

**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**PH.D. COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION IN SOCIOLOGY OF CRIME AND LAW**  
**August 23-27, 2021**

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You are required to answer THREE (3) QUESTIONS (ONE QUESTION FROM EACH OF PARTS A, B & C). Each answer should be 10-12 pages (12-point font and double-spaced) in length. The complete exam should not total more than 36 pages in length (double-spaced, 12-point font), not including references. THE COMMITTEE WILL NOT READ PAST THE 36TH PAGE.

**Part A**

1. Many scholars have critiqued some of the 'classical' or 'canonical' texts on punishment (e.g., Becker's *Outsiders*, Cohen's *Visions of Social Control*, Garland's *Punishment and Modern Society* or Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*) for their inattention to race, gender, Indigeneity, etc. Thanks to more recent scholarship, how can we take this critique further – that is, begin to develop productive theories of punishment that go beyond absence to re-think old conceptualizations considering new knowledge? What are the major innovations, and what lines of inquiry remain to be investigated?

2. Punishment scholars sometimes proceed as if there is a universal and shared definition of punishment. Is there? If so, what is it? If not, what are the range of ways scholars understand, and have historically understood, punishment? By extension, what does it mean for a society to be 'more' punitive, and are more punitive societies necessarily less just? Explain why or why not.

**Part B**

3. Life course theory has long been used by sociologists, criminologists, and other academics to discuss various facets of crime. First, discuss the genealogy of life course theory. Second, expand on how readings from the comp exam list have used life course theory to discuss race, class, gender, sexuality, and other identities. Finally, discuss in what new directions we can take this theoretical framework.

4. Focusing on the relationship between inequality and crime, discuss the following questions: (1) How does poverty shape crime and those who engage in these activities? (2) How does the urban setting shape crime and those who engage in these activities? (3) How does race and gender affect the experiences of women and girls who engage in criminal activities?

**Part C**

5. 'Law and society' is often considered an interdisciplinary field without a theoretical core. In your view, to what extent is the sociology of law a coherent area of social science research? What are some common themes, theories, or orientations that tie this area together? Are there alternative perspectives that deviate from these common approaches? Use at least three different empirical topics in the sociology of law to illustrate your arguments.

6. Law is stubbornly local, yet it is also shaped by global forces. Write an essay to compare local and global approaches to two different issues in the sociology of law (e.g., courts, disputing, legal profession, organization, legal consciousness, Indigeneity, etc.). What do global approaches offer to our understanding of these two issues, respectively? Can you draw on local approaches to challenge or critique the law and globalization scholarship? What can global and local approaches learn from each other?