

Doctoral Examination
Public Administration and Management
Fall 2019

PART I. Please answer one of the following two questions:

Question 1:

Research and theory development in public administration may involve both quantitative and qualitative work. Develop an essay in which you define these two approaches to inquiry and explain how they are used. From the published literature on public administration, provide at least one example of the use of each of the two approaches (i.e., one book or article exemplifying one of the approaches and another book or article exemplifying the other). Briefly evaluate the contribution made by each example. Based on your understanding of our field, which approach (quantitative or qualitative) is most often utilized? Why is this the case? Alternatively, if you think scholars rely on both equally, why do you think that is true?

Question 2:

What is a theory? What is a good theory; that is, what criteria do we use to assess the value and quality of a theory? Are there valuable theories in public administration? Explain your answer to this question. Discuss a theory in public administration, or discuss a conceptual framework that might be considered akin to a theory. Show how you assess its value and its status as a theory. Describe also a well-developed theory in the social or administrative sciences outside of public administration?

PART II. Please answer one of the following two questions:

Question 3:

How well do government agencies and public programs perform? Describe major concepts of organizational effectiveness from organization theory, and other performance concepts from the public administration and public policy literatures. Discuss the methods public administrators and policy makers have used to assess performance. What challenges do public administrators face in assessing performance, such as multiple stakeholders and conflicting criteria (for example, efficiency, equity, representativeness, transparency, etc.) that complicate the concept of performance in public administration. There have been many reform movements and initiatives aimed at improving government performance, such as New Public Management, the Government Performance Project, Managing for Results, the National Performance Review, and others. Describe and assess one such movement and identify the set of values that it emphasizes. Finally, how can we know whether governments in the U.S. and other nations perform well?

Question 4:

As you know, the amount of discretion exercised by bureaucrats is a recurring question examined by public administration scholars. Discuss the interaction of discretion and administrative control within the framework of public organizations. The political philosopher Carl Schmitt once wrote “Sovereign is he who decides on the exception.” What might this mean in the context of our discussion?

PART III. Please answer one of the following two questions:

Question 5:

Constitutional constraints on public managers create one of the distinctive aspects of human resource management in the public sector in the United States. What are these Constitutional constraints, and where are they found in the Constitution? How do they influence management in government? Do these influences create differences between personnel management in government, as compared to the private and nonprofit sectors in the U.S.? Describe evidence of the effects of Constitutional constraints on governmental personnel management. For example, is there evidence of differences between public and private sector managers in their perceptions of personnel constraints? Cite appropriate sources and authors in the literature in developing your response.

Question 6:

What is network management and what components of such practice are important to conducting modern government work? Explain how knowledge about public service motivation can support a public manager’s efforts to facilitate relationships within a network effectively for the best return on investment. Justify your argument with some attention to relevant scholarship.