Be aware that questions evolve over time as do the respective core courses. Nonetheless, this list can give you a sense of the types of questions which have reflected the various core domains. You should also study the materials from your core courses to prepare for the exams: do not solely rely on this document as a study guide. Some questions may fit into more than one of the core domains shown, and questions may integrate across multiple domains.

Public Administration

1. Write a comprehensive essay discussing the contributions of the following early scholars to the development of the field of American public administration: [a.] Woodrow Wilson, [b.] Frank Goodnow, [c.] Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick, and [d.] Herbert Simon. In your essay also explain how each of them directly or indirectly treated the ‘politics-administration dichotomy’ concept.

2. Public administration has a rich history in various academic disciplines. Borrowing ideas and concepts from these disciplines make an argument suggesting where public administration has been, where it is at and where it is going in terms of disciplinary status and as a profession.

3. Explain the ways which the following authors’ explanations of administrative management still apply to public organizations today.
   a. Frederick Taylor
   b. Chester Barnard
   c. Mary Parker Follett
   d. Max Weber
   e. Herbert Simon

   What other scholars should be added to this list that will assist in explaining administrative management in public administration? Be sure to provide at least two concepts, terms, or theories per author that you choose to discuss.

4. A fundamental assumption of administrative reformers in the late 1800s and early 1900s was that politics could have only adverse affects on administration. How valid is that belief? Why? How, and to what extent, do current administrative structures and practices reflect that assumption? Also discuss the contributions made by Woodrow Wilson, F.W. Willoughby, Luther Gulick and Lyndall Urwick, and Herbert Simon to the development of public administration as a discipline.

5. Discuss the similarities and differences between the Weberian bureaucratic model, scientific management, and the “principles” approach to studying public organizations. Describe the basis of each theory and its impact on the development of American public administration. Also explain why critics contend these theories are not in tune with the “practice” of American public administration.

6. In attempting to define the field of public administration several authors have commented that PA has its origins in the Progressive era and the reform of government and/or society. The field, according to these authors, has not ever deviated from these roots. Explain how this statement is or is not true today.
7. How can bureaucrats and bureaucracies be held accountable? By whom and by what means can they be held accountable? Describe the steps and the measures that can be taken to increase bureaucratic accountability. How do the judicial, the executive, and the legislative branches of government hold bureaucrats and bureaucracies accountable?

8. Federalism is a distinct characteristic of American democracy. Explain the history of federalism and identify the three leading models utilized by scholars in understanding how federalism works in American democracy. Which model is commonly used today in understanding federalism and what purpose do bureaucrats have in administering the public’s will according to the ideal of federalism?

9. What is public administration? Define bureaucracy and identify the job functions performed by agency members as expressed by the public will. Is there constitutional legitimacy for public administration? If so, what powers are given to public administrators to formulate and implement the public’s will?

10. Administrative agencies in a sense replicate three constitutional powers exercised by the executive, legislature and courts. First, identify these powers and discuss how they are used by public bureaucracies in American government.

11. What is public administration? What are the legitimate powers possessed by public administrators in carrying out the public’s will? Where do these powers gain their legitimacy, or are they legitimate?

**Public Policy Analysis**

1. In what ways can interest groups influence the making and implementation of public policy?

2. A portion of Interstate 840 under construction in Williamson County is strongly opposed by local residents. As a policy analyst for the Governor’s Office, you have been asked to perform a stakeholder analysis of the issue. In writing that analysis, also include a discussion of who has primary standing and who has no standing.

3. In the American public sector today there are occasions when politics interferes with the political neutrality, professionalism, or expertise, which presumably characterize the public administrator’s role. Provide three examples where this has occurred either in current events or in the workplace. In examples where public policy has been influenced, in each case discuss whether the outcome has been beneficial, harmful, or neutral. Finally, provide your observations as to whether overall, there is a trend in public life toward increasing interference, decreasing interference, or no change.

4. Public advocacy is a necessary feature of the policy analyst’s role whether s/he is arguing for a personal stance or for someone else’s. Discuss the stages of the policy cycle and how policy advocacy can affect the evolution of policy at each stage for better and worse.
5. The essential consensus among policy analysis professionals is that the rational model of public policymaking represents the “ideal” model for understanding and analyzing public policy. Identify and define all stages the rational model of policy analysis, illustrating the stages using any public policy you would like. Do you agree with this consensus as described above? If so, why or why not? Thoroughly explain your answer; you may find it useful to draw on Deborah Stone’s work here.

6. Explain the concept of Pareto efficiency. What is its relevance to policy analysis, given that it is an abstract benchmark unlikely to be achieved by most policies that are subject to debate? Continue by explaining the Kaldor-Hicks compensation principle and its significance to rational policy analysis – in particular, the practice of cost/benefit analysis. What makes the Kaldor-Hicks compensation principle a “weaker” criterion to satisfy than the Pareto criterion? Do you think Kaldor-Hicks is a sound basis for making policy decisions; why or why not?

7. Discuss the nature of the “externality” market failure. What are possible policy responses to remedy this situation? Contrast the approaches of Pigou (based on taxes or subsidies) and Coase (based on assignment of property rights) in your answer, and illustrate by describing a negative externality of your choice and potential policy remedies. If faced with a negative policy externality, would you as an analyst tend to advocate for a Pigouvian or Coasian approach? What would influence your decision?

8. Markets, politics, and experts can each be a source of accountability for a policy after it is implemented. Each thus can fill an ex post policy analysis function. Under what conditions do markets serve as a useful ex post evaluation of a policy’s success? What question can the market answer about a policy? Under what conditions can politics serve as a useful ex post evaluation of a policy’s success? What question can politics answer about a policy? What types of ex post evaluation do experts carry out, and what question does each attempt to answer?

9. Deborah Stone’s work The Policy Paradox explores the way that core values or goals that policy analysts in the rational mode may take for granted are actually highly contested in the intrinsically political policy arena. Choose one of the following values, discussed in that text, and explain how her thesis applies: equity; efficiency; liberty; or security. Illustrate your discussion with examples from past or present policy debates whenever possible.

10. Based on the American “constitution,” which “internal and external stakeholders,” in the policymaking process, possess “constitutional legitimacy” for their role in making public policy? Do entities with “explicit power” have more influence than those entities with “implied powers” in making public policy? Should they? Why or why not?

**Information Technology**

1. Computers have made many workers more productive. However, this new technology has raised concerns with respect to ethics, privacy, and workplace security. Briefly discuss each of these concerns.

2. Explain why the proliferation of computers in society, business, and government has given rise to increased concern about issues such as privacy and ethics, computer crime, workers’ health,
and ergonomic consideration. What kind of education is necessary to discourage computer crime and what can be done to combat criminal acts such as hacking, theft, software piracy, etc? Is governmental legislation the best approach to protect our personal privacy? What functions might a professional code of ethics serve in relation to improper use of computers?

3. What are the major ethical issues involved with the expansion of the information age?

4. Discuss how information technology (IT) has affected the role of public administrators.

5. Discuss the computer network: the advantages and disadvantages, way it can be compromised, and security issues.

6. In what ways has information technology increased or decreased accountability of public sector agencies. How does this affect the public’s right to know?

7. Discuss the implications of IT for “the human side of the enterprise.”

8. What are the issues involved in measuring returns on government investments in IT? What are the policies/regulations/laws governing the management of government investments in IT?

9. What issues should be considered when planning for upgrade or expansion of E-Government? In particular address those issues that involve protection of privacy and ethics.

10. Explain how organizational structure and IT facilitate (or hinder) the creation of work groups, the use of power, and job satisfaction.

Public Budgeting and Finance

1. “On what basis shall we allocate resources to program A instead of program B,” is the perennial statement in public sector budgeting. Identify and discuss at least five attempts, found in the budgeting literature, used to answer V.O. Key’s famous budgeting question. In your professional judgment, which type of budgeting system is most appropriate for public administration? Why do you feel this way?

2. Compare and contrast, in as many discrete ways as you can, the US federal budget process and state/local budgeting.

3. Define – then compare and contrast – line-item budgeting, performance budgeting, planning programming budgeting system (PPBS), and zero-base budgeting (ZBB). What are the features, advantages, and disadvantages of each? Which do you think should be used today? Defend your answer.

4. Describe the types of potential market failure, in detail, and provide examples of each type. What is the relevance of the concept of market failure to government intervention in the economy? Explain as fully as possible.
5. Pick an agency (government or nonprofit). Briefly describe the agency and its function, and then give concrete examples of inputs, outputs, and outcomes relevant to the core function of this agency. Which of these three elements does a traditional line-item budget focus on? When pressed to develop performance measures, which (outcomes or outputs) would will the agency tend to propose? Why? Which (outputs or outcomes) will the principal (legislative, executive, or funder in the case of a nonprofit) attempt to compel the agency to use? Why?

6. Federal, state and local governments use a variety of taxation policies to generate revenue, and these policies are coordinated in a number of ways. “Source separation” is evident in the way certain types of tax instrument tend to be associated with each of these levels of government. Explain this statement, and give an example for each level of government. In those cases where tax bases are shared, however, what other types of coordination mechanisms are possible? Give examples.

7. Tiebout’s theory has important implications for fiscal federalism. Explain this statement as fully as you can, and provide examples to illustrate your explanation.

8. A variety of Federal legislative reforms have sought to address the erosion of budgetary norms and the growth of the deficit. Discuss these as fully as you can. Does the same issue arise at the state level? Explain.

9. Distinguish between operating and capital budgeting. Include a summary of the prevalence of capital budgeting across the levels of US government (federal, state, local) in your answer. Why might a jurisdiction practice separate operating and capital budgets? Why is debt finance potentially appropriate for capital budgeting but not for operating budgets?

10. Discuss thoroughly the principles often used in evaluating tax policy: ability to pay (include horizontal and vertical equity), and the benefits principle. Can these principles typically be satisfied simultaneously? Why or why not?

**Research Methods**

1. Discuss how the time series designs and the comparison group pretest-post design (before-and-after-with-control group designs) compare to the experimental design in handling threats to internal validity. Cite the relevant threats to internal validity in your discussion.

2. Describe the classical experimental research design. Explain the importance of each of the three major pairs of its components. Compare and contrast the three basic strategies for making the subjects in the experimental and control groups as similar as possible.

3. A group of researchers met to plan a study of causes of poor eating habits among graduate students in public health. After meeting, the group left their building, and walked outside into a raging snowstorm. Their planning notes were ripped from their hands, and tossed to the street. Although the notes were recovered, they were hopelessly mangled and out of order. Suppose that you were the team member who offered to re-construct the notes. Describe in a logical order at least three steps that the team should undertake to develop, test, and evaluate a
hypothesis on the causes of poor eating habits among public health students. Be sure to state what type of study design you would use and why.

4. Assume you are a researcher in a state’s department of health. One of the programs in the department is designed to improve neonatal care. The aims of the program are to reduce neonatal deaths. The program seeks to do this by providing certification when neonatal facilities and personnel in the hospitals reached a prescribed adequate level. Hospitals are not required by law to be certified but receive some financial assistance when they are. Describe and discuss two alternative research designs that would allow you to evaluate the success of the program. What are the key questions you will ask, and how will your design allow you to answer these questions?

5. Compare and contrast using examples of the following types of quasi-experimental research designs: [a] before-and-after-with-control-group design, [b] time series design, [c] before-and-after, and [d] after-only. Also explain why it is difficult for a researcher to control for most threats to internal validity in quasi-experimental research designs.

6. To determine if halfway houses improve the transition from prison, 50 inmates who will be released in a month are randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group is sent to the halfway house to participate in the program called “ReEntry.” The other group stays in prison until the time of release. Tow months after release, data measuring “success in job placement” are gathered on the subjects in both groups.
   a. Use the R, X, O notation to sketch the research design.
   b. Someone says the design does not control for statistical regression, design contamination, history, maturation, sample or experimental mortality, and selection. Do you agree that the study does not control for each of these threats to internal validity? Explain. If you disagree partially or completely, also explain why.

7. To reduce crime, a police force tries team policing, which has two officers walk a beat together. If trouble arises, the team calls a patrol car for backup reinforcement.
   a. Write a hypothesis with an independent and dependent variable suggesting a relationship that is appropriate given the above statement.
   b. Operationalize your hypothesis, and the independent and dependent variables.
   c. Discuss a research design to determine the effectiveness of the team policing. Generically, what type of evidence is necessary to support a claim that one variable is the cause of change in another? Specifically, what types of evidence would be necessary to support the hypothesis you have stated in ‘b’?

8. The City Council has requested that the municipal research unit in the city manager’s office examine why so many citizens appear to be dissatisfied with municipal services. That dissatisfaction has manifested itself in complaints to city council members, to the city manager and mayor’s offices, to heads of city departments and in letters-to-the-editor of the local and community newspapers.
9. Using citizen satisfaction with city services as your dependent variable write five hypotheses that you could then test in a survey of citizen attitudes in your city. Identify the independent variables. How would you operationalize the independent and dependent variables? How would you collect the data?

10. A public relations office of the State of Tennessee considers two alternative plans to evaluate a change in how it uses press releases.

Plan A: Send press releases 1-5 (Group 1) using the existing approach. Send press releases 6-10 (Group 2) using the new approach. All newspapers on their list will receive both groups of releases. Compare average number of news items resulting from Group 1 with average number resulting from Group 2.

Plan B: Compare average number of news items appearing in three groups of newspapers.
   - Group 1: 25 randomly assigned papers will receive press releases 1-5 using the new approach.
   - Group 2: 25 randomly assigned papers will receive press releases 1-5 using the old approach.
   - Group 3: 25 remaining papers will not receive press releases 1-5.

a. Evaluate how plan A and Plan B control for any two of the following threats to internal validity, maturation, and selection.

b. What is the advantage of including group 3 in Plan B?

c. Someone proposes applying Plan A to only 40 randomly selected newspapers. No data will be collected on the other newspapers. The person proposing this approach argues that this strategy controls for selection as a threat to internal validity. Do you agree with this observation? Justify your answer.

11. Davidson County may contract with a consulting firm to offer its Supervision Workshop (SW) regularly to county supervisors. The consulting firm has agreed to offer one demonstration workshop free of charge. County staffs consider two strategies, (a) and (b):

   a. Ask supervisors to volunteer to attend the workshop. A month later, gather and compare data on the supervision skills of SW attendees with those of a random sample of other supervisors.

   b. Ask supervisors to volunteer to attend the workshop. Randomly assign the volunteers into two groups, one of which will receive SW training while the other participants in another activity. A month later, gather and compare data on the supervision skills of the two groups.

First, use R X O notation to sketch out the design of strategies (a) and (b). Then, compare and contrast how strategies (a) and (b) control for threats to internal validity. Finally, will strategy (B) provide adequate evidence of external validity? Justify your answer.

12. You are an applicant for a position with the state Department of Evaluation. As part of the written examination you are asked to demonstrate that you understand the methodology necessary for evaluating a public program. The examiner gives you great latitude and states the question that you must answer as follows: “Discuss a public (or nonprofit) program that you
have been involved with in the past. How would you establish the process for evaluating that program?” Please answer the examiner’s question as carefully as you can.

**Organization Theory**

1. “Open systems theory” has been used to explain organizations. Explain open systems theory using examples from the public or nonprofit sectors of society. Is this theoretical construct useful in illuminating “why organizations exist?”

2. Tom Burns & G.M. Stalker (1961) in *Mechanistic & Organic Systems* stipulated that two types of management systems are essential in defining organizations: “Mechanistic & Organic Systems.” Distinguish the differences between these two management systems. From which school of thought are these two scholars theorizing about organizations? What are the basic tenets of this school of thought?

3. Henry Mintzberg, in *The Five Basic Parts of the Organization*, and again in *The Power Game and the Players*, wrote about the structure of the organization from the modern structural school of thought, and the power and politics school of thought. Describe and define the “structural components of Mintzberg’s argument in *The Five Basic Parts of the Organization*. Secondly, what modifications did he make to his model in *The Power Game and the Players*?

4. The power and politics school of thought expresses concerns over how to define “power and politics.” Delineate the differences between the terms “power and politics.” What are the “five types” of power in public organizations, according to the instructors interesting and thought provoking lecture? How is power achieved in the organization? How does power become authority?

5. The Neoclassical school of thought emerged as a result of certain aspects that classical scholars failed to account for in the development of organization theory. One scholar in particular (Simon) is given credit for “challenging” the classical school of organization theory. What additions to organization theory did he contribute that lead to refinements in how we study and view public organizations?

6. Classical organization theory deals with the “systematic processes necessary to make bureaucracy more efficient and effective.” Two scholars (Weber and Taylor) are credited with the development of classical organization thought. What were the basic arguments articulated by each in their contributions to the development of classical organization theory?

7. Organizational culture is the culture that exists in an organization, “something akin to a societal culture.” Therefore, organizational culture is “contextually driven” and is comprised of many intangible things such as “values, beliefs, assumptions, perceptions, artifacts, and patterns of behavior.” What does all this mean? Use the previously stated concepts in answering your question (e.g., “unwritten rules” and “unspoken language”).

8. In the class lecture on leadership, six approaches to “effective leadership” in organizations were discussed. What are these leadership techniques, and which style of leadership, in your opinion, is most appropriate for public and nonprofit organization theory?
9. According to Jones, there are three kinds of product structures: product division structure, multidivisional structure, and a product team structure. Identify and discuss each structure. What are some competing alternatives to structuring the organization based on the product? In the context of public organization theory, which structure is most appropriate for bureaucratic organizations? Why?

10. Parkinson's Law stipulates that “growth in the number of managers and hierarchical levels is controlled by two principles,” what are these principles and how do they work in controlling the hierarchy? In public organizations, do we need to control the hierarchy? If so why? In your explanation, discuss how Jones uses the concepts of centralization and decentralization in controlling the hierarchy.