

**Department of Justice, Law and Society**  
**Master's Comprehensive Examination**  
**Justice and Public Policy**  
**Spring, 2008**

**Instructions:** Answer any two of the following six questions. Include in your answers references to the relevant literature, case law and other sources. Label each answer by topic and number. Please begin each answer on a new page. Remember to write your 4-digit ID number on all pages.

**Justice and Public Policy:**

1. The criminal career paradigm represents a major shift in thinking in the field of criminology. Discuss current thinking about criminality over the life course. What are some of the ways scholars have described the processes of stability and change in offending over time?
  
2. While many anti-crime politicians, prosecutors, and victim advocates complain that those accused of crime are manipulating the system at every turn and getting off on technicalities, many Public Defenders see their clients as underdogs, "friendless individuals faced with the enormous power of the state" who are locked up for being poor, young, homeless, and drug-addicted. Please articulate the arguments of those who believe that the criminal justice system is unfair to African Americans. Cite evidence when possible.

### **Policing:**

3. Why do we have police? What are the alternatives? Who sets the agenda for police? How are they held accountable? Please cite the relevant literature in answering these questions.
4. Some have attributed problems such as use of excessive force and corruption among law enforcement agents to "police culture." What are some of the characteristics of police culture, and how might it lead to excessive use of force? Is community policing likely to change police culture and remedy some of its problems? Please cite the relevant literature in answering these questions.

### **Corrections:**

5. Women and young offenders constitute a significant minority of prisoners in the United States. Focusing on either group, examine the special challenges these offenders face as they adapt to confinement. What challenges do they pose to those who would run decent prisons? What recommendations would you make for improving the treatment of these prisoners?
6. Prisoner reentry is a major topic of concern these days. What does the research tell us about the transition from prison to the free world? How might we use this research to assist prisoners in successfully making the transition from prison to the free world?

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**Instructions:** Answer any two of the following four questions. Include in your answers references to the relevant literature, case law and other sources. Label each answer by number. Please begin each answer on a new page. Remember to write your 4-digit ID number on all pages.

1. Gays and lesbians, like racial minorities and women, have faced discrimination in the past. Today, they are increasingly successful in obtaining legal protections. To what extent are the arguments used by feminist legal theorists and critical race theorists applicable to gays and lesbians?
2. Recently, a private salvage company found the remains of a French ship which sank 40 miles from Key West, Florida, in 1755. The ship had been chartered by Spain to carry gold, silver and gems extracted from mines in Mexico, Colombia and Peru, and its cargo is worth several billion dollars. What kinds of considerations should enter into determining who has a right to this very valuable property? Argue for your position, based on reading list materials, and respond to objections.
3. The connection between morality and the law has been widely debated. Explain the principal issues in this debate and the positions taken by key figures, giving attention to the source and limits of our moral obligation to obey the law and the role of morality in judicial decisionmaking.
4. Beginning with the Legal Realists in the 1930's, critics have argued that judicial decisionmaking is essentially a matter of personal discretion. Evaluate this view in light of alternative models of judicial decisionmaking found in the literature.