George Mason University
School of Policy, Government, and International Affairs
Public Policy Doctoral Qualifying Examination, Part I (in-class exam)
January 2015  9:00 am – 12:00 noon

Instructions

The following questions draw exclusively from:


Answer each question in order, but first read through all questions to avoid redundancies in your answers. Answer each question completely, being both definitive and concise as appropriate to fully communicate your answer; do not report information given in a prior answer. You should not quote passages from the article; use your own words. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to answer all six questions (consider their point values).

Please place your completed examination in your exam envelope and return it to the proctor. Include the Part I tracking number on the printed exam/blue book and on the outside of the exam envelope. Do not put your name on the envelope or any other materials in the envelope.

Examination Questions:

General Questions:

1. State the specific research question of the paper in 20 words or less.
2. Provide a specific motivation for why the specific question (not the general topic) is interesting for policy scholars (50 words or less).
3. Describe the general problems – conceptual and statistical – in answering the research question (max 100 words).

Data and Methods:

4. What specific data set(s) is/are utilized?
5. How was/were the data set(s) collected?
6. What time period is covered?
7. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these data for answering the research question?
8. What variables are missing from the data that would improve the analysis?
9. Is the basic estimating equation linear or non-linear? What alternative functional forms might have been used?

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Results and Interpretation:

10. Which table(s) contain(s) the central results of the paper?
11. What function do the other results perform in the paper? Describe briefly how the results of each table relate to the central results.
12. Focusing on the central results, discuss the degree of confidence other scholars should have, providing both factors that raise confidence and factors that reduce the credibility and usability of the findings.
13. Are there direct policy implications from the empirical results?
14. If not, what additional assumptions (positive and normative) would be necessary to derive policy implications?
15. If you had to referee this paper for a journal would you recommend acceptance, rejection, or revise-and-resubmit? What revisions would you recommend prior to publication?