

Policy Field Exam – Spring 2021 – Committee: Voss (chair), Waterman, Zilis
Instructions: Answer 3 questions total, one from each section.

General Public Policy (Answer one)

- 1) Choose a broad area of public policy -- such as social-welfare policy, fiscal policy, or foreign & defense policy -- and outline the contemporary role that different political actors play in that policy area. In particular, select at least three domestic factors that have been especially important in that policy area, and identify policies or policy outcomes that they explain. (Examples might include lobbies of various sorts, elite or popular cultural influences, public opinion or attitudinal variables, etc.) Insofar as you can identify "the public good" in your policy area, how did the particularized interests encapsulated by your three domestic factors interact with aggregate national interests?
- 2) Policy scholars often discuss theories of the policy process. Yet, some scholars contend (but not all) that many of the theories fail the basic definition of what a theory entails. First, what is a theory and why is theory important to the study of public policy? Second, describe at least five different models of the policy process. Explain whether these models are theories and why (or why not). Also, identify the model, theory or framework that best examines the policy process and explain why.

Public Policy Methods (answer one)

- 1) During the early years of studying policymaking, what tools did scholars advance to help better understand the policymaking process and policy outputs? Which was the most effective and why? In recent years, some scholars have pushed for a better understanding from a causal perspective. Others argue that in most scenarios, this is not feasible because it is either impossible or unethical to manipulate treatments to evaluate policy outcomes. Evaluate whether the emphasis on causal methods in recent years has been successful and explain why.
- 2) Until very recently, most quantitative political science employed inductive models that build from an assumption that observations are independent of each other. Even the models that softened this assumption typically did so by allowing for a particular structure of autocorrelation or clustering of errors, treating the dependence among cases mostly as a nuisance to be "taken into account" rather than as a substantively important pattern to be studied or tested. The obvious exception is network models, which aside from a brief period of popularity early in the discipline's behavioral revolution, have only recently started coming into their own. Select three subfields of Political Science and evaluate the contribution of network analysis to each subfield, assessing the advances such modelling has allowed but also the limits to how it has been applied thus far.

Foreign Policy (Answer one)

- 1) Under what conditions are transnational advocacy networks and international non-governmental organizations most likely to achieve policy change? As you answer, be sure to define policy change, provide at least two examples of the phenomenon, and draw any necessary distinctions between the conditions under which advocacy networks versus NGOs are more effective at bringing about policy change.
- 2) Does globalization inevitably lead to a 'race to the bottom.' In addressing this question, you should first define the 'race to the bottom' idea from the literature. Then, discuss the mechanisms underpinning the 'race to the bottom' argument and evaluate their applicability to ONE of the following policy areas: macroeconomic policy, 'social' policy, or industrial policy.