CURRICULUM FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION
KNOWLEDGE AREA MODULE 5
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Using doctoral-level research, students will examine the theoretical underpinnings of democratic governance and apply it to their chosen area of specialization. By exploring the fundamental theories, current literature, and the best practices of democratic governance in the areas of public administration, public policy, nonprofit or nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), students will demonstrate their comprehensive understanding of the literature as it relates to their topic of interest. The emphasis of this KAM is on the context in which governmental and nonprofit leaders use democorative processes to lead social institutions, influence public policy, and guide administrative decision-making.

Overall Learning Objectives

A primary purpose of KAM 5 is to establish an extensive foundation knowledge of governance issues as scholar/practitioners in the field of study. The objectives for this KAM are;

- Develop a comprehensive understanding of important theories and concepts regarding governance and democratic processes and their application in their area of specialization,
- Demonstrate a mastery of the current research literature on democratic governance as it relates to an area of specialization, and
- Solve a “real life” problem in an area of specialization by applying the theories, current literature, and best practices of democratic governance as it relates to organizations and agencies working for the public good.
Democratic Governance

The term “governance” has evolved over the years to mean different things in different institutional contexts. To understand the breadth of the idea of governance, consider the following definition. The United Nation defines governance as

Governance is the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions—achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations and firms. Governance, including its social, political and economic dimensions, operate at every level of human enterprise, be it the household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe (UNDP Strategy Note on Governance for Human Development, 2004).

A current example is the debate over Social Security. Initiated during the Great Depression as an old age pension program, it was designed to ensure that older Americans were not living in abject poverty. Decades later Social Security has evolved into disability income, support for minor children who have lost a parent, and a general retirement program. The public policy question now is whether citizens should share a greater responsibility for their retirement and how. This is not just a question for the legislature or
the President. Interest groups, from AARP to large stock brokerage firms, are all participating in the debate and few agree as to the urgency that has prompted the call for a change in this more than half-century old program. It is just this type of proposed policy change that provides the student an opportunity to study and understand the process of policy development through democratic governance. Policy is almost always the result of compromises and concessions and rarely achieves all of its intended outcomes.

Using the example of Social Security, a student could trace the history of old age pensions, the plight of the elderly, the development of alternatives such as corporate pensions, and write a Breadth section that demonstrates a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the principle debates, conditions, and legislation leading up to the present debate. By honing in on one of these broader areas and using the current literature, the student can probe in Depth (the Depth section of the KAM), the policy, its impact on a selected segment of the population, various alternatives to address the problem, and a solution for that segment. Similarly, a student who is interested in nonprofit administration may choose to focus their KAM on effective governance of nonprofit institutions. Keeping it broad, the Breadth Section might investigate the different theories of what make an effective nonprofit board and executive director. The Depth might delve into board and chief executive recruitment, and the Application might be a case study of the effectiveness of the governance of a specific board using a particular governance model.

Public policy, nonprofit or public administration draws from theorists in sociology, management and political science. Think tanks abound, but are more often promoting a specific agenda or position on a matter of current interest. From the conservative Heritage Foundation, the Libertarian Cato Institute to those with more liberal view such as the Urban
Institute, there is no shortage of discussion about any topic of policy. This makes any study of public policy rich with resources that enable the student to compare and contrast various points of view, or theories of implementation of policy.

What follows is an abbreviated list of topics that generally would fall into the category of Democratic Governance for this program. It is not exclusive and a student’s Faculty Mentor can answer questions about others. Each of these may well have an entire sub-set of related topics, so use this as a general guideline. For example, gender has sub-sets of gender equity, gay marriage, gay rights, sexual preferences, single parenting, adoption and so forth. Others can be combined such as AIDS and Gender, or Race, or AIDS and the Elderly. Education and Crime, Education and Taxes might lead to vouchers and the list continues.

Sample topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aging and the elderly</th>
<th>Homeland Security</th>
<th>Alcohol and tobacco</th>
<th>Arts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crime/Criminal Justice</td>
<td>Cross-sector collaboration</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Democratic accountability vs. administrative discretion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>Ethics in public policy, public administration, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>Health Care</td>
<td>Housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration</td>
<td>International issues and organizations</td>
<td>Intergovernmental relations</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>Leadership (best used in KAM VI) Use other topics</td>
<td>Leading or managing public organizations Use another topic</td>
<td>Lotteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Motivating workers and serving citizens</td>
<td>Nonprofits</td>
<td>Policy Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Poverty, Welfare</td>
<td>Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>Taxes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breadth Component

PPPA 8510 Theories of Democratic Governance

Learning Outcomes

The purpose of the KAM 5 Breadth Component is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the theories that form the foundation for scholarly inquiry into the governance issues in public administration, public policy, or nonprofit institutions.

Upon completing the breadth component, the student will:

• acquire an understanding of the historical development, philosophical foundations, key concepts, principles, and assumptions underlying theories and models informing the issues of governance in their chosen area of specialization
• be able to critically evaluate the philosophical foundations, major concepts, principles and key assumptions of these theories or models.

Demonstration of Competence

Making use of relevant readings, students will prepare a scholarly doctoral level paper (about 30 pages) demonstrating a critical analysis of theories of democratic governance and how they relate to the specific professional field in which the student is interested. For example, students may compare and contrast theorists, explore the historical foundations of their field of specialization, or place important contemporary issues into a theoretical or historical context. In looking for themes to write about, these questions may be helpful:

• What do the authors postulate as the basic characteristics of each theory of governance?
• What key independent and dependent variables comprise the theory?
• What theoretical propositions relate the variables to each other?
• What kinds of issues, problems, or needs give rise to the need for governance in your field?

• How thorough are the theories in including various components related to effective governance?

• Does the theory include how communication, decision-making, problem solving, motivation, interpersonal relations, the nature of influence, how rewards and reinforcement are handled, and the nature of culture or climate influence governance?

Learning Resources

A bibliography of possible references for this KAM can be found at the Walden Library site accessed through the faculty or student personal start page/campuscruiser. Once in the Walden Library site, click on Get KAM Research Help and look for the appropriate program or KAM. The Resources links will take you to general references that will provide an overview of the field or key thinkers. The Bibliography link will take you to a list of possible writings. The books and authors listed here are meant only to provide examples of the kind of literature you should be accessing. You can compile your own bibliographic references using this list as a starting point. If you have difficulty compiling a bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.
Depth Component

PPPA 8520 Contemporary Research and Issues in Democratic Governance

Learning Outcomes

The purpose of the KAM 5 Depth component is to gain in-depth knowledge enabling effective implementation of appropriate principles, methods, and tools for administering and governing public and nonprofit institutions.

Demonstration of Competence

1. Create an annotated bibliography of at least 15 research references published in the last 5 years that specifically relate to the governance issues studied in this KAM.
2. Prepare a scholarly doctoral level paper demonstrating an understanding of the contemporary research literature and how it informs the principles, tools, and methods for administering and governing and developing policy public and nonprofit institutions (about 25 pages).

Learning Resources

A bibliography of possible references for this KAM can be found at the Walden Library site accessed through the faculty or student personal start page/campuscruiser. Once in the Walden Library site, click on Get KAM Research Help and look for the appropriate program or KAM. The Resources links will take you to general references that will provide an overview of the field or key thinkers. The Bibliography link will take you to a list of possible writings. The books and authors listed here are meant only to provide examples of the kind of literature you should be accessing. You can compile your own bibliographic references using this list as a starting point. If you have difficulty compiling a
bibliography or choosing relevant readings, consult with your faculty mentor or KAM assessor and the Walden librarians.

Application Component

PPPA 8530 Professional Practice Application of Democratic Governance

Learning Outcome

The purpose of the KAM 5 Application Component is to explore contemporary practice regarding governance and policy making in the area of specialization. This component offers many options for demonstrating the application of theory and research on the topic.

Demonstration of Competence

To demonstrate competence in the Application Component, the student must complete a project in consultation with his/her KAM assessor which will include a paper setting the project in the context of the theories and research studied in the Breadth and Depth components of this KAM (about 10 pages). The following are suggested as possibilities:

- Documenting and reflecting on a professional experience and placing it in the context of the theories and research studied in the Breadth and Depth Components, describe a situation in which the policymaking or governance process succeeded or failed and the reasons why.

- Comparing and contrasting actual governance situations and describing practices and how they were determined and evaluated in light of the theories and research studied.

- Reporting findings from a case study in the workplace or conduct an intervention program using the theories and research studied.
• Creating a training curriculum, review policies, or recommending changes in the organization based upon the theories and research studied.

*Learning Resources*

Since the Application builds on the Breadth and Depth, students may use some of the resources that were employed in those components. Additionally, nontraditional sources such as institutional documents, annual reports, project outlines, or organizational policies can be used and cited. Demonstrations can also include presentations that should be appended to the Application Component.