Public Policy and Public Administration Examination
Fall 2005

Student ID# ____________________________

Directions:

You have 72 hours to prepare your answers to these examination questions. Budget your time carefully, including time to think and organize, as well as rest, while preparing and writing the answers. Focus on preparing coherent, well-organized essays that not only demonstrate your mastery of the literature, but also indicate how that literature expands our collective knowledge. Answers should range from five to eight (5-8) double-spaced pages per question; please do not write more than ten (10) pages on any individual question.

Number your pages consecutively for the entire examination.

Cite sources throughout your examination using a standard format and provide a bibliography that covers all materials used in preparing your answers.

Clearly label each answer with the number of the question you are answering.

Please put your Student ID number at the top of each page of your examination. Do not write your name anywhere on the examination.

MA Minors: please answer one question from each of three sections of your choice, a total of 3 (three) answers.

MA Majors: please answer a total of four questions, one question must be chosen from each of the sections.

Ph.D. Minors: please answer a total of four questions, one question must be chosen from each of the sections.

Ph.D. Majors: please answer a total of five questions, at least one question must be chosen from each of the sections.
Part I. Theoretical Approaches

1. If a vibrant civil society makes possible at least a degree of "governance without government," does that mean that we also have "public policy without government"? If so, what are the implications of nongovernmental governance for our theories and concepts of public policy, and for our methods of researching public policy?

2. Every policy scholar must have a theory of the state (whether implicit or explicit). What is a theory of the state? What are the implications of adopting different accounts of the state for analysis of particular policy issues? In answering this question, give examples from the literature on a policy issue of your choice.

3. Do ideas play an important role in the process of policy formation? Should they play a role? If yes, how and why do ideas enter the policy process? If you think ideas play little or no role in the policy process, explain why that is. Whether or not you think ideas do play a role, be sure you also indicate whether you think they should play a role. Illustrate your argument with reference to a particular policy.

4. In his Theories of the Policy Process, Paul Sabatier presents three major approaches to understanding how and why policies are made: The Advocacy Coalition Framework, The Institutional Rational Choice Model, and the Punctuated Equilibrium Model. What are the major strengths and weaknesses of these approaches? Which approach do you think offers the most promise in terms of solving real world policy problems? Explain and justify your choice.

Part II. Policy Research (note question 4 on next page)

1. Do the research problems in public policy differ from those in the rest of the field of political science? Why or why not? What implications does your answer have for the conduct of policy research?

2. Deliberative democracy among average citizens is attracting a great deal of interest as a new approach to making public policy. Yet policy research traditionally follows the mandate of “speaking truth to power.” As a policy researcher, what steps might you take in your research to make sure your ideas are as relevant and usable as possible in a deliberative policy setting? How optimistic should you be that a deliberative policy process will make good use of your science, and why? Support you answer with arguments from the literature on expert knowledge and public policymaking.

3. In his introductory policy textbook, Thomas Dye (1998) contends that “It is important to distinguish policy analysis from policy advocacy. Explaining the causes and consequences of various policies is not equivalent to prescribing what policies governments ought to pursue”(p.8, emphasis in original). Do you agree with this distinction between policy analysis and policy advocacy? Why or why not?
Part II. Policy Research (continued from page 2)

4. What are the most serious pitfalls of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to policy research? How might a researcher avoid some of those pitfalls?

Part III. Substantive Policies

1. Should all policy research search for causal relations? Or is research seeking to create typologies or "families" of governments according to some set of common policy approaches a worthwhile pursuit? Are these pursuits necessarily different (i.e. could it be that research that creates typologies of policy regimes also searches for causal relations)? Explain your answer with reference to examples of cross-national policy research.

2. Marc Dowie, Robert Gottlieb and others argue that the "main-streaming of modern environmentalism" greatly weakened the effectiveness of environmentalists’ participation in policymaking. On the other hand, Martin Lewis and Gregg Easterbrook are concerned that the extreme views adopted by some environmental groups are the real threats to successful environmental policy. Discuss the implications of the "main-streaming" of environmental policy and politics for research and analysis.

3. Should policymakers allow private businesses and free markets more power and flexibility to solve environmental problems than they do currently? Support your answer with specific examples of market-based policy approaches, either proposed or in operation.

4. Are American approaches to social policy distinctive? What accounts for this distinctiveness (or lack thereof)? After you characterize approaches to social policy (both historically and in contemporary policy), turn to the why question. Be sure to reckon with various (competing) explanations, such as American exceptionalism, cultural uniqueness, and historical/institutional explanations, and then to offer your own views about what best explains the trajectory (typical policy strategies, policy priorities, historical evolution) of US social policy.
Public Policy and Public Administration Examination
Spring 2005

Student ID#

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Ph.D. Majors: please answer a total of five questions, at least one question must be chosen from each of the sections.

Part I. Theoretical Approaches

1. Every policy scholar must have a theory of the state (whether implicit or explicit). What are the implications of adopting different theories of the state for the analysis of particular policy issues? In answering this question, give examples from the literature on a policy issue of your choice. Be sure to explicitly define what a theory of the state is as well.

2. What role, if any, do ideas play in the policy process? What role should they play? Are there any theories of the policy process that do a particularly good job, in your view, incorporating the role of ideas you describe? Illustrate your argument with reference to a particular policy example.

3. Evaluate the role of interest groups in the policy process today. Do the complaints by earlier critics of interest group pluralism still hold true? Do organized groups have a valuable role to play in the policy process, or are they largely a pernicious influence?
Part II. Policy Research

1. Some policy scholars have advocated giving greater attention to social structures (such as capitalism or patriarchy) in conducting policy research. Do you agree? Why or why not? Defend your position with a specific research example and be sure to define key terms like “social structures” carefully in your answer.

2. Policy researchers do many things that could credibly be described as belonging to other “fields” in political science: they study congressional behavior, they compare political systems and outcomes across nations, they consider the negotiation and implementation of international treaties, and they think carefully about political theory. Why, then, is “public policy” a distinct field in the discipline? Should it be? What makes policy researchers different, if anything?

3. In his introductory policy textbook, Thomas Dye (1998) contends: "It is important to distinguish policy analysis from policy advocacy. Explaining the causes and consequences of various policies is not equivalent to prescribing what policies governments ought to pursue" (p.8, emphasis in original). Do you agree with this distinction between policy analysis (or research) and policy advocacy? Why or why not?

Part III. Substantive Policies

1. Rene Dubos suggested decades ago that people should "think globally and act locally," and the slogan was subsequently embraced by many environmentalists (and bumper sticker manufacturers). To what extent might a policy scholar profit from the opposite idea of "thinking locally and acting globally," however, with respect to applying what we know about democracy, local governance, and civic federalism to the analysis of (and even prescriptions for) emerging institutional developments in international environmental policy?

2. What is the appropriate role of the market in environmental policy? Be sure to support your answer with policy examples and arguments by scholars both for and against a “market-based” approach.

3. In what ways are U.S. social policies similar to or different from the social policies of other developed (OECD) nations? What accounts for these similarities and/or differences?

4. Discuss the development of contemporary social policies in two or more nations, paying close attention to the ideas of leading scholars (e.g. Theda Skocpol, Anthony Marx) on the role of “identity” and “identity formation” in the process. Besides outlining the social policies in each case, help us understand the role of identity in each policy process. How important is “identity formation” to a better understanding of the eventual social policy outcomes in each case?