Section I. Theory/Methods Integration

1. Criminologists often find a relationship between alcohol consumption and offending. Identify three theories that explain this relationship. Selecting one of these theories, describe a research design and method or methods of data collection that may be used to test this theory as it pertains to the consumption of alcohol and offending. The description should include explanations of strengths and limitations of the research design as well as how one could validate measures of the causal and impact variables.

2. The empirical outcomes for deterrence theory and labeling theory would appear to produce support for each theory. First, explain why this is so. Then, construct a research design that would sufficiently allow us to assess the relative empirical merit of one theory versus the other. In your response, please adhere to each section below and number your response to correspond to the various subsections
A. Research Question
   • State the hypothesis or hypotheses of your research question.
   • List the conceptual definitions of the key variables and identify your independent and dependent variables.
   • Provide operational definitions of the key variables.
B. Sampling Design
   • Identify the population, sample, sampling frame, and sampling technique.
C. Data Collection Technique(s)
   • Describe how you will gather your data.
   • Describe the instrument(s) that you will employ.
D. Human Subjects Protections
   • Identify any issues related to the use of human subjects/respondents.
E. Measurement Issues
   • Describe the reliability and validity of the measures and how you will assess the veracity of your measures.
F. Analysis
   • Describe the appropriate statistical tests that you will employ to analyze your data.
Section II. Research Methods

3. Given successful evaluations of focused deterrence strategies at targeting youth gang violence in several communities, the National Institute of Justice is interested in conducting an evaluation of the strategy in an application targeting intimate partner abusers. Focused deterrence strategies have previously been constructed to include the identification of specific, repeat offenders, notifying them that a specific category of offense will result in immediate, certain, and severe consequences, providing options for services including substance abuse treatment, coordination among criminal justice practitioners to respond to new offenses, and re-notification of identified offenders of consequences of new offenses. A local, municipal police department is interested in pursuing a focused deterrence strategy, has identified repeat offenders, as well as identified and gathered cooperation from social service providers. In collaboration with the department, you are asked to jointly respond to an RFP released by the NIJ for practitioner-academic collaborations.

Writers are asked to construct their proposals using the outline below. Be thorough in responding to this RFP and please create subsections delineating your response including justifications for your responses for the choices in methods. You should create a research design that evaluates the impact of the strategy on recidivism. Remember that you need to convince the grantor that yours is the proper approach.

a. Research question, hypothesis, and all variables
b. Conceptualization and operationalization of all independent and dependent variables
c. Research design
d. Sampling
e. Data collection
f. Issues of validity and reliability
g. Ethical consideration

4. The link between unemployment and crime has been a hotly debated issue, both politically and academically. First, discuss the empirical literature surrounding this link. Second, create a research design that will address this link. Be sure to include the following information and to justify your reasons for the choices in methods.
a. Research question, hypotheses, and all variables
b. Conceptualization and operationalization of all independent and dependent variables
c. Research design
d. Sampling
e. Data collection
f. Issues of validity and reliability
g. Ethical considerations
Theory-Methods Comprehensive Exam – August 2014

Saturday – 8-23 (9 am – 2 pm) – Answer one (1) question under each section.

Section III. Individual Theories

1. Gottfredson and Hirschi’s population heterogeneity approach to studying offenders and offending continues to be somewhat at odds with the state dependence approach. One facet of disagreement between these two approaches emerges when discussing the role of 1) unemployment, 2) parenthood, and 3) marital status in crime. Your task is to:
   a. Briefly expound upon each theoretical approach
   b. Using each approach, explain how each theoretical orientation would account for the association between the risk/protective factors of unemployment, religious participation, marital status and crime
   c. Tell us what the empirical literature demonstrates regarding the association between the three risk/protective factors and crime and which theory seems more supported by this literature.

2. Gottfredson and Hirschi’s concept of low self-control and their assertion that this concept is inferred with time-stable individual characteristics continues to come under fire by critics. Explain Gottfredson and Hirschi’s notion of the stability of low self-control. Then, describe how critics have viewed this conceptual idea in terms of its stability. Finally, narrate the empirical literature and tell us what empirical tests of the stability of low self-control reveal.
Section IV. Structural Theories

3. In a recent issue of *Criminology and Public Policy*, Sampson, Winship, and Knight discuss the potential difficulties of turning a complex theory, with the myriad pathways and social contexts in determining causal relationships, into concrete policy recommendations. First, explain social disorganization theory, including the move toward collective efficacy, as well as the various causal pathways. Second, discuss the empirical research surrounding this theory. Third, based on your above responses, describe two concrete policies as workable solutions to crime and why these solutions are seen as viable.

4. A number of feminist approaches look at how the concept of “masculinities” can aid in the examination of crime. Although these approaches focus more on males, what it means to be male, and males’ responses to those meanings, other feminist approaches specifically examine females and their roles, causes, and effects of crime. Discuss the literature regarding both types of approaches, including their contributions to criminology as well as their problems. Second, choose one theory and argue how best to study it based on the current empirical research.