the faculty. As with coursework, this reading list is designed to be a study guide. It is expected that students will collect and read journal articles, books and government reports that are considered important to American policing that are not identified on the reading list. It is recommended that students examine the main journals in policing over at least the past five years to find and then read articles that are not included on this reading list. These journals include (but are not necessarily limited to): Criminology, Justice Quarterly, Police Quarterly, Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management, Police Practice and Research, Criminology & Public Policy, American Journal of Sociology, American Sociological Review, and Social Problems.

Taking the Examination

No advice can be offered that will ensure a passing grade on the comprehensive examination. Even so, it might be helpful to share some broad suggestions on the factors that often are considered in the grading of the examination. First, it is essential that students are able to accurately identify and clearly articulate important issues and theories relevant to policing research.

Second, a related difficulty is when students display a surface knowledge of the policing literature. Stated positively, answers that show scholarly depth are accorded higher grades. Stated negatively, answers that are filled with broad statements—which themselves are not supported with appropriate citations to the literature—do not show convincingly that a student truly knows the subject matter. Remember this simple but important point: only what is written on the exam can be graded. Professors cannot “fill in the blank” or “assume you know the answer.”

Third, scholarly depth is shown by citing appropriate works. Note that merely providing “a string cite”—that is, a list of works cited with no discussion of any work in detail—is usually not sufficient to answer a question. Scholarly depth is demonstrated by synthesizing relevant research/literature in some logical manner, as well as identifying both strengths and weaknesses of each study you have included in your answer.
Fourth, citations to textbooks are forbidden (do not do it!!!). Textbooks on policing—such as Walker and Katz' *Police in America* or Fyfe et al.'s *Police Administration*—may be useful in helping you organize main points about each of the general categories important in American policing. These works, however, are not replacements for reading the original contributions of the authors listed on your reading list. In your examination, you must cite the original theoretical works and research studies.

**Grading**

Comprehensive examinations will be graded by at least three tenured or tenure-track faculty with full-time appointments in the Department. Each grader will grade each question “pass” or “fail” (faculty may also make a recommendation for or against a grade of “pass with distinction”). The Department Chair, or his or her designee, will tabulate scores by student in a matrix by de-identified graders. Each student will be allowed to review the matrix for their own examination, but not for other students. All examinations with 75% of the total possible score will pass. Those with less than 75% will fail.

Once a student fails a comprehensive examination, he or she must retake the exam at the next offering. A student who fails will meet with a faculty member for advising about how to proceed in preparation for the second administration. A student who fails a comprehensive examination a second time shall be terminated from the doctoral program.

**Books**


The Police and the Public


**Police Effectiveness**


**Hot Spots**


**Police Discretion**


**Use of Force**


**Policing Domestic Violence**


He, N., Jihong Zhao, and Carol A. Archbold. (2002). “Gender and police stress: The convergent and divergent impact of work environment, work-family conflict, and


**Police Reform**


**Community Policing**


