PA 507 – Policy Process
Spring 2010
Final Exam

Instructions: Please type your answers to the following questions. Be sure to copy the question into your paper so I know which questions you have answered.

1. All questions are mandatory
2. The exam is due to my email by 9 pm on Friday, May 7. The file name must follow the form lastname_final.doc (or .docx). The subject line of the email must contain PA 507: Final. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for every day late, including weekends and holidays or breaks. Papers four or more days late will earn a zero.
3. Each answer should be concise, but long enough to answer the question. I don’t have a word count in mind, but no more than 1,000 words per question should be sufficient. My sense is that questions 3 and 4 may require longer essays than questions 1 and 2.
4. Please put your name on the exam, and number pages. Papers without names will lose points.
5. If you wish to do so, you may submit a backup paper copy in the PA department office, but this is not mandatory.

Grading Criteria

1. Papers will be assessed on the quality of writing, including grammar, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics that meet or exceed the standards for professional writing in real-world contexts.
2. Complete answers to the question will earn top scores. Incomplete answers will not earn top marks.
3. Better exams will reference to the texts and, where appropriate, the lectures. If the books say the same thing as I said in lecture, refer to the books, not to the lecture notes.
4. Better essays are reflect creative and logically sensible answers. Answers that simply repeat back the words of the books with little evidence of analysis and understanding will not earn top marks.
Questions

1. In your final memo you were asked to provide three policy alternatives, including the “let current trends continue” alternative. But in that memo I did not ask you to make a case for one of those options. In this essay, provide a recommendation, in now more than 1000 words, of which alternative we should select. You should select—and prove—an alternative that will do more to ameliorate the problem you have identified than will the other alternatives. In writing this essay, you may expand on any one of the alternatives you described, or may develop a new alternative based on any rewrite of that memo. The best essays will contain a realistic policy idea with extensive evidence to suggest that the alternative will work.

2. Describe what we mean by policy implementation, and explain how policies often seem fail during implementation. What might causes of these failures be? Then explain how we might structure policies to improve their prospects for implementation.

3. In the next-to-last lecture, we discussed how we can think of the academic and technical study of policy as a science. What does it mean to say that studies of policy are “scientific”? In what ways are formal studies of policy scientific? In what ways is the scientific study of policy more difficult than studies in the “hard” sciences, such as physics or biology or chemistry? Does it even matter that we study policy scientifically? How are scientific studies of policy used in “real world” policy making? How can knowledge derived from research and theory help you to be a more effective policy designer, implementer, or advocate?

4. Kingdon’s “streams model” is a way of describing how features of the political, problem, and policy streams combine in a “window of opportunity” for policy change. Using the policy problem you have studied this semester, describe the features of each of these streams in your policy area. Explain whether a window of opportunity has actually opened for policy change; if such a window has not opened, explain why it hasn’t, and how groups might work to pry open these windows.