**Doctoral Examination**

**Policy Process and Analysis**

**Fall Semester, 2017**

**Part I. Answer either question 1 or question 2.**

1. Researchers in public policy have developed models of the public policy process, including such models as punctuated equilibria, incrementalism, policy streams, policy cycles, systems models, and the advocacy coalition framework. Choose three of these models and describe and explain them. Compare and contrast the three models, discussing relative strengths and weaknesses, and similarities and differences in their uses, content, and domains of application. Cite major academic contributors and sources in your discussion.
2. Our public policy courses, and public policy studies generally, often divide into a category of economics-based policy analysis and evaluation, and a category that we often call “policy process” that is based more in political science. Discuss the differences and any similarities between these two categories, in substantive content, methods, focal topics and issues, and other important similarities and differences. Discuss the pros and cons of such a categorization, including the value of covering both in the same curriculum, but also any attendant complications in doing so. Discuss any potential or actual points of integration of the two. If you choose, you can object to this dichotomous categorization and argue that it does not really exist or that it should not exist.

**Part II. Answer either question 3 or question 4.**

1. Choose an area of public policy with which you have good familiarity and describe the latest major piece of legislation or regulatory initiative adopted within this domain. Next, briefly outline the alternative policy approaches that were set aside in favor of the actual policy established. Using concepts/frameworks/theories from the literature on problem definition and agenda setting, explain why the policymaking process on this issue developed and turned out as it did. Finally, what implications for program implementation (approach, challenges, likely effectiveness) follow from the fact that policymakers settled on this particular policy design while rejecting more or less ambitious alternatives?
2. Privatization of government services through contracting out with private (including nonprofit) providers has been an alternative for government for centuries in the U.S. and other nations. Governments have utilized this alternative increasingly in recent decades. Consider the challenge of assessing a privatized service by comparing it to a government-provided version of the same service. What theoretical and practical difficulties are there in making these sorts of comparisons? Explain challenges in research design and analytical methods that such comparisons raise. Explain endogeneity and suggest an endogeneity problem that might arise in this study. Choose an example of a service that government is providing, but that a private or nonprofit organization is also providing under a government contract. Suggest a research design that you would use to compare the two forms of provision, on cost of provision of the service, taking into account the quality of the service provided.

**Part III. Answer either question 5 or question 6.**

1. Consider a resource that is currently being used by the community at large, with no restrictions on access (for example, a lake which is popular for fishing, but which currently puts no limits on the types of, or time of, fishing people can do). Social welfare is increasing in the number of fish that are taken from the lake at each point in time. For the purposes of this exercise, assume that the only social use of the lake is in producing fish. If no one fishes, there are many fish in the lake, but social welfare from the lake is zero. If too many people fish, then there will be high social welfare today, but no fish left in the lake after that, and welfare is zero tomorrow and thereafter.

a) Discuss what factors you would need to take into consideration to decide what the correct (i.e., optimal) number of people fishing would be. What costs and benefits would have to be compared? If fishing technology changed, such that it is now easier to catch fish than before (say, a new lure that fish found irresistible) how would that affect the optimal number of people who should be allowed to fish?

b) Discuss at least two ways you could implement your answer to section a) above if you were to use direct government action. Which of these would be the best approach in terms of achieving your goal of maximizing long-term fish production with the fewest dollars expended in government action? Which would be the best approach in terms of minimizing any distortions in the market from people trying to circumvent the government action?

c) Discuss how you could implement your answer to section a) above if you were to follow the guidance of Ronald Coase in his paper “The Problem of Social Costs.”

1. The policy process can be used strategically to "water down" or strip a proposed or previously implemented policy of its effectiveness. Researchers in public policy use a variety of models of the public policy process, including models focused on punctuated equilibria, incrementalism, policy streams, policy cycles, systems models, and the advocacy coalition framework. Choose and explain two policy process models (you may include others not listed here). Show how each model would explain when and how a policy can be made more limited in its effectiveness. Do this in the context of some actual, real-world, policy (either currently or from the past) that has been deliberately watered down at some point during or after its initial implementation. Discuss how this represents a conflict between either the legislative and executive branches, or between earlier and later regimes within on branch of government.