

Non-Thesis Track M.A. Comprehensive Exam Spring Semester 2021

Instructions

You must address one of the following three questions in your policy paper. Generally, each topic requires you to review, analyze, and synthesize the literature as it pertains to a particular policy area and draw conclusions or make recommendations based on your findings. Please be sure you read the entire question and address all parts of it.

The Spring 2021 exam is being distributed on Friday, January 22, 2021 at 9:00am by Dr. Koons-Witt through a password-protected electronic copy. You will confirm receipt of the exam through email between 9:00am and 12:00pm, and upon confirmation, receive a password to open the exam. An electronic copy (both WORD and PDF formats) of your completed examination must be submitted to Dr. Koons-Witt between 9:00am and 12:00pm on Monday, March 22, 2021. Late examinations will not be accepted and will result in a failing score. Please note that once you receive the password to open the comprehensive examination document, you are required to submit an examination paper by the deadline; otherwise your exam will receive a failing score. If you experience extenuating circumstances that interfere with your ability to complete your comprehensive exam, you should notify the graduate program director immediately. Please make sure your exam complies with the following **submission requirements**:

- ✓ You have written a response to one of the three questions on the exam.
- ✓ Your submission contains FOUR parts: (1) an Executive Summary (2-3 pages briefly outlining the contents of your paper); (2) a Policy Paper (20-25 pages in length, not including the cover); (3) a separate List of References **formatted using APA** (which does not count against the page limit); and (4) a signed Honor Pledge. Please note that students receiving assistance from the University's writing center is considered a violation of the Honor Pledge.
- ✓ **You have not identified yourself anywhere within the document other than on the cover page.** You will be assigned an **identification code** for each question so your answers can be linked to your name after grading is complete.
- ✓ Your **identification code (####)** is typed on both the cover page and the top right-hand corner (i.e., header) of each page of your answer. (*see attached example page*)
- ✓ You followed the APA format, with **12-point Times New Roman** font, double-spacing, and 1-inch margins throughout your answer.
- ✓ You have checked your document to ensure that you have not plagiarized. Any finding of plagiarism will result in a failing score on the exam. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please see https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/using_research/avoiding_plagiarism/is_it_plagiarism.html or <http://plagiarism.org/>.
- ✓ You provided a signed honor pledge indicating that you neither gave nor received assistance with the comprehensive examination.

- ✓ You used a well-developed list of academic sources (i.e., no Wikipedia and if necessary, no popular media sources except in a very limited way if needed).

When possible (i.e., when there are two or more test takers), your comprehensive examination will be graded in a double-blind manner – neither you nor the faculty graders will know each other’s identities. A three-member committee of graduate faculty will grade all examination questions. To pass the exam, at least 2 of the 3 grading faculty members must give your exam a passing score (a grade of “pass” or “high pass”). To earn a “high pass”, all grading faculty members must assign a grade of “high pass.” Students who fail this examination are permitted to retake it one additional time.

Exam Questions (Please Answer *One*):

Question 1:

Within the adult criminal court system, pretrial diversion programs are used as an alternative to the traditional system, whereby defendants avoid a conviction by carrying out certain obligations laid out by the court or prosecutor. First, provide a general discussion of pretrial diversion programs and their foundation. Then, review the existing literature that has evaluated pretrial diversion programs. What conclusions can be drawn regarding the success or failure of these programs thus far? Are there weaknesses in the existing evaluations that preclude drawing these conclusions?

Question 2:

In recent years, police legitimacy and procedural have gained a tremendous amount of popularity as a means of improving police-community relations. Recent events such as the spate of police-initiated shootings and the resulting nationwide protests across the nation have further brought this issue to the forefront, especially among Black communities. First, consider how police have historically responded to social unrest and protests and whether these responses vary depending on those involved in the protests. Then, address whether the police legitimacy and procedural justice literature can provide guidance on how police leadership can move forward to resolve issues related to distrust of the police in Black communities.

Question 3:

There is some question about the extent to which criminological research impacts criminal justice policy. In this essay, you are to choose a specific topic of research in the area of criminal justice (e.g., sentencing guidelines, hot spots policing, solitary confinement, death penalty). Review the existing empirical research on this topic and document how this research has or has not impacted criminal justice policy.



DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINOLOGY AND
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Non-Thesis Track MA Comprehensive Exam

Honor Pledge – Spring 2021

Your Exam Identification Code: _____

Honor Pledge: In accordance with the ideals set forth in the Carolinian Creed, I hereby pledge that I neither gave nor received assistance on this examination.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____