

# **CRIMINOLOGY AREA EXAMINATION GENERAL STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES**

## **I. Purpose**

The Criminology Area Examination provides the criminology faculty an opportunity to assess the level of mastery doctoral students have achieved in the area of sociological criminology. As outlined in the Department of Sociology's "Doctoral Program" handbook, the purpose of area examinations is to determine whether students have attained a level of mastery that is sufficient for becoming a viable professional in the field of sociology.

The Criminology Area Examination should be viewed as an opportunity to develop as a scholar in the field of criminology. Preparing for the examination will lead students to synthesize criminological knowledge and to develop their own understanding of the discipline. Sustained reflection and study of criminological theory and research, both classical and contemporary, will provide students with a firm foundation for organizing their own research program and can yield conference presentations or publications. Moreover, systematic scrutiny of the state of criminological knowledge will leave students in a favorable position to develop courses in their future teaching endeavors. Finally, acquiring and studying the books and articles central to the criminological discipline will assist students in the development of a library which will serve them well in their professional roles of scholar and teacher.

Doctoral students who wish to claim expertise in the field of criminology are expected to demonstrate both depth and breadth in their general and integrative knowledge of theories of crime and delinquency and criminological methods. They should be able to demonstrate a solid understanding of the standard criminological theories, to discuss classical and contemporary research and empirical evidence with respect to each of these theories, to demonstrate competency with respect to the manifold research methods employed in criminological investigations, and to critically evaluate these theories and methods. Students must also demonstrate a familiarity with the current issues and debates that surround these theories and use of methods in the field.

## **II. Format**

The Criminology Area Examination will consist of a written portion and an oral portion:

**A. *Written Portion of the Examination.*** The written portion of the examination will be completed as a "take home" examination, allowing students to use notes and other sources. Students will be given five days to complete the examination. Students will be expected to keep their answers to 20 pages, double-spaced, maximum *per question*.

For the first question, students will be asked to select one question from at least two options that deals with criminological theories and research that tests these theories. These questions are designed to allow students to demonstrate both depth and breadth in their general and integrative knowledge of criminological theories and their empirical status. Answers to these questions should be both succinct and comprehensive.

For the second question, students will be asked to select one question from at least two options that deals with criminological research methods. These questions are designed to allow students to demonstrate their knowledge of data collection techniques (both qualitative and quantitative) and statistical methods used in the field of criminology. Answers to these questions should be both succinct and comprehensive.

The third question will offer a choice between at least two alternatives, and will cover criminological theories, research methods, or a combination of theories and methods. Alternatively, the third question may cover the student's specialty area within the field of criminology. These questions are designed to allow students to demonstrate both depth and breadth in their general and integrative knowledge of criminological theories and/or research methods, or a specialty area of their choice.

***B. Oral Portion of the Examination.*** Within three weeks of the completion of the written examination, an oral examination will be held on a date scheduled by the chair in consultation with the student and committee members. The oral examination will provide students an opportunity to revisit each question addressed in the written examination in order to extend and clarify their responses. Faculty members will ask questions that allow students to further demonstrate their mastery of the field of criminology. Faculty questions may focus on the written responses, questions from the written examination that were not selected, or any other relevant criminological topic.

### **III. Composition of the Criminology Area Examination Committee**

Students will select a committee chair from the graduate faculty in criminology. Then, in consultation with the committee chair, the student will select two additional graduate faculty members.

### **IV. Preparation**

The student will develop a comprehensive reading list in consultation with her or his committee chair. The reading list will include books, research monographs, and peer-reviewed journal articles covering classical and contemporary criminological theories, empirical research, research methods, and an optional specialty area within the field of criminology. A recommended list of the journals that should be reviewed for recent advances in criminological theory, empirical studies, and research methods is given below. The reading list will be reviewed by all committee members who may request revisions to the list. The reading list must be approved by all committee members.

## **Journals**

American Journal of Sociology  
American Sociological Review  
Crime, Law, and Social Change  
Criminology  
Criminology & Public Policy  
Critical Criminology  
Feminist Criminology  
Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency  
Justice Quarterly  
Law and Society Review  
Quantitative Criminology  
Social Forces  
Social Justice  
Social Problems  
Theoretical Criminology  
Violence Against Women  
Women and Criminal Justice

This list of journals is not comprehensive and others may be important to consult as well. Students should consult with their committees to determine the scope of journals and specific recommendations.

Questions from previous administrations of the Criminology Area Examination are available for students to inspect and study. Students should also meet individually with their committee members for further guidance on preparing for the written and oral portions of the examination.

## **V. Assessment**

At the conclusion of the oral portion of the examination, the student's committee will assess the student's performance on both portions of the examination. The committee will determine with a unanimous vote whether a student has passed or failed the examination. When the committee is unable to reach unanimity, it may award an incomplete and request additional written work and/or a second oral examination before making its final decision. An incomplete can be given, however, only if the committee agrees that a student has passed on two out of three questions. If a student is given an incomplete by the committee, the chair will provide a written statement to the student and her/his doctoral advisor that specifies the required additional work. A final decision

of pass or fail must be made by the committee within six weeks of the date of the assignment of the incomplete. Students who fail the Criminology Area Examination will be permitted to take the examination one more time.

## **VI. Academic Integrity**

You are responsible for making yourself aware of and understanding the policies and procedures in the Graduate Catalog that pertain to academic integrity. These policies include cheating, fabrication, falsification and forgery, multiple submission, plagiarism, complicity and computer misuse. If it is determined that you have been involved in academic dishonesty in the area examination, this will result in your failing the examination. You will also be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. You will be given the opportunity to review the charge(s). If you believe you are not responsible, you will have the opportunity for a hearing. Please consult with the chair of the Criminology Area Examination Committee if you are uncertain about an issue of academic honesty prior to the submission of an examination.

## **VII. Record**

The student's examination committee chair will prepare a written record of the student's performance on the Criminology Area Examination that will be placed in the student's academic file.

## **VIII. Criminology Faculty and Research**

### **Interests Susan M. Carlson**

Political Economy of Crime and Punishment, Research Methods in Criminology, State/State Corporate Crime, Comparative Criminology, Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Crime and Punishment

### **Charles E. Crawford**

Criminology, Law Enforcement, Race, Ethnicity and Crime, and Punishment and Social Control

### **Patrick Cundiff**

Criminology, Life Course, Victimization, Prisoner Re-entry, Social Psychology

### **Whitney DeCamp**

Criminology, Research Methodology, Statistics, Intellectual Property Issues, Video Games, The Media, Sociology of the Internet, and Technology and Society.

### **Barry Goetz**

Crime Prevention, Drugs and Crime, Regulatory Process, Law Enforcement, Political Economy and Crime, Public Policy and Crime Control, Punishment and Social Control, Restorative Justice, and White-Collar, Corporate, and State Crime

### **Gregory J. Howard**

Comparative Criminology, Surveillance, Punishment and Social Control, Mobilities, and Media

**Ashlyn Kuersten**

Gender and Crime, Race/Ethnicity and Crime, and Sociology of Law

**Ronald Kramer**

Political Economy and Crime, Public Policy and Crime Control, White-Collar, Corporate, and State Crime

**Angela M. Moe**

Gender and Crime, Juvenile Delinquency, Race/Ethnicity and Crime, Victimology, and Violence against Women

**Zoann K. Snyder**

Gender and Crime, Popular Culture, Media, and Crime, Public Policy and Crime Control, Race/Ethnicity and Crime, and Sociology of Law