

**Ph.D. Comprehensive Exam in Public Administration
Spring 2011**

Answer three of the following questions in 4.5 hours. Keep duplication between answers to a bare minimum.

Responses should demonstrate a comprehensive command of the literature by citing a sufficient number of scholars and/or studies as evidence for the position taken in each question.

1. The field of public administration has changed drastically over the past century. Select three areas of research from the 20th century that will endure well into the 21st century. Describe these themes, the authors associated with them, and the reasons why you think these topics will remain relevant.

2. In a recent essay, Jos Raadschelders characterizes public administration scholars as either “scientists” or “holists.” He writes:

“Scientists such as Simon, Meier, and O’Toole, now advocate more rigorous research methods with an eye to developing public administration as a science and a true academic discipline. Holists such as Waldo, Stillman, and Wamsley are more concerned with the understanding of government as a whole and emphasize its service to the community at large. To them, public administration trains professionals as well as scholars.”

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the “scientist” and “holist” approaches to the study of public administration? Can these perspectives be reconciled, or will they be perpetually at odds with one another?

3. Much of the research in public administration over the past 20 years has been empirical in nature. Some have argued that this orientation distracts us from more important normative issues in the field. In your opinion, what is the most important, unresolved *normative* question in public administration? What makes it so important, and why do you believe it continues to go unresolved? What are the prospects for scholars coming to a consensus solution in the future?

4. Moe and Gilmour wrote that “[t]oday, public administration has largely abandoned or forgotten its roots in public law – and has accepted, to varying degrees, the generic behavioral principles of management as taught in schools of business” (1995, 135). Write an essay that explains why this shift is problematic for both the *theory* and the *practice* of public administration. Be specific in your response and cite literature as appropriate.

5. Scholars disagree about the extent to which public management and public administration can be distinguished from one another as distinct fields. Is public management separate and distinct from public administration? Is it a field that exists within a larger field of public administration? Are public management and public administration overlapping fields, as in a Venn diagram?

6. Scholars have long argued the primary challenge of organizations – both public and private – rests in securing the participation of workers. What do we learn from research in organization theory, organizational behavior, and public management about motivating public employees?