

Study Guide for the Comprehensive Exams for the Master of Science in Criminal Justice

Purpose of this Guide

This guide is designed to be a reference for the student to structure their preparation to take the comprehensive exams in criminal justice. It is important to remember that this is only a guideline of the basic principles of the core curriculum of the MSCJ degree and should serve as a starting point for preparation and studying. The student should also seek out the faculty graders of the comprehensive exams for any questions that arise during preparation as well as advice on taking the comps.

Expectations

It is expected that students will be able to apply the concepts outlined in this guide as well be able to give relevant examples from the criminal justice and criminological literature. Further, students should be aware of and be able to make reference to the major theories, primary authors, principle legal cases, and fundamental concepts and issues in each of the areas listed in this outline. It is expected that citations will be a part of any answer written for the comps regardless of the area. Students are expected to demonstrate their mastery of the core areas of the MSCJ by answering a series of questions designed to not only test the knowledge of the student, but also to test your ability to apply the material. Questions will typically require students to compare and contrast conceptual material and theories, apply concepts and theories to scenarios, and to demonstrate that the student understands how the conceptual or theoretical area developed over time. Taking the comps requires substantial preparation on the part of the student beginning with a solid work ethic in the classroom. In preparing for the comps, the student should spend a great deal of time reviewing material from their coursework, organizing their thoughts and relevant literature, and assuring that they have prepared themselves to answer any potential questions generated from the following outlines.

Study Guide for Criminal Justice Policy

Expectations: The student will be able to understand and apply knowledge of the criminal justice system and issues in criminal justice policy throughout the exam. Although there are no specific areas or specific questions directly from the policy course per se, the material from the course is directly applicable in all the areas of the comprehensive exams. Students should be aware of the policy implications of the major theories in the theory portion of the exam. Program evaluation and policy analysis are frequent topics in the research methods portion. Policy implications of legal decisions and issues in criminal justice policy and law are appropriate topics for the legal portion of the exam. Finally, the policy implications of managerial practices and the effects of policy adoption, implementation, and policy analysis are appropriate topics for the administration section. A good working knowledge of policy implications, policy analysis tools and techniques, policy-making practices and implementation issues, and the operation of the criminal justice system are essential throughout the comprehensive exams.

Study Guide for Criminological Theory

Expectations: The student will be able to understand and apply the frameworks and concepts described in Roman numerals I and II in answering questions about the theories described in Roman numeral III of the outline below. The student should have a good working knowledge of each of the items in Roman numeral II for each of the theories identified. Questions in this section will frequently ask students to discuss a particular theory focusing on the assumptions, structure, heritage, and policy implications. Other frequent questions will ask students to compare and contrast different theories and theoretical perspectives.

- I. Criteria for Evaluating Theory**
 - A. Logical consistency, scope, and parsimony
 - B. Testability
 - C. Empirical Validity
 - D. Causal logic
 - E. Usefulness and Policy Implications
- II. Issues in Theory Construction and Analysis**
 - A. Assumptions
 - B. Structural Framework and Theoretical Perspective
 - C. Theoretical History and Development
 - D. Major Authors
- III. Major Criminological Theories**
 - A. Early Criminological Heritage
 - 1. Classical Criminological Theories
 - a. Beccaria, Bentham
 - 2. Early Positivism
 - 3. Comparison and Contrast between Classical and Positive Theories
 - 4. Neo-classical Theories
 - a. Deterrence, Rational Choice and Routine Activities Theory
 - B. Functionalism, Anomie and Strain Theories
 - 1. Durkheim and Merton
 - C. The Chicago School
 - 1. Social Disorganization Theory
 - a. Shaw and McKay
 - 2. Culture Conflict
 - a. Sellin
 - E. Differential Association and Social Learning Theory
 - 1. Sutherland and Akers
 - D. Subculture Theories
 - 1. Subculture of Delinquency
 - a. Cohen
 - 2. Differential Opportunity
 - a. Cloward and Ohlin
 - 3. Lower Class Focal Concerns
 - a. Miller

- F. Social Bonding and Social Control Theories
 - 1. Containment Theory
 - a. Reckless
 - 2. Techniques of Neutralization
 - a. Sykes and Matza
 - 3. Bonding and Control Theory
 - a. Hirschi
- G. Labeling Theory
 - 1. Early Sociological Heritage
 - a. Symbolic Interactionism
 - 2. Becker and Lemert
- H. Conflict and Critical Theories
 - 1. Conflict and Marxist Theories
 - a. Turk, Bonger, and Quinney
 - 2. Critical Theories
 - a. Feminist, Power-Control, and Shaming Theories

Study Guide for Research Methods

Expectations: The student will be able to understand and apply the frameworks and concepts described in Roman numeral I in answering questions about the methods described in Roman numerals II through V of the outline below. Students will be able to discuss the various methods, strengths and weaknesses, reliability, validity, and specific methodological issues related to each of the main research methods described in the outline. The ability to apply these concepts to the specific methods outlined below in a scenario format is crucial. The student must demonstrate the ability to select an appropriate method, understand the limitations of the method selected, and defend why the selected method is the best way to study the scenario given. The student should also be prepared to use examples from the criminal justice literature to highlight their answer and demonstrate their mastery of this material.

I. Concepts and Issues in Research Methods

- A. Strengths and Weaknesses / Advantages and Disadvantages
- B. Reliability
 - 1. Methods of assessing and measuring reliability
- C. Validity
 - 1. Threats and Issues with Internal Validity
 - 2. Threats and Issues with External Validity
 - 3. Threats and issues with other types of validity
 - 4. Methods of assessing and measuring validity
- D. Methodological Steps
- E. Examples from Criminal Justice and Criminological Literature
- F. Application to a Given Scenario or Research Problem
 - 1. Choose Appropriate Method
 - 2. Defend Why Chosen Method is Best
 - 3. Apply Chosen Method to Scenario
 - 4. Demonstrate Knowledge and Understanding of Limitations and Issues with Adopting Chosen Method in Scenario

II. Surveys

- A. Components of surveys
 - 1. Sampling
 - 2. Question Design
 - 3. Distribution
- B. The Effect of Nonresponse
- C. Methods of Data Collection
 - 1. Mail
 - 2. Group Administered
 - 3. Face-to-face interview
 - 4. Telephone interview
- D. Issues in Choosing a Data Collection Strategy
- E. Designing and Evaluating Survey Questions
- F. Survey Interviewing
- G. Sources of Survey Error

III. Sampling

- A. Characteristics of Sampling Frame a researcher should evaluate
- B. Factors to consider and not to consider in determining how large a sample should be
- C. Simple random sampling
- D. Systematic sampling
- E. Stratified sampling
- F. Differential Probabilities of Selection
- G. Multi-Stage Cluster Sampling
 - 1. Area Probability Sampling

IV. Program Evaluation/Experiments

- A. Chronological Stages of Evaluation
- B. Process Evaluation
- C. Evaluability Assessment
- D. Marginal Effectiveness, Relative Effectiveness, and Cost-Effectiveness
- E. Experimental Designs
- F. Quasi-Experimental Designs
- G. Interrupted Time Series
- H. Criteria for Causation

V. Other Research Techniques

- A. Field Research
- B. Secondary Analysis
- C. Content Analysis

Study Guide for Criminal Justice Administration

Expectations: The student will be able to understand and apply the framework and concepts described in Roman numerals I in answering questions about the theories and issues described in Roman numerals II and III of the outline below. The student should examine this outline keeping in mind that a criminal justice focus of the material is crucial. The student should be able to cite major theorists and research in the areas of motivational theory and leadership theory. Cites are also appropriate in the other areas listed in the outline. Frequently, questions will require students to apply a particular subject in the outline to a real world example or scenario. Other frequent questions will ask students to compare and contrast different theories of administration listed below.

I. Issues in Administration and Analysis of Organizations

- A. Major Theoretical Perspectives
- B. Major Authors (if applicable)
 - 1. Primarily in motivational and leadership areas
- C. Understanding the Issues and the Specific Issues to Criminal Justice
- D. Application of Concepts and Theories to Criminal Justice Examples.

II. Theoretical Issues in Criminal Justice Administration

- A. Criminal Justice Organizations—Structure and Process
 - 1. Closed vs. Open Systems Theory
 - 2. Dimensions of Organizational Structure
 - a. Task Specialization, Formalization, Span of Control, Centralization v. Decentralization, Complexity, Allocation of Personnel
 - 3. Informal Structures in Organizations
- B. Theories of Motivation
 - 1. Need theory
 - 2. Theory X and Theory Y
 - 3. Achievement-Power Theory
 - 4. Expectancy Theory
 - 5. Equity Theory
 - 6. Theory Z
- C. Theories of Leadership and Employee Supervision
 - 1. Born Leaders vs. Developing Leaders
 - 2. Behavioral Theories and Models
 - 3. Contingency Theories
 - 4. Effect of Organizational Structure on Leadership
 - 5. Traditional Theories of Leadership and Employee Supervision
 - 6. Human Service Model of Leadership and Employee Supervision
- D. Theories of Decision Making
 - 1. Decision-Making Theory: Rationality to the Garbage Can Models
 - 2. Organizational Culture and Decision Making
 - 3. Politics and Decision Making
 - 4. Characteristics of Decision Makers
 - 5. Discretion in Criminal Justice
 - 6. Prediction in Criminal Justice

III. Issues in Management and Criminal Justice Administration

- A. Impact of External Environmental Forces on Criminal Justice
 - 1. Technological, Legal, Political, Economic, Demographic, Ecological, and Cultural Forces
 - 2. Managing Environmental Forces
- B. Communication in Criminal Justice Organizations
 - 1. Communication Process
 - 2. Barriers to Communication
- C. Job Design, Job Enrichment, and Job Enlargement
 - 1. Psychological Job Requirements and Significant Job Characteristics for Employee Motivation
 - a. Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy, Feedback
- D. Occupational Socialization
 - 1. Organizational Culture and Socialization
 - 2. The Socialization Process and Stages of Socialization
 - 3. Problems in the Socialization Process
 - 4. Strategies for and Managing Socialization
- E. Organizational Power and Political Behavior
 - 1. Types of Power and Authority
 - a. Organizational and Personal Power
 - 2. Effective Types of Power
 - 3. Political Behavior Within Organizations
- F. Organizational Conflict
 - 1. Types of Conflict in Organizations
 - a. Personal, group, intra-organizational, and inter-organizational.
 - 2. Stages of a Conflict Episode
 - b. latent conflict, perceived conflict, felt conflict, manifest conflict, and conflict aftermath.
 - 3. Conflict Behaviors of Personnel and Managers
 - 4. Conflict Management and Limits to Conflict Management
 - 5. The Role of Conflict in Organizations
- G. Organizational Effectiveness
 - 1. Issues Organizational Effectiveness and Criminal Justice
 - a. Measures of Success in Criminal Justice Organizations
 - b. Methods of Assessing Effectiveness
- H. Organization Change
 - 1. Why Change Occurs in Criminal Justice Organizations
 - 2. The Process of Organizational Change and Planned Change
 - 3. Planning in Criminal Justice
 - 4. Resistance to Change: Personal and Organizational Sources
 - 5. Characteristics of Successful and Unsuccessful and Innovations
 - 6. Overcoming Resistance to Change
 - a. Unfreezing, changing, and refreezing organization
 - b. Change Strategies
 - 1. Individual, Structural and Systems, Organizational-Climate.
 - 7. Unintended Consequences of Change

Study Guide for Law Section

Expectations: The student will be able to understand and apply the framework and concepts described in Roman numeral I in answering questions about the legal issues and topics described in Roman numerals II through VIII of the outline below. Your review and discussion of the following subjects should include the substance of the major United States Supreme Court decisions relating to the topics identified. Frequently asked questions typically require students to provide an exposition of or an application of a particular area of criminal procedure listed in the outline. Other questions will require a comparison of different areas of criminal procedure.

- I. Issues in Criminal Procedure**
 - A. Identification of Relevant Constitutional Provisions
 - B. Interpretation Through U.S. Supreme Court Decision-making and Resulting Case Law
 - C. Application of Legal Principles and Precedents
- II. Overview of Criminal Procedure**
 - A. Identification of relevant constitutional provisions
 - B. "Incorporation" of constitutional provisions
 - C. Comparison between Warren Court and Burger/Rehnquist Court approaches to criminal procedure
- III. Fourth Amendment Prohibition of Unreasonable Searches and Seizures**
 - A. Definitions of "search" and "seizure" and understanding of governmental conduct that potentially is not restricted by the Fourth Amendment, e.g., regarding abandoned property or "open fields"
 - B. Investigatory Stop and Frisk, including permissible scope and required basis/justification for action
 - C. Probable Cause, including definition, how established, when required
 - D. Arrest, including requisites for arrest with and without warrant and permissible use of force to effect arrest
 - E. Search Warrant, requisites for issuance and execution
 - F. Plain View and "Touch" Seizures, including requisites and scope
 - G. Major Warrantless Searches: Incident to Arrest, Vehicle Searches, Consent, Exigent Circumstances, Regulatory Searches, including requisites and scope
 - H. Exclusionary Rule, including historical evolution, scope, exceptions
- IV. Constitutional Requisites Regarding Defendant Statements, including scope, exceptions**
 - A. Fourth Amendment prohibitions regarding "fruits" of unlawful searches and seizures
 - B. Fifth Amendment due process requirement of voluntariness
 - C. Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination
 - D. Sixth Amendment right to counsel
- V. Constitutional Requisites Regarding Identification Procedures, including scope, exceptions**
 - A. Fourth Amendment prohibition regarding "fruits" of unlawful searches and seizures
 - B. Fifth Amendment due process requirement

- C. Sixth Amendment right to counsel
- VI. Constitutional Requisites Regarding the Trial Process, including scope, exceptions**
 - A. Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination
 - B. Fifth Amendment prohibition of double jeopardy
 - C. Fifth Amendment grand jury requirements (where applicable)
 - D. Fifth Amendment due process requirements.
 - E. Sixth Amendment right to counsel
 - F. Sixth Amendment right to a jury trial
 - G. Sixth Amendment right to a speedy trial
 - H. Sixth Amendment right to a public trial
 - I. Sixth Amendment right to confront witnesses
 - J. Sixth Amendment right to compulsory process
 - K. Eighth Amendment prohibition of excessive bail
- VII. Constitutional and Other Requisites Regarding the Sentencing and Post-Trial Processes**
 - A. Fifth Amendment due process requirement
 - B. Eighth Amendment prohibition of excessive fines
 - C. Eighth Amendment prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment
 - D. Rights regarding appeal and habeas corpus
- VIII. Additional Topics**
 - A. The Changing Court: Legal Doctrines, Politics, and Behavior
 - B. The Justices of the Rehnquist Court and the Incorporation Doctrine
 - C. "Equal Justice Under Law": Race, Gender, and Equal Protection
 - D. "Thy Liberty in Law": Religion, Expression, and Privacy