

Doctoral Examination
Public Administration and Management
Fall 2012

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

Question 1:

Discuss the concept of a paradigm, and whether we have a paradigm or paradigms in public administration and/or public policy studies. What is a paradigm and where does the concept come from? Why is it considered an important topic or concept? What are some of the important issues involved in using the concept and determining the existence of a paradigm? Discuss whether or not we have a paradigm or multiple paradigms in public administration. Explain the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research. Discuss whether or not this distinction is a paradigmatic issue. Considering the research in public administration or public policy that you know about, identify two or three categories or types of research that have been published, and discuss how the concept of a paradigm applies or does not apply to these types of research. Cite and describe important contributions to the literature on this topic.

Question 2:

From your readings in the “capstone” course, the Public Administration and Democracy course, or from other sources in our curriculum, choose five major published contributions to the literature on public administration. These can be books, journal articles, or other publications. Summarize the most important points from each publication. Explain what you learned from each one, and why you consider it an important contribution to the field. For example, can you cite evidence of its influence because it influenced other scholars, can you show that it filled an important void or otherwise provide evidence of its importance?

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

Question 3:

Government administrative officials tend inevitably to have considerable discretion in carrying out mandates from elected officials and implementing public policies. This topic is often referred to as “bureaucratic discretion” or sometimes as “bureaucratic autonomy.” Why do “bureaucrats” virtually always have some degree of discretion, and what increases the level of discretion that they have? Why is this topic very important and controversial in a democratic republic? In what ways do other elements of the political system and of the society try to control the discretion of bureaucrats? Discuss at least four such means of controlling bureaucratic discretion, and their pros and cons. Cite and describe important contributions to the literature on this topic.

Question 4:

Two topics that have been major subjects of inquiry in public administration for a long time, and will likely remain important topics are: 1) change and reform of administrative agencies or the entire governmental administrative systems, and 2) the performance of government agencies and the people in them, including the assessment of performance and the management of it. Choose one of these two topics and write a scholarly essay describing major contributions to the literature on the topic, and important ideas, movements, initiatives, and trends pertaining to these topics.

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

Question 5:

For years in the United States and various other nations, controversy has raged around the question of whether government “bureaucracy” is good or bad, and over the extent to which it is good or bad, and why. What have been the concerns and complaints of those who have attacked and criticized government bureaucracy? Scholars and practitioners in public administration and in some other settings (e.g., some journalists) have sometimes sought to defend the government bureaucracy and to emphasize good aspects of it. How do they defend the government bureaucracy? What arguments do they mount in its favor? Cite important contributions to the literature on this topic.

Question 6:

A relative of one of our faculty members spent his career working for a federal agency and then retired. He told our faculty member that he never really understood the “budget.” He essentially asked, “how do government agencies get the money that they spend?” Explain to this person what every reasonably informed American, and especially anyone involved in public administration, should know about the governmental budgeting process. How does the budgeting process work at the federal level in the U.S. or in another government in the U.S. or some other nation? How is the budget formed, what processes and procedures are followed, and what administrative entities are involved? What roles are played by other elements of the government, such as legislative bodies and/or their committees, by the chief executive and the chief executive’s staff offices, and by politically active groups? Discuss several of the major issues that budgeting experts have been concerned with, such as the different types of budgets that might be used (for example, the line item format, performance budget, PPBS, ZBB, etc.), incrementalism, line item vetoes, or other issues. When Wildavsky titled his book, *The Politics of the Budgetary Process*, what was he talking about, in general? How do “politics” become involved, and how is the budgeting process essential in public administration because of its relation to political power and to what government does or does not do?