University of Florida
Criminology, Law and Society
Crime and Justice Area Comprehensive Exam
January 13, 2007
Spring 2007

Answer three of the following seven questions.

1. Edwin Sutherland argued in his 1939 presidential address to the American Sociological Society that the concept of “white collar crime” was under-appreciated and under-researched in sociology. How did Sutherland define “white collar crime?” Review and explain the definitional debate that ensued being sure to answer the question “is white collar crime, crime?” Your answer should clearly describe the issue(s) being debated, a detailed description of both (or all) sides of the debate, and conclude with a discussion of whether or not the debate has been settled?

2. Marshall Clinard and Richard Quinney put forth one of the most widely accepted typologies of criminal behavior in their 1973 book, Criminal Behavior Systems. What is the current status of crime typology research in the discipline? Does it help? Or, is it a false reality that distorts the study of crime? Give examples of both sides of the typology debate.

3. Select an area of research of problem in criminal justice, corrections, or law enforcement which you believe is important in criminology. Identify clearly what the research area or problem is. Review the relevant literature on that problem, identifying key issues in the study of and the state of knowledge about it at this time. Indicate what kind of research you think is needed to advance our knowledge about the problem by spelling out, briefly, a research project designed to address what you consider to be the significant question(s) or issue(s) in the selected area.

4. There has been a longstanding concern with race and criminal justice decision-making and scholarly research on this topic goes back at least 75 years. Considerable attention has been devoted to the issue of race differentials or discrimination at several phases of criminal and/or juvenile justice processing. As a criminologist, evaluate the problem in the U.S. of race and criminal justice processing? Write an essay which clearly defines the issue, reviews the empirical literature, critiques that literature, and provides an outline of what you believe are the most important unanswered questions in this area of research.

5. Consider the following statement. “Discretion within the criminal justice system is unacceptable. It should be removed through strict guidelines and/or organizational structure.” Adopting either a policing or sentencing framework, construct a persuasive essay that agrees or disagrees with this statement. Be sure to review the nature of discretion within your framework selection, as well as past attempts to curb it and their success at doing so.

6. In his 2004 Presidential address to the American Society of Criminology, Francis Cullen pondered that “what we do as criminologists does not matter.” Write an essay in which you agree or disagree with his sentiment that criminology is largely irrelevant to policy makers and the functioning of our criminal justice system.

7. Every criminologists encounter scholarly works that help shape the kind of criminologist he/she becomes. In an essay, carefully describe the five works (books or major research articles) that have, to this point in your career, most shaped the way you approach the study of crime and justice. Why have these particular works been such fundamental influences on you?