Chapter 8: Social Structure Theories of Crime I

1. Distinguish social structure theories from other models or perspectives presented in this book.
2. Explain what contributions and conceptual development Émile Durkheim added to the evolution of this perspective around the turn of the 19th century. Describe how his studies showed a significant breakthrough in social science.
3. Explain why Robert K. Merton’s theory of strain become popular when it did, as well as how his conceptualization of “anomie” differed from Durkheim’s.
4. Identify some of the revisions or variations of strain theory presented a couple of decades later and how they differ from Merton’s original theory. Specifically, explain types of elements that these derivative theories emphasized that Merton’s model did not include and what types of categories of individuals or gangs were labeled in these later models.
5. Evaluate how Robert Agnew’s proposed model of general strain added more sources of strain to Merton’s original framework.
6. Identify some ways the various models of strain theory have informed policy making in attempts to reduce criminality.