

Doctoral Comprehensive Examination in Public Administration
School of Public Affairs
American University
September 11, 2008

Answer THREE questions in 4.5 hours. Try to avoid duplication in your answers.

1. The self-conscious study of public administration in the United States began with the assertion that public administrative questions are not political questions. How has this assumption helped, hampered, or helped and hampered the field's intellectual development?

2. Much of the bureaucratic politics literature analyzes the relative importance of Congress and the presidency in federal administration. Less considers the role of the courts. By contrast, academic literature in the field of law sometimes asserts that the federal courts are "partners" in public administration. What are the main ways in which the federal courts have affected public administrative practice in the U.S.? Assess the extent to which the judicial impact on public administration has affected contemporary public administrative theory.

3. Pendleton Herring, Herbert Simon, Dwight Waldo, Paul Appleby, and Norton Long can be considered the main authors in destroying the intellectual credibility of the U.S. public administration "orthodoxy." What was the orthodoxy and how did the works of any two of the above challenge it?

4. Can the use of market approaches in public administration be reconciled with democratic values? If so, how? If not, why not? Be sure to address at least two specific democratic values in your answer.

5. At various times over the past four decades, scholars have argued that the study of policy implementation was (a) a "missing link" in the study of public administration; (b) an emerging new paradigm challenging public administration; (c) nothing more than a disappointing set of "proverbs"; (d) a field plagued by "too many variables chasing too few cases"; (e) an "intellectual dead end" because of its lack of a coherent theory; and (f) a topic widely studied by scholars, but without a self-conscious focus on implementation per se. Discuss the logic of any three of these arguments, assess their merits, and offer your perspective on the state of policy implementation theory today.

6. Political scientist James Marone has argued that two competing philosophical tensions have driven American political development: economic liberalism and civic responsibility. The first values markets, rugged individualism, and competition; the second values community, cooperation and collaboration, and civic duty. As a student of public administration, do you consider this characterization of competing tensions useful for understanding the evolution of the administrative state in the United States? Why or why not?

7. You have been asked to develop a management reform agenda for the next presidential administration. Pick any one of the areas listed below and discuss in detail

(a) why reform is needed (i.e., the historical background); (b) what the reform(s) should be; (c) what the empirical bases of your recommendation(s) are; and (d) what obstacles are likely to be encountered in pursuing reform in this area:

- i) Human Resource Management
- ii) Administrative Structure
- iii) Agency Rulemaking
- iv) Budgeting and Finance
- v) Contracting
- vi) Intergovernmental Relations
- vii) The Political Appointment Process
- viii) The White House Office
- ix) Partnerships