

Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam in Public Administration
Spring 2010

Answer three of the following questions in 4.5 hours. Try to avoid duplication if possible.
Good luck!

1. Although there were precursors, in the late 1940s and early 1950s public administration, as a field of academic study, tried to get beyond the "politics-administration dichotomy." How did the dichotomy develop? What intellectual and practical political or governmental purposes did it serve? What were the main critiques of the dichotomy? Has the academic field of public administration gotten beyond it?
2. For nearly 50 years the academic fields of public policy and public administration have attempted to define areas of overlap as well as differences in their conceptual frameworks, literatures, and research topics. Discuss this situation providing examples of both areas of agreement as well as differences. Illustrate your discussion with specific topics and literatures.
3. Dating from around 1975, the federal courts have sometimes been called "new partners" in public administration. What are the main aspects of the contemporary role of the courts in public administration? What are the consequences of the new partnership for public administrative theory and practice?
4. Evaluate the overall quality of research methods in the public administration literature. Identify the primary strengths and weaknesses in public administration research today. Use relevant research to illustrate the strengths and weaknesses that you choose, and be sure to explain why you have selected these areas as particularly strong or weak. What recommendations would you make to the next generation of public administration scholars to improve the quality of research methodology? Explain the logic behind your recommendations.
5. Evaluate the overall quality of *theory* in the study of public organizations and organizational behavior. Identify specific theories that you believe to be particularly promising, as well as specific theories that you do *not* believe to be worthwhile. Use existing research on public organizations and organizational behavior to support your conclusions on these points.
6. The "public management" movement has both supporters and detractors. One important developing sub-field of public management is the study of networks. Using the leading arguments of public management supporters and detractors, examine the issue of networks in public administration. Do these leading arguments/positions transfer to the network issues? How and why? To what extent does the study of networks add to our understanding of the important issues in public management, public administration and democratic governance?
7. Compare and contrast the concept of representative bureaucracy with Max Weber's ideal type bureaucracy.
8. Eugene Bardach has argued that "[t]he political and institutional relationships in an implementation process on any but the smallest scale are simply too numerous and diverse... It is the fragmentary and disjunctive nature of the real world that makes a 'general theory of the implementation process' unattainable and, indeed, unrealistic."

Do you agree or disagree with Bardach's assessment of the usefulness of policy implementation research? Discuss and evaluate relevant research and theory about policy implementation to support your position.