

THEORY ORIENTED QUESTIONS (Select one of the following three questions)

1. A core issue in the study of law and society is legal compliance. Select a theory that can account for compliance or noncompliance. Briefly discuss its basic premises and then review key research that either supports or disputes the theory. Conclude by taking a stand about the utility of the theory for understanding legal compliance. Defend your position.
2. In the past few years, we have seen an increase in school shootings. Pick three theories from law and society and 1) describe the theories, 2) describe the studies supporting the theories, and 3) demonstrate how each of the theories would explain the cause of these types of incidents.
3. Depending on your perspective, law can have a variety of different functions. Describe the primary function of law from either a race or gender theoretical perspective. In your answer be sure to detail the strengths and weaknesses of the perspective you chose.

OTHER LAW AND SOCIETY QUESTIONS (Select two of the following five questions)

1. Write an essay about the role of legitimacy in understanding law and society. What is legitimacy? How does it relate to law? How is it established, maintained, or undermined? Is it a necessary condition for law? Why or why not?
2. Law relies on shared constructions that contain assumptions about the way people and society operate. For example, age is constructed in ways that are reflected in laws on marriage, consent for sexual activity, the ability to contract, criminal responsibility, alcohol use, retirement, and discrimination. Historically, sex was constructed in ways that were reflected in employment laws, voting rights, property rights, etc. Class is constructed in laws ranging from welfare to progressive taxation. Your assignment is to identify a construction that is incorporated into law and that makes empirical assumptions that have been or could be checked against social science evidence. Discuss the theory and research in social science that either confirms or disputes the construction. Should the legal construction be changed? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. In the law, there are several assumptions about human behavior. Describe either a law, legal action, or a Supreme Court decision and the assumption(s) it makes about human behavior. Then, critique the assumption(s) using a theory and/or body of research from an area of social science. In your answer, you should adopt a position (i.e., the assumption about human behavior is correct or the assumption about human behavior is incorrect) and defend it using the social scientific evidence.
4. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Success is being influential. Describe and discuss the three most influential programs of research in law and society. In your answer, be sure to include how and where the program has been influential.
5. Courts and social scientists have been interested in juveniles' abilities to understand their rights and the court process. For instance, there is a concern that juveniles may not understand Miranda warnings as well as adults. Describe why a juvenile's comprehension of the justice system is or is not an issue police should consider as they arrest juveniles. Should other legal decision makers consider this issue, and if so, how and why?