

Department of Justice, Law and Society  
Master's Comprehensive Examination  
Justice and Public Policy  
Spring 2009

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 reading list includes discussions of many issues – the criminal justice system, punishment, juvenile justice, crime, errors of justice, discretion, drugs and crime etc. Based on your readings, training, and experience, what do you believe are two of the most important things that should be changed about the criminal justice system? Explain what is wrong, and provide suggestions for how the system could be improved. (If you do not believe anything should be changed, please choose two areas that others have argued should be changed). Please remember to cite sources from the reading list.
2. Deterrence and incapacitation involve different understandings of how to prevent crime. Give an account of these understandings and use the relevant literature to illustrate the strengths and limitations of deterrence and incapacitation.

Corrections:

3. One of the most important figures in the prison community is the correctional officer. Officers can be, among other things, agents of human service or custodial repression, whether working in the cell house, the yard, or the death house. Describe and analyze the role or roles played by correctional officers. If you were a prison reformer, what would you suggest be done to encourage correctional officers to make a contribution to the humane operation of contemporary prisons?
4. Life without possibility of parole is sometimes called our "other death penalty" because the prisoner is, in effect, sentenced to death by incarceration. Compare and contrast the experiences of prisoners sentenced to death by execution and death by incarceration. Which punishment should serve as our ultimate penalty, and why?

Policing:

5. Police legitimacy suffers either when police are viewed as ineffective or when they are viewed as corrupt or overly aggressive. Why is police legitimacy important? What are the consequences of lapses in legitimacy? What tools are available for police executives and other public officials to deal with each major type of lapse? How have the tools been used in the past? Please cite the relevant literature in addressing these issues.
  
6. Community policing has become the dominant police strategy in the U.S. What are the characteristics of community policing and to what extent (according to the literature) has it been successful?

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Fall, 2008

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. Some Americans object strenuously to taxation for redistributive purposes, while others argue that government should do more to help the disadvantaged. What principles should govern the distribution of wealth in society? Argue for your position, considering the views found in the literature.
  
2. What is the source and what are the limits of the obligation to obey the law? Consider the views of several theorists, showing how their views on the source of this obligation play into their views on its limits.
  
3. Scholars writing in the law and society field have proposed various definitions of the law. Identify three of these definitions found in the works mentioned in the Law and Society reading list. Review the implications of each of these definitions for the relevance of moral theory to jurisprudence.
  
4. Various postmodernist legal theories suggest that the law should take account of our identities as formed through membership in different groups. This idea challenges the idea that the law ought to treat people as individuals responsible for their own actions. To what extent does American law explicitly or implicitly adopt this postmodernist ideal? Discuss specific cases or areas of law and show how they reflect, or fail to reflect, this approach.