

Study Questions

What do you understand by terms such as 'utilitarianism' and 'rational action'?

How are classicist ideas being revived in criminological thought?

What can such perspectives contribute to criminology?

How far do such perspectives accurately capture the basis upon which individuals commit crime?

What major twentieth century historical/criminal event is seen by many commentators as the ultimate expression of Modernity? What features of Modernity can be seen in this act?

Has our faith in the Modernist project proved misplaced? What crises have emerged in the last two decades that challenged the core values of the Modernist project? Can we continue to put our faith in technology and progress?

Are genetic studies, brain scans or MRIs likely to be useful in the fight against violent crime?

Should we attempt to look for the signs of a future criminal career in the behavioural characteristics of small children?

Can locality, in itself, be considered a causal factor in social problems? Even if it is not, is there still some utility in focusing on the character of localities in analysing crime patterns?

What criticisms of the Chicago School approach do you have?

What practical or reformist measures to reduce deviance were advocated by the main members of the Chicago School?

What is the relationship between globalization and anomie?

Is Merton too rational?

What has selling crack got to do with the American Dream?

How relevant is sub-cultural theory today?

By displaying illicit styles, do members of criminal subcultures "invite" legal surveillance and control? Are legal authorities justified in using these styles as indicators of criminality? If so, in what circumstances, and with what limitations?

Identify a significant 'label' by which, you define yourself and consider how far it conditions the way that you act.

How does labelling theory help us to understand law creation and enforcement?

In what different ways can crime and criminalization be explained by reference to the capitalist economic system?

Why were historical studies so important to Marxist-inspired criminology?

What policing practices are associated with 'zero tolerance policing'? What is this approach to street crime hoping to achieve?

Describe the traits and the environment of a person who is likely to conclude that the rewards of crime outweigh the rewards of non-crime.

What do you think of the theory of criminality set out in Herrnstein and Murray's book 'The Bell Curve'?

What practical solutions might left realists employ to reduce crime on a troubled inner-city housing estate?

Why do left realists stress the importance of 'local' or 'community' concerns in many of their policies?

What criticisms can you find of the left realist approach?