Public Policy and Public Administration Examination
Fall 2006

Student ID#

Directions

You have 48 hours to prepare your answers to these 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. Be sure to answer the question or questions that are asked of you. 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 questions.

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 the three sections, for a total of three (3) answers.

**MA Majors:** Please answer a total of four (4) questions, at least one question must be answered from each of the three sections.

**Ph.D. Minors:** Please answer a total of four (4) questions, at least one question must be answered from each of the three sections.

**Ph.D. Majors:** Please answer a total of five (5) questions, at least one question must be answered from each of the three sections.
I. Theoretical Approaches

A. What are some key factors that are theorized to shape the behavior of public bureaucracies? Which seem most or least important in your view? Give examples to defend your thesis.

B. What are some of the more important implications of “the New Institutionalism” in political science for theories of the policy process?

C. Although we often refer to elected officials as “policymakers,” many theories of the policy process attribute a significant role to “outsiders” of various types (activists, movements, lobbyists, citizen’s groups, intellectuals, academics, civil society, etc.). Discuss the place of such outsiders or outside influences in policy theory, and offer your assessment of their theoretical importance for determining policy outcomes.

II. Policy Research

A. Policy scholars have argued at length over positivist versus post-positivist approaches to policy analysis, including arguments over the proper role of techniques like cost-benefit analysis (CBA). Write an essay discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the positivist approach to policy analysis and research, including a discussion of CBA as a specific policy analysis tool.

B. How should one go about designing a comparative study of policies to advance social welfare or environmental protection? Why would one choose one set of countries or case studies to compare rather than another? What are a few prominent rival hypotheses one might test in explaining such variation?

C. How is doing policy research both similar to and distinctive from research in other fields in political science?

III. Substantive Policy

A. What are the strengths and weaknesses of collaborative environmental governance according to the latest work in this area? Should we be optimistic or pessimistic about the long-term prospects for this movement in environmental policy?

B. Discuss the development of some aspect of U.S. social policy (welfare policy, policies on violence, immigration policy, housing policy). How did the prevailing policy in this area develop? How does it compare to social policies of other nations in this area?

C. Dan Cole argues that we must “get beyond the simplistic notion that our environmental problems are all the result of either too much or too little private or public property.” Discuss this claim, including your own views on the matter.

D. Many theories of social policy argue that social relations of gender importantly structure social policy. Outline and evaluate two or three of these theories. Do you find them convincing? Why or why not.
Public Policy and Public Administration Examination
Spring 2006

Student ID#

Directions

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Ph.D. Majors: Please answer a total of five (5) questions, at least one question must be answered from each of the three sections.
I. Theoretical Approaches

A. Identify three distinctly different real-world institutional innovations in participatory governance. Assess the democratic virtues of each of these innovations, in terms of theories of process or input democracy, then compare and contrast them in terms of their likely adaptability to a broad range of policy challenges.

B. What role, if any, do institutions play in the policy process? Explain your answer in the context of several important theories of the policy process. Also clarify your definition of the term institution in your answer.

C. Deborah Stone criticizes "the rationality project." Other policy scholars criticize "rational choice" understandings of the policy process on similar grounds. What is Stone's basis for criticism, and why are scholars so exercised about the role of rationality in our understanding of the policy process? Are their concerns well-founded?

II. Policy Research

A. Public Policy research is sometimes criticized for being "athecoretical." Do you think this is a valid criticism? Explain your answer to this question both in empirical terms (Is it true?) and in normative terms (Is it a valid criticism?).

B. Increasingly, policy scholars utilize comparative approaches to ground their research. What are the strengths and weaknesses of this trend? How do studies of single cases "fit" within a comparative framework? Explain.

C. Recently, scholars have convincingly argued that categories such as "class," "race/ethnicity," or "gender" are socially constructed categories that mask politically significant differences within race, class and gender groups. Given the complexities involved in studying social relations in a single national context, is it possible to study the impact of social relations of race/ethnicity, gender, or class on public policy using comparative research designs? If so how? If not, why not? Be sure to illustrate your answer by drawing on examples from the literature.

III. Substantive Policy

A. Comparative studies of social policy (such as Esping-Anderson, 1990, and Lewis, 1993) often seek to delineate groups or types of welfare states. How useful is this typology-building approach for understanding cross-national variation in social policies? Explain and illustrate your answer by referring to a policy area of your choice.

B. What is "civic environmentalism"? What are the implications of a robust civic environmentalism for the design of effective environmental policies?
C. 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?

D. "The key to environmental policy is getting the prices right." Discuss this claim with respect to various approaches to and critiques or defenses of market-based environmental policy. Be sure to indicate in your essay whether or not, and how, you agree or disagree with the claim and why.