

Doctoral Examination
Public Administration and Management
Fall 2015

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

Question 1:

Public managers must frequently deal with issues related to public personnel management. In fact, personnel management is a core component of public management, and it is frequently more difficult to handle personnel issues in the public sector than it is in the private sector. Why is that difficulty present? What constraints are placed on public sector managers with respect to personnel management that are not present in the private sector? What is the source of these constraints? How do these constraints influence the roles of managers in government? Cite appropriate sources and authors in the literature in developing your response.

Question 2:

Please identify what you consider the single most "promising" body of public administration research to have emerged in the past 10 years. For, present purposes, let us define "promising" as encompassing at least the following criteria: (1) dealing with issues central to public administration; (2) providing strong evidence and/or compelling theoretical explanation of public administration phenomena; (3) influencing public administration scholars to such an extent that many have begun to take up the topic (i.e. no one-person research agendas qualify, no matter how brilliant). If possible, pick a topic that is not the signature research of faculty members in our department. In your response, be sure to tell us exactly why this body of work is so promising, what it has achieved, what it has yet to achieve and how it can be improved upon. Naturally, you should identify and briefly discuss the articles or books that best illustrate this promising body of work.

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

Question 3:

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. Can you describe a well-developed theory in the social or administrative sciences outside of public administration?

Question 4:

What is science? What are the criteria and procedures that determine whether we can consider an area of inquiry or knowledge acquisition a science? Is public administration a science-based discipline? Explain your answer. Whether or not you assess public administration as science-based, are there approaches to inquiry and knowledge development in public administration that we can consider more scientific than others? Discuss and describe such approaches, or explain why there are not any such approaches.

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

Question 5:

Scholars in the field of Public Administration have long been concerned about the existence and effects of *bureaucratic discretion* in democratic government and the apparent difficulty of ensuring that bureaucrats – who are non-elected public officials – will act responsibly and be held accountable. Drawing from the classic and contemporary literatures, explain how various scholars have tried to resolve or manage the problems of bureaucratic responsibility and accountability in order to better ease the tension between bureaucracy and democracy. What approaches appear most promising to you?

Question 6:

Today governments everywhere seem bent on streamlining the public sector and increasing its productivity. To further this goal, they often downsize the public workforce and institute alternative service delivery mechanisms such as volunteerism, outsourcing, contracting, forming partnerships, and in more extreme cases, even privatizing public services. This has resulted in an era of “collaborative” or “networked” governance in which much of government’s work – meaning the things government is held accountable for – is now being done by people and organizations outside of government such as nonprofit organizations, public/private partnerships, private sector contractors, and individual citizens who are increasingly called upon to help co-produce public services. Analyze this movement and assess its impact on public administration theory and practice. How is it changing public management? Note implications for organization structure, management practice, and public service performance.